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# **Dialectic as the Truth of Reality and Thought**

**A Prolegomenon to the Reconceptualisation of Dialectic**

**Doctoral Thesis**

**Mitsugu KURATA**

**2003**

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## Abstract

Dialectic has been rejected or dogmatically accepted by many philosophers. The modern history of dialectic began with Kant who, however, regarded it as deceptive. Fichte and Schelling contributed to the formation of the theory of dialectic by developing the concepts such as the absolute, spirit, reason and speculation. Hegel did the further clarification of those concepts by exhibiting their necessary interconnection, which was systematically expounded in *Science of Logic*. Dialectic in *Logic* can be grasped with three key concepts: (1) the absolute, (2) contradiction and sublation, and (3) the identity of thought and being. In *Logic*, through the doctrines of *being*, *essence* and the *concept*, the necessary development of categories is expressed as the self-movement of *the absolute*, which culminates in the absolute *idea*. Logic is for Hegel the exposition of God as the thought which thinks of itself. Therefore the truth of logic is the thought's returning to itself as a full circle of the descriptions of *thought* itself. Dialectic is the activity of this self-thinking thought. *Contradiction* immanent in every category, and its *sublation*, is the generator of all the development of categories. Only through the whole process of logic can *the identity of thought and being* be known as the *truth*. However, as the later generations argued, Hegel's interpretations was biased as his emphasis was on the self-identity of *thought* to itself. Dialectic is to be re-grasped with the emphasis on the self-development of *reality*. This entails the cognition that the reality enforces the human mind to recognise the dynamism of ever-moving reality that is dialectical. However, dialectic is not to be regarded as the collection of principles, but to be re-conceptualised as the necessary development, and thus the explication, of reality through our thought. Dialectic is this truth as the identity of reality and thought.

## Acknowledgements

This thesis stems from my deep concern about the possibility of the non-dogmatic development of Marxism. In the years around 1990 the major impact came from outside of my mind: the successive events of the collapse of the socialist regimes in the Soviet Union and other nations made me seriously think of the meaning of democracy, freedom, and above all, Marxist philosophy. Before that time I had been basically content in a slumber of dogmatism. Once awakened, however, I could no longer be blind to those questions in both practical and theoretical terms. In those years I was not only a local government official but also a semi-professional trade unionist in Japan. The above concerns grew year by year, adding its seriousness by reading many theoretical books, especially on philosophy. I finally decided to quit my stable job and join a university in Britain. The systematic study of philosophy began this way in 1995. As a degree holder in Law, I had to start from scratch: from a one-year undergraduate diploma, then MA, and finally PhD in Philosophy, for which this is the thesis. Seven and a half years' study in a foreign country was tough but rewarding.

Great thanks have to go to the following academics: Professor Sean Sayers of the University of Kent at Canterbury, whose work *Reality and Reason* was one of the major source to think of the possibility of studying in Britain, and who later became my supervisor for the PhD research. I cannot think of any other person than him who could better help me to get through the difficulties of both academic and mental matters. Professor Richard Norman (of Kent, too), who taught me Ethics and Greek Philosophy in my first academic year, and continued to be a major source of my philosophical inspirations. Professor Stephen Houlgate of the University of Warwick, whose philosophical discussions at the Hegel Society of Great Britain conferences were suggestive to my work.

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## Contents

Introduction	1
Part I	
Historical and Logical Background to Hegel's Dialectic in Classical German Philosophy: Kant, Fichte and Schelling	
Chapter 1 Towards Dialectic (1): Kant	5
Preliminaries	
Section 1 Judgement, Synthesis and the Understanding	
Section 2 Categories	7
Section 3 Reason and the Understanding, Phenomena and Noumena, and Organic View	9
Section 4 Dialectic as Transcendental Illusion	12
Section 5 The Problem of Kant's Dialectic: Hegel's Critique of Kant	14
(a) Antinomies and Opposites	
(b) Kant's Contribution to Philosophy and Its Limit: Historical Assessment	16
Chapter 2 Towards Dialectic (2): Fichte	20
Preliminaries	
Section 1 The Development from Kant: What Fichte Aims to Achieve	
Section 2 The <i>I</i>	23
Section 3 Fichte's Dialectic: Three Logical Principles	26



Section 4	The Limits of Fichte's Dialectic: Hegel's Critique of Fichte	29
(a)	The Truth of the <i>I</i>	
(i)	The Self-Identity of the <i>I</i> as a Demand	
(ii)	The <i>I</i> , <i>Anstoß</i> and Categories	31
(b)	Fichte's Dualism: The Failure of Synthesis	32
(c)	Reason and Speculation	34
(d)	The Absolute	36
(e)	Historical Assessment: Concluding Remarks	38
Chapter 3	The Search for the Absolute: Schelling	40
Preliminaries		
Section 1	Beyond Fichte	41
Section 2	Philosophy of Nature: The Organic View of Nature and Reason	42
Section 3	The Absolute	45
Section 4	What Philosophy of Nature Aims At	47
Section 5	Transcendental Idealism: Toward What Philosophy Truly Is	48
Section 6	Toward Dialectical View of History: History of Human Mind	50
Section 7	Hegel's Critique of Schelling	51
(a)	Schelling's Contribution to Philosophy	
(b)	Hegel's Criticisms of Schelling	52
Part II		
Dialectic in Hegel's <i>Logic</i>		
Chapter 4	Preliminary Remarks on Hegel's Dialectic in <i>Logic</i>	55
Preliminaries		
Section 1	Three Moments of the Logical	56

(a) The Understanding	57
(b) The Dialectical Moment	
(c) The Speculative Moment	58
Section 2 The Features of Dialectic and Thought	59
(a) What Thinking Is	60
(b) Thought Is Objective	
(c) Dialectic and the Truth: The Identity of Thought and Being	61
(d) Reason, the Infinite and the Absolute	62
(e) The Limits of the Understanding	
Section 3 Logic as the System of the Truth: Preliminary Remarks	63
(a) Three Key Concepts of Hegel's Dialectic	
(b) God as the Self-Thinking Thought	
Chapter 5 Dialectic in the Doctrine of Being	66
Preliminaries	
(a) Pure Being as the Beginning of Logic	
(b) General Division of Being	68
Section 1 Being	69
(a) Being, Nothing and Becoming	
(b) Coming-to-be and Ceasing-to-be	71
(c) Sublation of Becoming into Being-there	
(d) Sublation	72
Section 2 Being-there: Quality (1)	73
(a) Being-there	
(b) Negation and Reality	
(c) Something	74
(d) Infinity	75
(i) The Infinite in General	
(ii) Alternating Determination of the Finite and the Infinite	76
(iii) Affirmative Infinity as True Infinity	
(e) Reality and Ideality, and Transition to Being-for-itself	77

(f) The Character of the Development of Categories	78
Section 3 Being-for-itself: Quality (2)	79
(a) Being-for-itself and Being-for-one	
(b) The One (as the One, the Void and Many Ones), and Transition to Quantity	80
Section 4 Quantity	82
(a) Pure Quantity	
(b) Quantum ( as Number, Degree and Ratio), and Transition to Measure	83
Section 5 Measure, and Transition to Essence	85
Section 6 The Basic Tenet of Hegel's Dialectical Description of Categories	87
 Chapter 6 Dialectic in the Doctrine of Essence	 89
Preliminaries	
(a) What Essence Is	
(b) Remarks on Essence	90
(c) The Development of Essence in its Movement	91
Section 1 Reflection and <i>Schein</i>	
(a) Reflection	92
(b) Determinations of Reflection	93
(i) Identity	94
(ii) Distinction	95
(iii) Contradiction and Ground	
(iv) Existence, Thing, and Transition to Appearance	96
Section 2 Contradiction Further Described	97
(a) The Fundamental Point of Contradiction	
(b) Contradiction for Kant and Hegel	98
(c) The Feature of Contradiction in Essence	100
Section 3 Appearance	101
Section 4 Actuality	102
(a) Actuality as such	

(i) Possibility	103
(ii) Contingency	
(iii) Necessity	
(b) Substantiality	104
(c) Causality	105
(d) Reciprocal Action, and Transition to the Concept	106
Section 5 The Absolute in Actuality	107
(a) The Exposition of the Absolute	
(b) The Absolute Attribute	109
(c) The Mode of the Absolute	
Section 6 The Absolute Further Described	110
Chapter 7 Dialectic in the Doctrine of the Concept	113
Preliminaries	
(a) The Concept	
(b) Logic as the Science of the Absolute Form	
Expressed as the Concept	114
(c) The Division of the Concept	115
Section 1 Subjectivity (or Subjective Concept)	
(a) The Concept as such	
(b) Judgement	116
(i) Qualitative Judgement	117
(ii) Judgement of Reflection	118
(iii) Judgement of Necessity	
(iv) Judgement of the Concept	
(c) Syllogism	119
(i) Qualitative Syllogism	
(ii) Syllogism of Reflection	120
(iii) Syllogism of Necessity	121
(iv) The Fundamental Point of Syllogism	
Section 2 Objectivity	123
(a) Objectivity as such, Mechanism and Chemism	



(b) Teleology, and Transition to the Idea	
Section 3 The Idea	124
(a) Life	127
(b) Cognition	
(c) Willing	129
(d) The Absolute Idea	130
Section 4 Dialectic in Kantian and Pre-Kantian Philosophy	133
Section 5 Hegel's Dialectic in the Concept	134
Chapter 8 The Fundamental Feature of Hegel's Dialectic	139
Section 1 Logic as the System of the Truth	
Section 2 The Identity of Thought and Being	142
Section 3 Dialectic as the Truth	145
Part III	
Dialectic as the Truth of Reality and Thought	
Chapter 9 Transition to the Materialist Dialectic	149
Section 1 Who Thinks?	
Section 2 The Identity of Thought and Being	
– from the Materialist Viewpoint	150
Section 3 Feuerbach's Contribution to Materialism	154
Section 4 Critique of Objective Idealism	159



Chapter 10	Towards the Materialist Reconceptualisation of Dialectic	161
Section 1	The Real and the Ideal in Materialism and Idealism	
Section 2	The Identity of Logic, Dialectic and the Theory of Knowledge	168
Section 3	The Problem of the ‘Three Principles’, and Lenin’s Attempt to Formulate the Dialectic	174
Chapter 11	For the Development of Materialist Dialectic: Conclusion	182
	Epilogue	188
	Bibliography	190

## Introduction

This doctoral thesis is intended to be a brief odyssey. Its aim is the search for the *truth* of the objective material world, i.e. *reality*, and of our *thought* which knows it. *Dialectic* is the total naming of this truth.

Dialectic has been variously treated by various thinkers: some have accepted it, but dogmatically, and the others have totally rejected it as false. In any sense, to know what dialectic is, we need to face the difficulties of complicated arguments accumulated on this controversial concept 'dialectic'.

The word 'dialectic' can be traced back to an ancient Greek word *dialegein*, which means 'speaking through' or 'double-speak' – *dia* is 'through' or 'two' (dyad); *legein* is to 'speak' and is related to *logos*. This will imply that 'dia' (two) of *dialectic* would already be the prelude to the self-contradictory expression of the *truth*, i.e. the thought thinking of itself in the other.<sup>1</sup>

What I intend to clarify in this thesis is the core or essence of the meaning of dialectic. Therefore I will focus on the following three points: (1) historical and logical development of the theory of dialectic before, and towards, Hegel's dialectic; (2) Hegel's dialectic expressed in his *Science of Logic*, which is the systematic exposition of *dialectic* itself; and (3) the possibility of the materialist reconceptualisation of the theory of dialectic, which I think is not fully developed yet. To clarify these points, this thesis is divided into three parts, each of which corresponds to each of the above philosophical issues.

Part One, which consists of three chapters on Kant, Fichte and Schelling, discusses the historical and logical background to the formation of Hegel's dialectic. I will focus on the categories which they introduce and develop – such as reason, antinomies (by Kant); 'the *I*' (*das Ich*, a precursory expression to Hegel's absolute

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<sup>1</sup> Desmond, 'Thinking on the Double', pp. 226, 231-32.

spirit), speculation (by Fichte); and the *absolute* (by Schelling). All these categories will be integrated into Hegel's system of *Science of Logic*. By discussing those categories, I will clarify how they contributed to the development of the theory of dialectic, and also at what points their own philosophical systems stopped.

Part Two, in its five chapters, is entirely devoted to Hegel's *Science of Logic*, which is nothing but the explication of what *dialectic* is. Here I will focus on the clarification of the total movement of categories as the self-movement (self-development and self-explication) of the *absolute*. For Hegel the *absolute*, in the realm of logic, is the thought which thinks of itself, i.e. God. The absolute, as this self-thinking thought, goes through the three spheres in *Logic – being (Sein)*, *essence (Wesen)* and the *concept (Begriff)*. At the end of this whole process the self-thinking thought, as the *absolute idea*, finally (but atemporally) knows itself: it turns into *nature*. From a materialist point of view, Hegel's above description will be criticised as upside-down. However, Hegel's greatest contribution to the theory of dialectic consists in that he systematically clarified the self-movement of the real material world and of human thinking. The *truth*, i.e. the identity of thought and being, was firmly established by him.

Part Three, in its three chapters, tries to clarify the possibilities of further development of the materialist theory of dialectic. However, as I will discuss in detail, materialist dialectic has been abused by dogmatism and axiomatisation. But the clue to solve this situation was already presented by the original dialectical thinkers, Marx, Engels and Lenin. What they suggest is to read Hegel materialistically, i.e. to embark on the serious and critical study of his *Logic*, and, on this basis, re-conceptualise what 'dialectic' is, from a materialist view. In so doing, one will surely know that the truth of man's thinking, *thought*, is nothing but the truth of the objective material world, *reality*. What differentiates between Hegel's dialectic and materialist dialectic is that the former thinks of *thought* as the origin of reality, and the latter thinks of *reality* as the origin of thought. Therefore here I will firstly discuss: *who* actually thinks, i.e. *man* thinks; Feuerbach's contribution to materialism; and the confusion by both idealists and dogmatic materialists on the relation between the ideal and the real. In so doing, I will clarify the materialist meaning of the identity of thought and being as the *truth*. Dialectic, as logic (and theory of knowledge, too), is also the science which explicates this truth. I will also discuss the problem of the axiomatic understanding of dialectic, which attributes its truth to 'principles'. Although each of those 'principles' actually

exists, they are to be grasped as the *aspects* of one and the same *dialectic*. Dialectic cannot be understood as the collection of separate principles, but as a *single whole*, which has a variety of aspects within it. To do so, I will briefly discuss Lenin's attempt to formulate dialectic, which is a good example of the possibility of further development of the theory of dialectic.

## **Part I**

# **Historical and Logical Background to Hegel's Dialectic in Classical German Philosophy: Kant, Fichte and Schelling**



## Chapter 1

### Towards Dialectic (1): Kant

#### Preliminaries

In this chapter I will discuss some of the important concepts of Kant only insofar as they are the materials for the formation of Hegel's dialectic, focusing on *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), together with Hegel's critique of Kant, which appears in *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, *Science of Logic*, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, and other works.

#### Section 1

#### Judgement, Synthesis and the Understanding

The modern history of dialectic began with Kant. He intended to establish the over-all philosophical systems of nature and of morality. Three Critiques were originally written as prolegomena to them although they are too gigantic to be so called. To secure the soundness of his entire philosophical system, his enquiry had necessarily to be centred on what human knowledge is, or, on what our *judgement* is.

Judgement, when described in the most abstract way, is 'the faculty of thinking the particular as contained under the universal'. He also treats judgement as a middle term between the understanding and reason.<sup>1</sup>

Judgement, when described in relation to objects, is 'the mediate knowledge of an object, that is, the representation of a representation of it [the object]'.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, Part I: The Critique of Aesthetic Judgement, pp. 15, 18

In a more detailed and concrete way, regarding its function of unity, judgement is also described as ‘the manner in which given modes of knowledge are brought to the objective unity of apperception’, and the copula ‘is’ in our language shows this judgement.<sup>3</sup>

In the search for what judgement is, Kant makes a distinction between *analytic* judgement and *synthetic* judgement. In analytic judgement, identity is seen between subject and object, in which predicate can be logically drawn from the analysis of subject. In synthetic judgement, on the contrary, the predicate cannot be automatically drawn from the analysis of subject, but this synthetic judgement is as true as the analytic is; this judgement can be called ‘ampliative’ since something new, unknown must be given, as predicate, to subject without previously known identity.<sup>4</sup>

A right judgement, if simplified, is for the knower to acquire the accurate knowledge of objects. Kant explains how *synthesis* and *analysis* work together in the process of acquiring this knowledge. Synthesis is ‘the act of putting different representations together, and of grasping what is manifold in them in *one* act of knowledge’. But this knowledge may be at first ‘crude and confused’, therefore analysis is needed.<sup>5</sup>

There is a widely accepted misunderstanding on the relation between synthesis and analysis, in which analyses are done first, and then syntheses of the results of analyses come later. Contrary to this commonsensical, superficial view, Kant clearly states that synthesis comes prior to analysis. Synthesis of a manifold is what first gives rise to knowledge, and, in regard to content, no concepts can first arise by way of analysis. To bring this synthesis to concepts is the function of the *understanding*.<sup>6</sup> That is, for Kant the understanding is closely connected to synthesis although analysis is never denied its relation to the understanding.

In order to reach knowledge the understanding must be connected to sensibility (senses, sensations). The understanding and sensibility can determine objects only when they are employed in conjunction.<sup>7</sup> In this sense Kant states: ‘Without sensibility no object would be given to us, without understanding no object would be thought.

<sup>2</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (hereafter abbreviated as *Critique*), A68=B93.

<sup>3</sup> *Critique*, B141.

<sup>4</sup> *Critique*, A6=B10.

<sup>5</sup> *Critique*, A77= B103, my italics.

<sup>6</sup> *Critique*, A77-78=B103-04.

<sup>7</sup> *Critique*, A258=B314.

Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.’ Only through the union of the understanding and senses can knowledge arise.<sup>8</sup>

The meaning of *intuition* (*Anschauung*) should be noted here. Kant often uses this term in the meaning of the ‘awareness of individual entities’ and never in the meaning of ‘*a priori* insight not based on reasoning’ in ordinary English usage.<sup>9</sup> Nor is it in the meaning of super-sensible or non-sensible intuition that is unaccompanied by the senses, which has been asserted by ‘intellectualists’ who, Kant says, are represented by Plato.<sup>10</sup>

## Section 2

### Categories

The understanding works with sensibility, as stated above. But it cannot function without *the pure concepts of the understanding* which Kant names *categories* after Aristotle. Categories are the pure concepts of the understanding which apply *a priori* to objects of intuition in general. There are twelve categories, the list of which exhausts all original pure concepts of synthesis that the understanding contains within itself *a priori*.<sup>11</sup>

It can be seen here that Kant connects categories more closely to synthesis than to analysis. He even says that *general logic* – which, in order to transform representations into concepts, abstracts from all content of knowledge, and which must entirely rely upon analysis— *cannot* establish those pure concepts which are the transformed manifold of representations. It is *transcendental logic*, on the contrary, that does fulfil this requirement by synthesis, and thus can grasp a manifold of *a priori* sensibility as material for the concepts of pure understanding, i.e. categories.<sup>12</sup> (Here lies the implicit resource of his talking of ‘synthetic *a priori* judgement’.) Without the necessary connection between synthesis and categories no one can have the

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<sup>8</sup> *Critique*, A51=B75.

<sup>9</sup> Ewing, *A Short Commentary on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup> *Critique*, A853-54=B881-82.

<sup>11</sup> *Critique*, A79-80=B105-06.

<sup>12</sup> *Critique*, A76-77=B102, A79=B105.



understanding. Only when related to this higher connection with synthesis and categories can analysis fulfil its role of supporting the knower to reach the understanding.

However, categories are not almighty. The *thought* of an object by means of a pure concept of understanding (category) can become *knowledge* only insofar as the concept (category) is related to objects of senses. To *think* an object is *not* the same as to *know* it. We need categories as well as *empirical intuitions*, i.e. *experience*, in order to reach the knowledge of things. Categories can be applied only in regard to things which may be objects of possible experience.<sup>13</sup> The section-title itself clearly states this: ‘§ 22 The Category has no other Application in Knowledge than to Objects of Experience’.<sup>14</sup>

Kant is not bothered by the seemingly right, but in fact wrong, commonsensical view that the term ‘a priori’ is not connected to any experience. He probes more deeply into the implicit and necessary relation between *a priori* and *experience* that is usually thought of only in its relation to *a posteriori*.

However, Kant’s philosophy has its own defects. There remain contradictory aspects in his system. One of these significant problems is as follows. *Space and time*, which are not themselves categories, but are necessary for us as the framework (or condition) of perceiving anything real, are considered by him to be valid no further than for *objects of the senses*, and therefore only for *experience*. That is, for Kant space and time represent nothing beyond the limit of the objects of senses and the limit of experience: space and time have no reality beyond them. Categories, i.e. the pure concepts of understanding, on the contrary, are free from this *limitation* which is the boundary of senses (or sensibility). But even the categories as concepts of objects, when they are extended beyond senses, become *empty* since they are mere forms of thought, without objective reality, and we cannot judge whether the objects are possible or not.<sup>15</sup>

This contradictory problem remaining in Kant’s description of *space and time* and of *categories* (pure concepts of understanding) – i.e. that space and time are under the limitation of senses or experience and, on the other hand, categories are not under such limitation, and that, however, they are both under the limitation of sensibility of

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<sup>13</sup> *Critique*, B146-48.

<sup>14</sup> *Critique*, B146.

<sup>15</sup> *Critique*, B148.

objects – must have urged Fichte to reach the more consistent view of the perceiver and the perceived, through his epoch-making concept ‘the *I* (*das Ich*).<sup>16</sup>

Hegel explains Kant’s categories as follows. Kant presents us twelve categories, which are a great contribution to philosophy. Categories fall into four classes, each of which constitutes a triad. Although the triad of the first *positive*, the second *negative* and the third *synthesis* of the former two, *conceals* within itself the absolute form, i.e. the *concept* (*Begriff*), yet for Kant the triad remains an external schema only. Kant asserts that categories, which bring the unity of thought into the content of senses, are the objective elements in *experience*, and that the categories therefore hold universality and necessity. However, he also asserts that *experience*, which cannot be separated from categories, can grasp only *phenomena*, and that we cannot know *noumena* by means of the knowledge we gain through experience. Thus Kant’s contribution, i.e. his introducing categories into philosophy, loses its significant importance by this unphilosophic procedure which does not reach the necessity, the truth, the absolute. In this sense Kant’s philosophy remains the *metaphysics of the understanding*. For example, in Kant’s philosophy the two opposites – (1) pure conceptions of the understanding (or pure understanding) and (2) pure sensuous perceptions (or pure sensuousness) which were formerly considered by him to be separate from each other in the mind – are now united in knowledge in that the former determines the latter by categories, and this constitutes experience. Yet they are only united in an external, superficial way.<sup>17</sup>

### Section 3

#### Reason and the Understanding, Phenomena and Noumena, and Organic View

Kant makes a first great contribution of clarifying *reason* in an appropriate manner. Reason is the faculty of principles, and is distinguished from the understanding.<sup>18</sup> More

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<sup>16</sup> As for Fichte’s dissatisfaction on Kant on this issue, see Chapter 2 Section 1; as for the elaboration of ‘the *I*’, see Chap. 2 Sec. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (hereafter abbreviated as *Hist. Phil.*), III, pp. 438-41.

<sup>18</sup> *Critique*, A299=B356.



precisely, the understanding is the faculty which secures the unity of appearances by means of *rules* while reason is the faculty which secures the unity of the rules of understanding under *principles*. Reason never applies itself directly to experience, but applies to the understanding, giving it an *a priori* unity by means of concepts.<sup>19</sup> He gives to reason a higher, more honourable status in philosophy than in previous philosophers' systems. But his contribution stops here as far as dialectic is concerned. For him the unity of reason is not the unity of possible experience which is that of the understanding. Reason does not know nor prescribe a principle that everything which happens has a cause.<sup>20</sup> This shows that Kant acknowledges the power of the faculty of reason only to a limited extent. This limitation of reason by him is closely connected with his statement that thing-in-itself (*Ding-an-sich*) is unknowable since reason is associated with this unknowable thing-in-itself while the understanding is associated with knowable appearances or experience.

However, Kant does *not* say that senses or *appearances* (*phenomena*) and *things-in-themselves* (*noumena*) are completely separated from each other. For him *noumenon* (thing-in-itself) is merely a *limiting concept* in the sense that we cannot reach it beyond senses (sensibility). The concept of *noumenon* is of negative employment only.<sup>21</sup> In this context Kant also says that all objects given to us can be interpreted in two ways – as *appearances* and as *things-in-themselves* (as absolutely unconditioned).<sup>22</sup>

Kant shows his rather *organic view* of the *system* as the *whole*. A *system* is the unity of the manifold modes of knowledge under one idea which is the concept of the form of a *whole* that is provided by *reason*, and the scientific concept of reason contains the end and the form of that whole. A *whole* is an *organised unity* which may grow from within like an animal body.<sup>23</sup> His organic view of history also appears in *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose* (1784). Kant's organic view will be more precisely and vividly developed by a later generation, i.e. Schelling<sup>24</sup> and Hegel.

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<sup>19</sup> *Critique*, A302=B359.

<sup>20</sup> *Critique*, A307=B363-64.

<sup>21</sup> *Critique*, A255=B310-11.

<sup>22</sup> Kant, *Correspondence*, p. 199 (his letter to Christian Garve, 7th August 1783); cf. Scruton, *Kant*, p. 48.

<sup>23</sup> *Critique*, A832-33=B860-61.

<sup>24</sup> See Chap. 3 Sec. 6.

Hegel assesses Kant's important distinction between the understanding and reason. For Kant the understanding is the power of reaching the *particular* by means of *perception (Anschauung)*. It deals with objects in *finite* and *conditioned* relations. Reason, on the contrary, is 'the power of obtaining knowledge from *principles*, that is, *the power of knowing the particular in the universal* by means of Notions [*concepts (Begriffe)*]' (This is Hegel's expression. Kant himself uses the term 'idea' (*Idee*)). Reason finds its object as the *infinite* and *unconditioned*. The principle of *reason* is 'the *universal*, inasmuch as it finds the unconditioned involved in the conditioned knowledge of the *understanding*'. Kant gives to reason a higher position in philosophy than to the understanding. This becomes apparent when the product of reason is considered by him to be the *idea (Idee)* which is the unconditioned, the infinite. But in his philosophy reason loses its power. For him reason has the desire to know the infinite, but does not have such power. He ruins the importance of reason which he himself has found since in his philosophy the *idea* is merely the abstract universal, the indeterminate. In this context Hegel implies that Kant cannot reach the full grasp of the truth of knowledge, i.e. *reason*, the universal. For Kant the knowing subject does not really arrive at reason since it still remains the individual self-consciousness which is opposed to the universal.<sup>25</sup>

Hegel also describes reason in general. Reason includes within itself the understanding as its own necessary first moment. He apprehends the relation between the understanding and reason more dynamically than Kant does. For Hegel the understanding is that which determines and holds the determinations fixed. Reason, on the contrary, not only 'resolves the determinations of the understanding into nothing' (in this sense reason is negative and dialectical), but also 'generates the universal and comprehends the particular therein' (in this sense reason is positive). But Hegel does not stop at this point since for him reason is, in truth, '*spirit* which is higher than either merely positive reason, or merely intuitive understanding'. Reason at first *negates* what is simple, producing the *difference* of the understanding, then *resolves* the difference and is thus *dialectical*, and yet the result is that reason has restored what was at first simple which has now become the concrete universal.<sup>26</sup>

Hegel says that reason affected by sensibility is 'a culture (*Kultur*) of ordinary human intellect' which rises to the thinking of a universal. In other words, the

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<sup>25</sup> Hegel, *Hist. Phi.*, III, pp. 443-44, my italics.

<sup>26</sup> Hegel, *Science of Logic* (hereafter abbreviated as *Sci. Logic*), p. 28.



philosophies of Kant, Jacobi and Fichte consist in ‘the culture (*Kultur*) of reflection raised to a system’. Here Hegel asserts what philosophy truly is, against their philosophies. Kant grasps the negative, abstractly idealistic side of cognition as *positive*, and he thinks that it alone is reason, and that what is beyond it is unknowable. Although Kant grasps that there is ‘the absolute’, he does not clarify what the absolute truly is. Kant does not recognise reason as the one and only *a priori*.<sup>27</sup> Here Hegel seems to suggest that the absolute is reason, and reason is spirit; i.e. reason is that which discloses the absolute as spirit.

## Section 4

### Dialectic as Transcendental Illusion

Kant is important in that he re-introduced *dialectic* to philosophy after the long absence of the discussions of dialectic in the modern philosophy since Descartes – although dialectic had been intensively discussed in ancient Greek and medieval philosophies. But Kant employed this term in rather a negative sense. He defines *dialectic* as the ‘logic of illusion (*Schein*)’.<sup>28</sup> For him dialectic is the sophistry and the appearance of truth which conceals its emptiness by imitating logic’s methodical thoroughness.<sup>29</sup> This logic of illusion, i.e. dialectic, is not ‘empirical (e.g. optical) illusion’ but ‘transcendental illusion’.<sup>30</sup> Pure reason becomes dialectical, i.e. becomes deceptive illusion, only through heedlessness, misapprehension, or misemployment of reason.<sup>31</sup>

Kant states that *transcendental* and *transcendent* are not interchangeable terms. The term ‘transcendent’ is used by him mainly in the meaning of *passing beyond the empirical (or sensible) limits* (i.e. the antonym of the ‘immanent’ which means ‘within the limits of possible experience’), thus passing beyond the limits of the pure

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<sup>27</sup> Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, pp. 64, 68, 73.

<sup>28</sup> *Critique*, A61=B86, A293=B349.

<sup>29</sup> *Critique*, A61=B85.

<sup>30</sup> *Critique*, A295-96=B351-53.

<sup>31</sup> *Critique*, A669=B 697. A680=B708.

understanding.<sup>32</sup> The term ‘transcendental’ is used by him mainly in relation to *knowledge*, i.e. the way we know the objects, rather than to the objects themselves.<sup>33</sup>

Hegel describes the difference between ‘transcendent’ and ‘transcendental’ in Kant’s terminology. The *transcendent* is ‘whatever goes beyond the determinacy of the understanding’, which occurs, for example, in mathematics. The *transcendental* is ‘the unity of self-consciousness that is self-identical and inwardly infinite, as distinct from the ordinary consciousness, that is determined by finite material’, and is only subjective, and ‘does not also pertain to objects (*Gegenstand*) themselves as they are in-themselves’.<sup>34</sup>

However, the term ‘transcendental’ is employed by Kant in two senses as follows. (1) The term ‘transcendental knowledge’ is used in the sense of being *not empirical* but rather *a priori*. He explains that the term ‘transcendental’ signifies ‘such knowledge as concerns the *a priori* knowledge, or its *a priori* employment’.<sup>35</sup> Transcendental knowledge is distinct from the metaphysical or logical knowledge;<sup>36</sup> it designates the possibility of ‘*a priori* synthetic knowledge’.<sup>37</sup> (2) The term ‘transcendental’ is also used, in a sharp contrast to ‘transcendent’, even in the meaning of ‘misemployment’ of categories and judgement, or rather, simply an ‘error’ of judgement.<sup>38</sup>

In this context Kant’s ‘transcendental dialectic’ exposes the illusion of transcendent judgements and this is the maximum which it can achieve; and ‘logical dialectic’, on the other hand, exposes the error of deceptive inferences. However, he states that there exists, beyond these limitations, a natural and unavoidable *dialectic of pure reason* (that is inseparable from human reason) which, ‘even after its deceptiveness has been exposed, will not cease to play tricks with reason and continually entrap it [reason] into momentary aberrations ever and again calling for correction’.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Critique*, A295-96=B352.

<sup>33</sup> Caygill, *A Kant Dictionary*, pp. 399-400.

<sup>34</sup> Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic* (hereafter abbreviated as *Enc. Logic*), § 42 Addition 2, p. 85.

<sup>35</sup> *Critique*, A56=B80-81.

<sup>36</sup> *Critique*, A23=B38.

<sup>37</sup> *Critique*, A25=B40.

<sup>38</sup> *Critique*, A295-96=B352-53.

<sup>39</sup> *Critique*, A297-98=B354-55.



Contrary to Kant's own intention, this is the very point of dialectic of nature and of human cognition, in which negativity of error plays a crucial and essential role to attain the right, more appropriate judgement. This may appear to be a paradox, but it is *not* a paradox – in that only through negating the previous errors can one reach the *truth*, i.e. more appropriate cognition of the whole of the matter. There is no absolute discrepancy between *error* (partial truth) and *truth* (fuller truth). This is the very point Kant cannot acknowledge. That is, the recognition of negativity is crucial to reach the truth. Truth can be attained only by negating the error. Truth cannot be separated from error. The opposing concepts are the two aspects of the same matter in process. Truth is truth only insofar as it is related to error, its negative. Truth consists only in the total process from the lower truth (*error*) to the higher truth (*truth*).<sup>40</sup>

Kant does not reach the appropriate concept of dialectic in which *dialectical* opposition should be grasped as embracing within itself the *analytical* contradictory as its lower moment.<sup>41</sup>

Kant did not change his mind on the *defect* of dialectic even in his later years. For example, he talked of the *natural dialectic* which constitutes an unavoidable illusion that critical philosophy has to expose and resolve 'lest it should deceive us'.<sup>42</sup> He continued to think of dialectic as only defective. The positive aspect of dialectic, as stated above, is the very point which he could *never* acknowledge.

## Section 5

### The Problem of Kant's Dialectic: Hegel's Critique of Kant

#### (a) Antinomies and Opposites

The feature of Kant's dialectic clearly appears in the treatment of *antinomies*. Hegel says that antinomy is not that which can be confined to only four particular objects taken from cosmology as Kant describes, but is that which can be found in *all* objects,

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. Hegel, *Hist. Phi.*, I, p. 19; *Sci. Logic*, p. 580; Royce, *Lectures on Modern Idealism*, pp. 79, 86, 215, 217-18.

<sup>41</sup> *Critique*, A504=B352.

<sup>42</sup> *The Critique of Judgement*, Part II: The Critique of Teleological Judgement, § 69, p. 36.

representations, concepts and ideas. To recognise this antinomic feature of objects is 'the *dialectical* moment of logical thinking'.<sup>43</sup> As Hegel says, this point is what is missing in Kant's grasp of dialectic in the treatment of antinomies.

However, Kant's treatment of antinomies cannot be simply discarded as insufficient. Hegel says that taking up the antinomies is an important advance for philosophical cognition, by which Kant sets aside the dogmatism of the metaphysics of the understanding and steps forward to the dialectical movement of thinking. But Kant stops at the merely negative result of the consideration of antinomic character of objects. On the contrary, that which is the true and positive significance of antinomies is that 'everything actual contains opposed determinations within it', and consequently the comprehension of an object leads to the recognition of the object's being the concrete unity of opposed determinations.<sup>44</sup>

Hegel also says that Kant's assertion – that reason continues to be deceived on the ground of the natural illusion of antinomies, which grasps this antinomic character of perception as merely subjective – does not offer the resolution of antinomies. The only solution to antinomies is to recognise that 'two opposed determinations which belong necessarily to one and the same *concept* (*Begriff*) cannot be valid each on its own in its one-sidedness; on the contrary, they are truly only as sublated, only in the unity of their *concept*'. Kantian antinomies contain merely 'the quite simple categorical assertion of *each* of the two opposed moments of a determination, each being taken on its own in isolation from the other'.<sup>45</sup>

Therefore the true recognition should be described as follows: 'Since each of the two opposed sides contains its other within itself and neither can be thought without the other, it follows that neither of these determinations, taken alone, has truth; this belongs only to their unity. This is the true dialectical consideration of them and also the true result.'<sup>46</sup>

As clearly expressed above by Hegel, the main falsity of Kant's grasp of antinomies is that he takes the difference between opposites as fixed. In other words, for Kant the dichotomy between things-as-they-appear-to-us (appearances, *phenomena*) and things-in-themselves (*noumena*) is fixed. Therefore he must necessarily reach the

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<sup>43</sup> Hegel, *Enc. Logic*, § 48 Remark, pp. 92-93.

<sup>44</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 48 Addition, p. 93.

<sup>45</sup> Hegel, *Sci. Logic*, pp. 191-92, trans. emended.

<sup>46</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 197.



unsatisfactory conclusion that things-in-themselves are unknowable to us. Contrary to his intention, the truth consists in that opposed determinations of *all* kinds are the two inseparable aspects of one and the same matter, object, conception, etc. However, that he grasped the antinomic character in objects, is a great step to reach the dialectical grasp of reality, although his grasp is rather negative in that he talks of dialectic as transcendental illusion which deceives reason. His insufficient grasp of dialectic is inseparably connected with his grasp of reason in separation from the understanding.

To sum up: As stated by Hegel, what Kant cannot acknowledge is that everything actual contains opposed determinations within it, and that an object is the concrete unity of these opposed determinations. The only solution to antinomies is to recognise that the two opposed determinations associated with the *concept* should not be taken in the one-sidedness; they are to be sublated only in the unity of their *concept*. Truth belongs only to the unity of opposed determinations.

### **(b) Kant's Contribution to Philosophy and Its Limit: Historical Assessment**

The unsatisfactory grasp of dialectic by Kant stems from the feature of the system of his philosophy. Hegel says that Kant's philosophy has a contradictory feature, which eventually denies the path to the absolute. For Kant 'an absolute standpoint ... binds together the finite and leads up to the infinite'. *Thought* as reason grasps itself as the absolute ultimate in judgement. However, although this thought is grasped as the absolute in determining itself and as concrete, yet it is grasped by him as *subjective*. This self-contradictory standpoint that thought is absolute but subjective, in fact, denies the faculty to know the absolute since for him the understanding alone pertains to knowledge, and reason pertains only to *ideas*.<sup>47</sup>

Hegel explains the subjective defect of Kant's philosophy, in which the infinite *idea* as the truth of philosophy is lost. For Kant all reality is grasped within *self-consciousness*. Although Kant's philosophy apprehends that a simple thought has difference within itself, yet it does not apprehend that this difference within itself is to be applied to all reality. Although his philosophy describes reason effectively, yet it does so 'in an unthinking *empiric* way' by which the truth attained in his philosophy is lost. In other words, although his philosophy 'deals with the *infinite idea*, expressing its formal categories and arriving at its concrete claims, it yet again denies this to be the

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<sup>47</sup> Hegel, *Hist. Phil.*, III, pp. 424-25.

truth, making it a simple *subjective*, because it has once for all accepted *finite* knowledge as the fixed and ultimate standpoint'.<sup>48</sup> Kant admits that the *I* is the *unity*, i.e. 'the transcendental apperception, the pure apperception of self-consciousness'. Kant says that the 'I think' must be *able* to accompany all our representations. Hegel criticises this statement as 'a barbarous exposition of the matter' since 'the fact that I am the one and, as thinking, the simplifier, is not by Kant satisfactorily set forth'. For Kant the *unity* simply means just the identity which has no distinction within itself. Kant forgets that the unity is also the *relation*.<sup>49</sup>

To explain this problem briefly: The *unity* (or identity) of something is the self-identity to itself, and the *difference* is the self-difference from itself. In this sense even the unity should be understood to be nothing but the *self-relation*.

Hegel sums up: Kant sets forth, as a universal scheme, 'the *rhythm of knowledge*, [the rhythm] of scientific movement', and exhibits, on all sides, '*thesis, antithesis* and *synthesis*, [i.e.] modes of the mind by means of which it is mind, and thus consciously distinguishing itself'.<sup>50</sup>

However, Kant's 'rhythm of knowledge' is still rather axiomatic, not completely organic – in that his grasp of logical thinking reveals that he still remains at the level of the axiomatic grasp of triplicity (thesis-antithesis-synthesis) although the use of these terms is itself not wrong. This triplicity should be recognised as the expression of the moments (aspects, phases) of the self-movement of the *absolute*.

Hegel also describes Kant's philosophy as 'authentic idealism' in 'the principle of the deduction of the categories'.<sup>51</sup> What Hegel here describes as 'the principle of the deduction of the categories' is what Kant names 'the transcendental unity of apperception', which is for Kant 'the highest principle in the whole sphere of human knowledge'.<sup>52</sup> 'The principle of *speculation* is the *identity of subject and object*, and this principle is most definitely articulated in the deduction of the forms of the intellect [the understanding (*Verstand*)]', the theory of which is baptised by reason (*Vernunft*). 'However, Kant turns this identity itself, which is reason, into an object of *philosophical reflection* [i.e. subjectivity], and thus this identity vanishes from its home

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<sup>48</sup> *Hist. Phil.*, III, pp. 426-27, my italics.

<sup>49</sup> *Hist. Phil.*, III, p. 437; cf. *Critique*, B59, 97-104.

<sup>50</sup> *Hist. Phil.*, III, pp. 476-77, my italics.

<sup>51</sup> Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy* (hereafter abbreviated as *Difference*), p. 79.

<sup>52</sup> *Critique*, B135; cf. H. S. Harris, 'Introduction', in Hegel, *Difference*, p. 8.



ground'. This implies that, although reason used to handle the understanding, it is now handled by the understanding. Consequently the identity of subject and object, i.e. the principle of speculation, is limited to *twelve* acts of pure thought (*categories*). (However, Hegel points out that Kant has found only *nine* categories since *modality* determines nothing objectively.) Although Kant acknowledges that, outside the realm which is objectively determined by categories, there is an empirical realm of sensibility and perception (i.e. *a posteriori* realm), yet he finds, in this empirical realm, only the subjective maxim of the faculty of reflecting judgement. This shows that Kant's grasp of reason is not yet sufficient.<sup>53</sup>

Kant's great contribution to the development of philosophy is mainly his success in revealing what constitutes human knowledge and its relation to reality by presenting the categories as the knot which binds man and the world together. Kant teaches his successors, i.e. Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, to seek the reality of the universe in the system of these conceptions, and in the unconditioned thought. However, as is widely known, Kant imposes a boundary for human knowledge which, he says, can apprehend *appearances* alone and cannot know *things-in-themselves*. This split has already been criticised by Fichte and Schelling before Hegel does. But it is Kant himself who implicitly and unwittingly offers a key for solving this split or antinomy by his very mode of statement, leading us beyond his own viewpoint. For Kant self-consciousness is 'the representation of that which is the condition of all unity, and itself is unconditioned'. The thinking *I* 'does *not* know *itself through the categories*, but knows the categories, and through them all objects, in the absolute unity of apperception, and so *through itself*'.<sup>54</sup> These phrases by Kant unwittingly suggest the true nature of the universal *I*, which will be developed by his successors, particularly Fichte.<sup>55</sup> The analysis of the content of universal thought Hegel presents in *Logic* is nothing but Kant's list of *categories*, amended and *unified*, escaping the subjectivity remaining in Kant's philosophy.<sup>56</sup>

Therefore it is *not* that Hegel rejected Kant *but* that he succeeded Kant's great contribution to the more appropriate, higher level by unifying Kant's categories with his own dialectical method.

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<sup>53</sup> Hegel, *Difference*, pp. 80-81, my italics.

<sup>54</sup> *Critique*. A401-02, italics in the original.

<sup>55</sup> As for Fichte's concept 'the *I*', see Chap. 2 Sec. 2.

<sup>56</sup> Seth, *The Development from Kant to Hegel*, pp. 9, 13, 77.

Kant's *categories* are to develop to Hegel's categories in the more logically consistent manner. Kant's categories are fixed and static and thus cannot develop themselves to the satisfactory level on which reality can be grasped as a single unified whole. For Hegel reason is not a fixed, rigid something; it develops itself. Hegel's *Logic* shows that *reason*, in the whole sphere of its conceptions, is an *organism*.<sup>57</sup>

This point is the positive attainment of dialectic. Kant's important, yet still rigid system of categories is thus to be sublated to Hegel's more organic system of categories which culminates in the *absolute idea*.

Kant's insufficient grasp of dialectic represents the over-all feature of his philosophy, i.e. the fixity of the oppositions – the separation of the opposites between phenomena and noumena, between the understanding and reason, etc. He is not yet completely free from dualism. But his greatness consists in the very feature which can also be taken as weakness. By exhibiting antinomies, categories, reason, etc., he clearly showed to later generations the possibility to solve this contradictory problem on what reason may be, and what dialectic truly is.<sup>58</sup> The more eagerly he endeavours to discard dialectic, the more important and illuminating dialectic becomes. It is Kant himself who, contrary to his own intention, opened the proper path toward the new, more advanced viewpoint, i.e. the recognition of what dialectic truly is, for later philosophers, i.e. Fichte, Schelling and Hegel.

This point can be stated as follows. Every epoch-making mind has two sides. Like Janus, Kant looks two ways; one face is turned to the past, the other to the future, closing the old age and opening the new. No one can read Kant intelligently without perceiving two tendencies that strive for the mastery.<sup>59</sup>

Kant's system of philosophy is thus to be succeeded, at first, to the hands of Fichte.

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<sup>57</sup> Seth, pp. 80-81.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Hegel, *Sci. Logic*, p. 831.

<sup>59</sup> Seth, p. 95.

## Chapter 2

### Towards Dialectic (2): Fichte

#### Preliminaries

In this chapter I will discuss Fichte's philosophy as far as it is related to the formation of Hegel's dialectic, focusing on *The Science of Knowledge* (1794), together with Hegel's critique of Fichte which appears in *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy, Faith and Knowledge*, and *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*.

#### Section 1

##### The Development from Kant: What Fichte Aims to Achieve

Fichte says that the system of his philosophy is nothing other than the Kantian: his system contains the same view of things as Kant's, but it is in method quite independent of the Kantian presentation.<sup>1</sup> This corresponds to Hegel's explanation of Fichte's philosophy as the Kantian philosophy in its completion which is set forth in a more logical way.<sup>2</sup> In Hegel's *Difference* Kant's philosophy is described as reflective and Fichte's as speculative while in *Faith and Knowledge* Fichte's philosophy is described as the logical culmination of Kant's philosophy, i.e. as the reflective solution

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<sup>1</sup> Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge* (hereafter abbreviated as *Sci. Knowledge*), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Hegel, *Hist. Phil.*, III, p. 479.



of the problems left behind by Kant.<sup>3</sup> In the assessment of the relation between Kant and Fichte, as stated above, Hegel's emphasis differs from *Difference* (his first major work in 1801 when he was thirty-one) to *Faith and Knowledge* (a work in 1802, written a year after *Difference*) and *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (a collection of materials from the lectures in his mature years from 1805 to 1831, which has a more similar stance to *Faith and Knowledge* than to *Difference*). This shows that Hegel's own view develops year by year.

Fichte says that the task of philosophy is to furnish the ground of all experience. Experience, which is both internal and external, is the system of presentations accompanied by the feeling of necessity.<sup>4</sup> He is clearly aware of this task as he proclaims: 'A philosophy whose results do not agree with experience is surely false, for it has not fulfilled its promise to deduce the entirety of experience and to explain it on the basis of the necessary action of the intellect.'<sup>5</sup>

The relation between *experience* and *intellect* (the *understanding*, or *self-consciousness*) is that which both Kant and Fichte endeavour to explicate. However, Fichte demands us to examine his philosophy on its own basis alone, not on the presupposition of some other philosophy, even of Kant's philosophy. The system of Fichte's philosophy is 'to agree only with itself, it can be explained, proved, or refuted in its own terms alone; one must accept or reject it as a whole'.<sup>6</sup>

What does Fichte have in common with Kant, and what is Fichte's advance from Kant's position? The aim of Fichte's enterprise in his philosophy is to present the nature of man which is also the nature of reality. Fichte attempts to establish a tenable idealism as a natural outgrowth of the Kantian critical philosophy. This tenable idealism is nothing but *critical idealism*, which shows not only that *not-I* is opposed to the *I* on the level of conscious experience, but also that this *not-I* has its source in the *I* on a deeper level. In other words, for critical idealism the world of objects is empirically real and transcendently ideal. The correctness of critical philosophy consists in *whether* that which the absolute *I* grasps as the *a priori* is identical with the real experience as the *a posteriori*. That which guarantees the correctness of critical idealism is *deduction*. For Fichte deduction is the transcendental method of Kant. This

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<sup>3</sup> H. S. Harris, 'Introduction', in Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Sci. Knowledge*, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Sci. Knowledge*, p. 27.

<sup>6</sup> *Sci. Knowledge*, p. 5.

*transcendental deduction* must have our immediate but nonsensible acquaintance ('intellectual intuition' in Fichte's words) with an absolute and infinite *I*. The activity designated by the deduction is a necessary prerequisite for having the sort of experience we in fact have. Fichte tries to prove both the thesis that the *I* is simple and *unconditioned*, and the thesis that the *I* is the most dispersed and highly *conditioned* of realities. This proving both is possible because an *absolute I* limits (or determines) itself at once. This necessary and immediate self-determination (or self-limitation) of the *I* gives rise both to the finite, conditioned *I* and to its counterpart, the objective world of the *not-I*.<sup>7</sup>

For Fichte 'intellectual intuition' is the philosopher's intuiting of himself in performing the act whereby the *I* arises for him. He says: 'It is the immediate consciousness that I act, and what I enact: it is that whereby I know something because I do it. We cannot prove from concepts that this power of intellectual intuition exists, nor evolve from them what it may be. Everyone must discover it immediately in himself, or he will never make its acquaintance.'<sup>8</sup> This passage is a typical example of the above stated stance of Fichte which imposes on us either total acceptance, or total rejection, of his philosophical system.<sup>9</sup>

What is Fichte's term 'intellectual intuition'? It designates the *act* (*Tathandlung*) of pure self-consciousness which constitutes itself as an *I* by letting the *I* be immediately present to itself. At the same time this act distinguishes itself as an object of consciousness from itself as the subject. Because the object of consciousness is here *immediately* present, this act of consciousness can be called an *intuition* in Kantian sense. But since the object of this act, i.e. the *I* itself, is not here *given* to consciousness, but is *produced* by this act, this intuition should be rather called '*intellectual* intuition' than sensory intuition.<sup>10</sup>

Hegel says that the foundation of Fichte's system is *intellectual intuition*, pure thinking of itself, pure consciousness, I=I, I am. The *absolute* is subject-object, and the *I* is this identity of subject and object.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Heath and Lachs, 'Preface', in Fichte, *Sci. Knowledge*, pp. viii-xii. As for Fichte's 'I', see Sec. 2 below.

<sup>8</sup> *Sci. Knowledge*, p. 38.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Sci. Knowledge*, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Breazeale, 'Fichte and Schelling', p. 152.

<sup>11</sup> Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy* (hereafter abbreviated as *Difference*), p. 119.



Hegel's above explanation of 'intellectual intuition' designates *the identity of thought and being*. Therefore *Cogito ergo sum* of Descartes is understood to mean in fact the following: that which is aware of itself as *thinking* or (*thought*), knows itself as *being*. In other words, in the thinking (thought), this thinking thinks of itself; and furthermore, in this thinking of itself as thinking, the thinking knows itself as being. Since *thought (Denken)* is for the subject, *being* is for the object. Hence *the identity of thought and being* is expressed also as *the identity of subject and object*.<sup>12</sup>

This will then lead to the necessary procedure of Fichte's argument toward the concept of 'the *I*' which is the *absolute* as the identity of subject and object as stated above by Hegel. But Kant and Fichte fail to achieve what they aim at; i.e. they do not succeed in explicating the necessity of the identity of thought and being.

Fichte endeavours to found and furnish out the system which Kant 'envisaged' but could not establish. Kant prepared the materials for Fichte's system 'the science of knowledge' (*Wissenschaftslehre*), but Kant set them in a very arbitrary order. For example, Fichte says, Kant merely asserted that *categories* are conditions of self-consciousness, and that *space and time* are inseparable conditions of categories, but did not prove why and how they are so.<sup>13</sup>

What Fichte aims to explicate is, as aforementioned, the relation between self-consciousness (or intellect, the understanding) and the world (or nature, objects, experience), both of which are closely connected to each other. Fichte is not satisfied with Kant's inconsistent, problematic treatment of this issue. In order to solve this problem, Fichte necessarily proceeds to propound his important concept 'the *I*'.

## Section 2

### The *I*

*Das Ich* has been variously translated, mainly into 'ego' or 'self', which might have led many readers in English to some confusion. Therefore when I refer to *das Ich*, I will consistently use the term 'the *I*' since it is literally what Fichte intends to designate. I

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<sup>12</sup> H. S. Harris and Cerf, Note 1, in Hegel, *Difference*, p. 119. As for the thought which thinks of itself, see Chap. 4 Sec. 3(b); as for the identity of thought and being, see Chap. 8. Sec. 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Sci. Knowledge*, p. 51. As for Fichte's dissatisfaction on Kant, see Chap. 1 Sec. 2.



will also modify the related terms, if necessary; e.g. non-ego or not-self to *not-I* (*nicht-Ich*), egoism to *I-ness* (*Ichheit*).

Fichte's explanation of 'the *I* (*das Ich*) is as follows. The proposition  $A=A$  is absolutely certain without any other ground. By this proposition we are absolutely asserting something.  $A=A$  is not asserting that  $A$  is the case, but is asserting that *if*  $A$  exists, *then*  $A$  exists. Thus there is simply no question as to *whether*  $A$  actually exists or not. The question is not of the content of the proposition, but simply of its form. Therefore between *if* and *then* there is a necessary connection posited absolutely without any other ground. To this necessary connection Fichte gives 'the preliminary designation  $X$ '. Then the *I* asserts, by means of  $X$ , that  $A$  absolutely exists for the judging *I* simply in virtue of being posited in the *I*. Hence the  $X$  is expressed by the axiom 'I am I',  $I=I$ . (Here Fichte introduces, rather forcefully, his axiom  $I=I$ . This in fact means that the *I ought* to be the *I*. Here is a leap of logic as Hegel will criticise it.)<sup>14</sup> Then we reach the proposition 'I am' as the expression of a *fact*, not of an *act*. However,  $A=A$  is not the same as  $I=I$  in that  $A=A$  has content only under a certain condition while  $I=I$  always has content unconditionally. 'I am I' ( $I=I$ ) means that the *I* exists because it has *posited* itself, or rather, that the *I* posits itself simply because it exists. In other words, the *I* posits itself by merely existing and exists by merely being posited. What does 'the *I*' mean, then? The answer is: That whose being or essence consists simply in the fact that it *posits* itself as existing, is 'the *I*' as *the absolute subject*. In other words, as the *I* posits itself, so it is; and as it is, so it posits itself. The *I* exists for the *I* in the sense that the *I* posits itself as necessary and is necessary for the *I*. In other words, *I* exist only for myself, but for myself *I* am necessary. Therefore *to posit oneself* and *to be* are perfectly identical. Hence the proposition 'I am, because I have posited myself' can also be expressed as '*I am* absolutely, because *I am*'. In other words, I am absolutely what I am since the self-positing *I* and the existing *I* are perfectly identical, one and the same. That is, Fichte reaches the over-all formula '*I am* absolutely'; i.e. *I am* absolutely because I am; and I am absolutely *what* I am. The *I* begins by an absolute positing of its own existence.<sup>15</sup>

Fichte criticises Descartes' philosophy, in which *thinking* is primary, as superfluous since 'we do not necessarily think when we exist, but we necessarily exist

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<sup>14</sup> See Sec. 4(a)(i) below.

<sup>15</sup> *Sci. Knowledge*, pp. 94-99.

whenever we think. Thinking is by no means the essence, but merely a specific determination of existence'.<sup>16</sup>

Briefly, Fichte starts from the proposition  $A=A$  and reaches the proposition 'I am'. However,  $A=A$  is based on this 'I am'. The whole process of Fichte's argument constitutes a large self-circulation of the *I*.

Fichte's important term *setzen* (posit or positing), which he introduces into philosophy and often uses throughout his system, literally means 'to put, place, set up, or establish'. It implies creative causal endeavour. When this word is used in the context of the assertion of propositions, it is associated with the *intellect* (the understanding), but also with the *will*. Positing is a nontemporal, causal activity that can be performed only by minds. Reason is the faculty for positing, through which everything positive is needed to be *real*. Positing is a primordial act, in which the theoretical and the practical coincide, regarding to the realm of will, as stated above, and in which an undivided *I* is totally engaged in a single creative, all-encompassing enterprise. This 'I' is not personal. The *absolute I* is unitary and singular, and its operation is both necessary and free. The *I* acts by the necessity of its own nature independently of any external influence.<sup>17</sup>

Fichte explains what is 'the *I*' in another context on the knowledge of the practical. Insofar as the *I* is absolute, it is infinite and unbounded. The *I* posits everything that exists and what it does not posit, does not exist. But everything the *I* posits is posited as the *I*; and the *I* posits it as everything it posits. Thus the *I* includes everything, i.e. an infinite, unbounded reality.<sup>18</sup>

Therefore for Fichte the *I* creates the world. There can be no answer to the question on why the *I* creates the world. The creation cannot be explained by *causality* since the creation is *infinite* – in that the creation (as the infinite) produces the finite world which has, as its essential feature, causality; hence causality, as the *finite*, cannot explain the creation, the infinite. If we dare to have an answer to this, it should be that the ultimate *I* is *free* and this free *I* creates, by its own *necessity*, the world, i.e. everything *real* and everything *ideal*. When the *I* creates the world, practical drive and theoretical drive (reflection) presuppose each other from opposite directions. The practical drive fills out the *infinity*, and the reflection (the theoretical drive) assimilates

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<sup>16</sup> *Sci. Knowledge*, pp. 100-01.

<sup>17</sup> Heath and Lachs, pp. xiv-xvi.

<sup>18</sup> *Sci. Knowledge*, p. 225.



itself to the autonomous law of the world. By reflection the activity of creation reverts back toward the *I*. However, the practical drive and the theoretical drive cannot be satisfied and there is wavering or oscillation (*Schweben*) between them, and this makes the foundation of feeling of necessity. Thus the creation has its ultimate value in making it possible for the *I* to do its *duty*.<sup>19</sup>

Therefore although Fichte endeavours to avoid the problematic Kantian dualism which sets the difference between *thing-in-itself* (which is closely related to the *infinite*, i.e. the moral sphere) and *appearance* (which is closely related to the *finite*), yet Fichte himself also sets the division between the *practical* (which is in fact the moral sphere which refers to the words 'ought' or 'duty') and the *theoretical*. This indicates that, although Fichte's concept of 'the *I*' is supposed by himself to be all-embracing, creating everything (practical and theoretical; real and ideal), yet the *I* – which is the starting-point, and also the destination, of the whole process of his philosophical argument – does unwittingly conceive an also problematic Kantian terminology, which necessarily leads to dualism since the clear-cut *distinction* (between the *practical* and the *theoretical*, in this case) is the feature of dualism. Fichte is serious about getting away from Kantian dualism, but he falls into it again, in fact.<sup>20</sup>

### Section 3

#### Fichte's Dialectic: Three Logical Principles

Fichte answers Kant's question 'How are synthetic judgements *a priori* possible?'. They are possible since we have established a *synthesis* between the two opposites, i.e. the *I* and *not-I*, by postulating them each to be divisible, and since they are nonetheless also inseparably united with each other and can be distinguished only in reflection. Reflection dwells solely on the opposition between thesis and antithesis, thus reflection in this sense is necessarily synthetic, and so is judgement. There are no purely analytic judgements although Kant and Fichte do not neglect the importance of analysis, without which there is no synthesis. We need not find any further ground than the

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<sup>19</sup> Heath and Lachs, pp. xvii-xviii.

<sup>20</sup> As for Hegel's critique of Fichtean dualism centred on the 'productive imagination' which sets the distinction between the *practical* and the *theoretical*. see Sec. 4(b) below.



synthesis of the *I* and *not-I* since all other syntheses must be rooted in this one synthesis. For Fichte this is the sole and ultimate proof. There is no antithesis without synthesis, and no synthesis without antithesis. Both antithesis and synthesis presuppose the thesis, i.e. the absolute positing, and this is the *one*, and this is a *system*. The *form* of the system is based on the highest synthesis. Judgement cannot but be synthetic since judgement is nothing but that which partakes of this highest synthesis.<sup>21</sup>

Fichte's above answer to Kant is a further step of dialectic from its Kantian stage although it is to be furnished out by a younger generation, i.e. Schelling and Hegel. That is, the advance of Fichte over Kant consists in that, while in Kant's dialectic the axiomatic grasp (as thesis-antithesis-synthesis) is prevailing, in Fichte's system, on the other hand, it is clarified that the *I* is the primordial act, i.e. all-encompassing *thesis*, from which both antithesis and synthesis stem, and to which they also return. This 'I' is the precursory expression of the *absolute* of Schelling, or *absolute spirit* of Hegel.

The dialectical process in Fichte's system centred on 'the *I*'<sup>22</sup> can also be expressed as 'three logical principles'; i.e. identity (thesis), opposition (antithesis) and grounding (synthesis). The *I* posits the *not-I* as limited by the *I*, and the *I* posits itself as limited by the *not-I*. Thus from the combination of these two propositions, we get the synthetic proposition that *not-I* actively determines the *I* which is in turn passive, and the *I* determines itself by an absolute activity. *Not-I* has reality (activity) for the *I* only insofar as the *I* is passively affected.<sup>23</sup>

The above means that Fichte grasps the dialectical process of three logical principles as the process of the absolute activity of the *I*. But his synthesis here remains at the level of the expression of *I+not-I*. The true synthesis, the absolute grounding for both *I* and *not-I*, is not yet attained. He merely asserts the *absolute* activity of the *I*. This point will be criticised by Hegel.<sup>24</sup>

Hegel elaborates the above Fichtean dialectical process of the *I* as follows. Fichte sets forth the analysis of the *I* which is to be reduced to three principles from which the whole of knowledge has to be evolved. They are: (1) the simple *I* which can be axiomatised as  $A=A$ , in which the *I* is identical to itself as predicate and subject

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<sup>21</sup> *Sci. Knowledge*, pp. 112-14.

<sup>22</sup> See Sec. 2 above.

<sup>23</sup> *Sci. Knowledge*, pp. 120, 122-24, 130.

<sup>24</sup> See Sec. 4(b) below.

must be alike – in this there is no difference and thus no content (this is *identity*, i.e. *thesis*, as stated above by Fichte); (2) the negation of the simple *I*, thus *not-I* is here set forth in opposition to the *I* – in this the *difference* between the *form* as the *unconditioned* and the *content* as the *conditioned* does appear in order that determination as the content and difference should emerge (this is *antithesis*, i.e. *opposition*); and (3) the dynamic relation between the *I* and *not-I* is set forth as the determination of both *I* and *not-I* through one another, i.e. the limitation through and by one another – in this the difference is for the first time significantly re-united (this is *synthesis*, i.e. *grounding*).<sup>25</sup>

This unification is a great step from Kantian dualism. Fichte's *I* aims at the totality of human knowledge through this unification. Kantian split between subject and object *seems* to be solved by Fichte. But it will be revealed by Hegel that Fichte does not succeed in overcoming the dualism.<sup>26</sup>

Fichte's principles ( $A=A$ ,  $A\neq A$ ,  $A=B$ ) are to be more fully developed by Hegel. Fichte's  $A=A$  is merely a subjective *abstraction* from the self-positing of the *I*. Hegel treats this  $A=A$  as the absolute activity of *reason*, whose object is knowledge, i.e. self-knowing. For Hegel the first *A* expresses the truth for the subject, and the second *A* expresses the corresponding objects.  $A=A$  is the Parmenidean *identity of thought and being*. But we must also assert  $A\neq A$  because the thought (*A* in the mind) is *different* from what is thought (*A* in the world). To attain the validity of the identity of thought and being, the formula  $A=B$  is necessary; i.e. the object of *my* thought (*A*) is *this* real being (*B*). However, we must not forget that this does not deny nor neglect the difference between thought and being since there can be no more absolute and necessary difference than that between thought and being.<sup>27</sup>

Fichte advances Kant's dialectic, which was rather negative, to a *positive* point. The transcendental deduction<sup>28</sup> proceeds dialectically. The first moment of dialectic is the *analysis* of a given concept until contradictory conclusions are attained by the analysis. These contradictions will destroy the unity of consciousness or of the *I*, therefore the contradictions have to be reconciled or *synthesised*. A clear example of this dialectical procedure is that the *I* develops to the opposition between the *I* and *not-I*

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<sup>25</sup> Hegel, *Hist. Phil.*, III, pp. 487-90.

<sup>26</sup> See Sec. 4(b) below.

<sup>27</sup> H. S. Harris, 'Introduction', in Hegel, *Difference*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>28</sup> See Sec. 1 above.



when a new concept of *divisibility*, which unites those incompatible concepts, is introduced. Fichte even proceeds further beyond the theoretical realm, even to the realm of *will*, in which we *may* finally reach and possess the complete and adequate system of universal *reason*.<sup>29</sup>

This seems to be the very point which inspires younger philosophers, Schelling and Hegel, to develop their more sufficiently dialectical philosophies, which envisage the dynamism of *reason*. However, Fichte's dialectic is not complete, nor sufficient at the very point where he introduces a division of the *theoretical* from the *practical* (centred on the *will*, in this case).<sup>30</sup>

## Section 4

### The Limits of Fichte's Dialectic: Hegel's Critique of Fichte

Here I will discuss Hegel's critique of Fichte's philosophy, mainly on the limits of Fichte's dialectic. However, Hegel often intends to express his own ideas rather than to accurately paraphrase previous philosophers' systems when he is engaged in critiques, which are sometimes unfair or biased, sometimes entailing the twists of logical explanation. His critique of Fichte's system is not an exception. Therefore there should be some reservations about his critique, which is, however, deep and thought-provoking.

#### (a) The Truth of the *I*

##### (i) The Self-Identity of the *I* as a Demand

Hegel at first gives a brief account of Fichte's theory. The identity of subject and object is expressed by Fichte in the form  $I=I$ , i.e. on its subjective side. Thus Fichte's *speculation* abandons itself and its principle, and does not come back to it again since the *absolute* is apprehended by Fichte only in the form in which it appears to philosophical *reflection* (i.e. at the level of the understanding), not to *speculation* (i.e. at

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<sup>29</sup> Heath and Lachs, p. xiii.

<sup>30</sup> See Sec. 4 below.



the level of *reason*). Thus *finitude* and *opposition* are not removed, and the subject-object becomes a *subjective* subject-object. Here transcendental intuition, i.e. the very principle of speculation, loses itself. The *I* fails to constitute itself as absolute self-intuition. Therefore  $I=I$  is transformed into the principle 'The *I* ought to equal the *I*'. In Fichte's system *reason* is placed in absolute opposition. In other words, the reason which is degraded to the level of intellect (the understanding) becomes the principle as which the absolute must appear.<sup>31</sup>

The above shows that young Hegel already has in mind the relations of infinity-speculation-reason-the absolute, in contrast to finitude-reflection-the understanding (intellect).<sup>32</sup>

Hegel then explains Fichte's transcendental deduction of the objective world. The theorem  $I=I$  as the principle of speculation or of subjective philosophical reflection must prove itself *objective* as the principle of philosophy, and its proof consists in *suspending* its opposition to empirical consciousness. There must occur this suspension when *pure consciousness* produces out of itself the activities which are identical with *empirical consciousness*. The *I* on the subjective side as pure consciousness is supposed to produce out of itself, or to advance to, another *I* on the objective side as empirical consciousness. In other words, the theorem  $I=I$  is presupposed. However, in empirical consciousness there is an X (an opposite); and pure consciousness (positing of itself) can neither produce this X from itself nor conquer it; pure consciousness merely presupposes X. (This is Hegel's paraphrasing of Fichte's theory. Fichte himself describes this X as 'I am I'.)<sup>33</sup> Therefore although the theorem  $I=I$  is supposed to show itself to be the immanent real ground of the totality of objects in their externality to one another, yet the *I* which posits itself as the *I* determined by the *not-I*, is not a purely immanent sphere. Fichte fails to show the proof he has promised to show, i.e. the necessity of the advancement from the subjective, self-positing *I* (as pure consciousness) to the objective *I* (as empirical consciousness). Pure consciousness and empirical consciousness remain absolutely opposed to each other. Fichte merely proclaims the theorem  $I=I$  (The *I* equals the *I*, i.e. the identity of both *I*'s). This identity he proclaims is incomplete and superficial. Another *identity*, which grasps both pure

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<sup>31</sup> Hegel, *Difference*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>32</sup> As for the problems of Fichte's reason, speculation and the absolute, see Sec. 4(c) and (d) below.

<sup>33</sup> See Sec. 2 above.

and empirical consciousness within itself and yet suspends them both as what they are, should necessarily come about.<sup>34</sup>

Here Hegel is implicitly moving toward his own concept of the *absolute* as the complete and all-embracing identity which Fichte cannot reach.

Hegel then elaborates that, because Fichte's *I* on the subjective side cannot produce the objective *I*, the identity  $I=I$  has necessarily to be a *demand*. The *I* cannot succeed in positing itself as  $I=I$ , nor succeed in intuiting itself as subject-object through its non-conscious production. Here the synthesis of opposites as subject-object is made impossible. Therefore the *I* should produce itself practically as identity as subject-object; i.e. the *I* as subject should metamorphose itself into the object. In other words, 'The *I equals the I*' turns into 'The *I ought to equal the I*'. The identity of subject and object as  $I=I$  remains a *demand*. Fichte's *ought* expresses the non-existence of the absolute identity.<sup>35</sup>

Hence Fichte's theorem  $I=I$  is not proved by himself to be necessary.<sup>36</sup>

#### (ii) The *I*, *Anstoß* and Categories

Fichte tries to explicate the origin of Kant's categories by the principles of the *I*. The self-positing *I* is 'the primordial, absolutely unconditioned first principle of all human knowledge', and the initial description of it is that the *act* (*Tathandlung*) 'does not and cannot appear among the empirical states of our consciousness, but rather lies at the basis of all consciousness and alone makes it possible'.<sup>37</sup> Fichte endeavours to prove how Kantian categories can be deduced from the above Fichtean principle, avoiding the use of Kantian concept of thing-in-itself. Only in this way would the theory of knowledge be established on a truly *scientific* basis. However, Fichte wrongly treated Spinoza's and his own highest unity not as something that exists, but as something that we *ought to*, and yet cannot achieve.<sup>38</sup>

Hegel assesses the principle of self-determination of thinking, on the account of the development from Kant's categories to Fichte's *I* with the concept *Anstoß* as

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<sup>34</sup> *Difference*, pp. 129-30.

<sup>35</sup> *Difference*, pp. 132-33.

<sup>36</sup> As for Fichte's dualism, see Sec. 4(b) below.

<sup>37</sup> *Sci. Knowledge*, p. 93.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Harris, 'Introduction', in Hegel, *Difference*, pp. 8-9.



follows. The principle of self-determination of thinking, i.e. the principle that thinking determines itself from within (*aus sich selbst*) was established by Kant. But Kant established it in a merely formal way; he did not demonstrate *how* (*Wie*) and *to what extent* (*Inwiefern*) thinking determines itself. Fichte aims to conquer this defect and explicate the deduction of the categories. Thus Fichte makes the *I* the starting point for his philosophy, and Kant's categories are supposed to result from the *I*'s activity. But the *I* does not genuinely appear as free, spontaneous activity since the *I* is supposed to react to *Anstoß* (shock, check, impulse, impact), i.e. *not-I*, in fact. The nature of *Anstoß* is outside of cognition, and the *I* remains conditioned by an other, *Anstoß*. Therefore Fichte falls on the same problematic conclusion as Kant's – that there is cognition only of the finite, and the infinite transcends thinking. Hence thinking cannot reach the infinite.<sup>39</sup>

This leads to the result that in Fichte's system, as in Kant's system, *Ding-an-sich* (thing-in-itself, i.e. the infinite sphere) is *thinkable* only negatively, not positively.<sup>40</sup>

### **(b) Fichte's Dualism: The Failure of Synthesis**

Hegel points out Fichte's dualism. Fichte's absolute opposition is the very condition which alone makes 'productive imagination' possible. Productive imagination is the *I* only as *theoretical* faculty which cannot raise itself above the opposition. The *practical* faculty alone suspends the opposition. But even in the practical faculty the *I* does not posit itself as the *I*; and the objective *I* is still expressed as *I+not-I*, and the practical faculty does not penetrate to  $I=I$ . In other words, the incompleteness of the highest synthesis entails the absoluteness of *opposition* which still exists within this synthesis.<sup>41</sup>

Hegel then refers to why and how Fichte propounds the concept 'productive imagination'. *Not-I*'s negativity is only through the *I*'s own positing itself as *not-I*. The *I*'s positing of the opposite is itself a positing of, and by, the *I* itself. The immanence of the *I* can be asserted only in respect of its being conditioned by the opposite, X. In other words, the *I* posits itself as not posited. Thus the *I*'s positing of itself and of its opposite contradict each other. This contradictory opposition, which remains absolute, cannot be

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<sup>39</sup> Hegel, *Enc. Logic*, § 60 Addition 2, p. 108.

<sup>40</sup> Geraets *et al.*, Note 81, in *Enc. Logic*, § 60, Addition 2, p. 319; cf. *Sci. Knowledge*, pp. 245-47.

<sup>41</sup> *Difference*, p. 126.



dissolved by the theoretical faculty in Fichte's system. In order to solve this contradiction, he propounds the *productive imagination*, which is a hovering between absolute opposites and which is supposed to synthesise those absolute opposites at the boundary where they meet, yet in fact cannot unite their opposite ends that contradict each other. That Fichte has to propound the concept 'productive imagination', clearly indicates that the theoretical faculty in his system fails to show that the *I* becomes objective itself. The theoretical faculty cannot show the necessity of the theorem  $I=I$  in that the objective *I* has to be expressed as  $I+not-I$ . In other words, pure consciousness (as subjective *I*) is not shown to be equal to empirical consciousness (as objective *I*). In Fichte's system, as stated above, the split between pure consciousness (the subjective *I*) and empirical consciousness (the objective *I*) remains absolute, fixed.<sup>42</sup>

Therefore *dualism is not yet completely overcome by Fichte*. Fichte's failure to show the necessity of  $I=I$ , i.e. his dualism, is also the main reason for his *demand* that the *I ought* to be the *I*.<sup>43</sup>

Fichte's solution expressed as the unification in three logical principles is unsatisfactory. Hegel says that Fichte's solution as expressed in three logical principles – thesis (the simple *I*), antithesis (its negation, *not-I*) and synthesis (affirmation or unification of the *I* and *not-I*) – is unable to overcome Kantian dualism.<sup>44</sup> The *I* is considered by Fichte to be not only *infinite*, i.e. identical with itself, but also *determined*, which implies that the *I* is *finite*, externally dependent. This contradiction is never solved by Fichte himself although he endeavours to reconcile the contradiction by destroying the *barriers*. However, he does so by finding the next barrier (limit) beyond the previous barrier which prevents the *I* from reaching infinitude. Fichte's *I* thus moves back and forth reciprocally between *negation* which stems from the barriers, and *affirmation* which aims at infinitude, but in fact never reaches it. Kantian dualism is left undisturbed.<sup>45</sup>

Hegel explains Fichte's dualism in another context. 'The reality that is not dualistic exists for Fichte only in faith'. Fichte's system lacks the true synthesis as the *third* that is truly the first and the only one (*das Erste und Einzige*), and it lacks the genuine, non-dualistic *negativity*, i.e. infinity, the nothing. In Fichte's dualistic system

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<sup>42</sup> *Difference*, pp. 128-29.

<sup>43</sup> See Sec. 4(a)(i) above.

<sup>44</sup> As for Hegel's explanation of Fichte's three logical principles, see Sec. 3 above.

<sup>45</sup> Hegel, *Hist. Phil.*, III, p. 494.

pure reason is in sharp contrast to empirical reality. This is closely connected to the fact that sense-world (nature), for the *I* as the absolute thinking, is recognised by Fichte as something absolutely bad, something to be negated.<sup>46</sup>

Therefore for Fichte *nature* remains an absolute object. Nature never attains an independent status at which it posits itself like a subject. Fichte does not analyse nature, but analyses only self-knowledge. For him nature is only the stage for moral activity, i.e. the place where the *I ought* to be equal to the *I* itself, but cannot be so since the *I* always needs the tension of this *ought* in order for itself to be existing.<sup>47</sup>

That is, for Fichte *nature* remains an absolute object. Nature is merely for the moral activity. Nature remains unexplained by him. Fichte's degrading, or neglect, of nature is untenable to younger philosophers, Schelling and Hegel. Therefore Schelling will at first endeavour to establish his more satisfactory, i.e. more non-dualistic, Philosophy of Nature.<sup>48</sup>

### (c) Reason and Speculation

The main merit of Fichte's system consists in that he upgrades *reason* and *speculation*, but he remains on the finite sphere. Hegel says that Fichte's system has two sides: (1) As a plausible side, it establishes the pure concept of reason and of speculation, and philosophy is thus made possible. (2) As an implausible side, it equates reason with *pure consciousness*, and apprehends reason in a finite shape as the principle.<sup>49</sup>

Hegel interprets that Kant was unaware that he was thinking at the level of reason, not at that of the understanding. Kant was very close to the speculative stance which partakes of the *unconditioned necessity* that is the starting point of truly speculative philosophy. Speculative philosophy is always with universal reason, and proponents of this philosophy in a new era are those who can recognise 'the organic shape that *reason* has built for itself out of the material of a particular age'.<sup>50</sup> In this sense one becomes the mouthpiece of one's time *even when*, or rather, *only because*, the speculative philosopher speaks with the voice of *universal reason*. Philosophy is

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<sup>46</sup> Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, pp. 170, 174-75.

<sup>47</sup> Harris, 'Introduction', in *Difference*, p. 44.

<sup>48</sup> See Chap. 3.

<sup>49</sup> *Difference*, p. 82.

<sup>50</sup> *Difference*, p. 88.



needed and given birth when mankind loses the totality he had and feels that he has lost the *life (Leben)*. Hegel says: 'When life as *reason* steps away into the distance, the totality of limitations is at the same time nullified, and connected with the *absolute* in this nullification, and hence conceived and posited as mere appearance.'<sup>51</sup> This is the philosophical stance which Kant finally reaches. Experience, which is to be conceived in the form of categories of the understanding, is *phenomenal*. Thus experience presupposes its own *noumenal* foundation, i.e. thing-in-itself (*Ding-an-sich*), in order for itself to be its appearance. Fichte's merit over Kant consists in that Fichte has found the above mentioned 'unconditioned necessity', to which Kant was merely close, in the principle of *pure thinking*. But Fichte is not faithful to the principle he himself has found out since he lets *nature* (or natural phenomena), which is given in experience (or empirical intuition), be separate from the pure thinking.<sup>52</sup>

Fichte's unfaithfulness to his own principle is closely related to the aforementioned Fichte's dualism and to his failure in the proper grasp of nature.<sup>53</sup>

However, Fichte brilliantly advances the proper grasp of *reason*, which is found by himself to be always self-positing and self-actualising. We have to re-examine the absolutely unconditioned principle, which is *self-knowledge*, i.e. *Cogito* of Descartes and 'I think' (*Ich denke*) of Kant. Fichte's brilliance consists in that this principle is for him not a dogmatic conclusion from thinking being to substantial being by Descartes, nor a necessary *form* critically cleansed of all ontic commitment by Kant. The brilliance of Fichte consists in that his *I* is a primordial *act (Tathandlung)*, the self-positing of reason. For him *reason* is always *positing* itself, which entails that self-actualisation of reason, as intellectual intuition, is the basis of experience.<sup>54</sup>

However, Fichte ruins his *speculative* thought he himself has found. Fichte falls on dualism by analytically separating the acts of the *I*. The identity of, and the difference between, pure and empirical consciousness, is grasped by him merely as causal relationship, and the meaning of necessity is not deeply probed. Fichte's system, despite its genuinely speculative impulse, remains at the level of intellect (the understanding).<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> *Difference*, p. 90.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Harris, 'Introduction', in *Difference*, pp. 17, 19-20.

<sup>53</sup> See Sec. 4(b) above.

<sup>54</sup> Harris, in *Difference*, p. 11.

<sup>55</sup> Harris, in *Difference*, p. 40.



The task of speculative thought is to let the abstractions go back into the living unity of the whole. Kant and Fichte cannot fulfil this task although they endeavour to do so, since their achievement remained at the level of the making of an *abstraction* which completed the pattern of previous abstractions.<sup>56</sup>

Hegel assesses Critical Philosophy not as a speculative philosophy, but as a systematic exposition of the highest *reflective* position that is achievable. If knowledge merely deals with the objective (*what is*) as that which is far from our consciousness or awareness of the objective, then the knowledge is degraded to a kind of *faith*. Kant's genius was thus needed in order to systematise the position of those who developed the critical theory of knowledge so that the real relation of their finite knowledge to faith could become visible. However, Critical Philosophy is at least the immediate precursor to Identity Philosophy – in that Critical Philosophy marked the moment of rebirth of *speculation*. The rational justification of this issue is based on the two grounds: (1) The speculative principle of Kant, Fichte and Jacobi, is not 'a limited expression of the spirit of a brief epoch or of a small group' since the Enlightenment is neither a brief epoch nor a small group. Hence Kant's philosophy, which is a philosophical expression of the Enlightenment, is not for a particular era nor for a limited number of people. (2) The mighty spiritual form as the *principle* in the philosophies of Kant, Jacobi and Fichte, achieved the 'perfect self-consciousness, perfect philosophical formation and definitive self-expression as cognition'.<sup>57</sup>

#### **(d) The Absolute**

An important point of Hegel's critique of Fichte is that Fichte cannot reach a proper grasp of the *absolute*.

Hegel says that for Fichte the pure, free and empty activity alone is primordially certain. There is only pure knowing, pure intuiting and sensing, which is to be formalised as  $I=I$ . But even Fichte's formalism, which can be axiomatised as 'knowing only the knowing' and as 'knowing only the bare identity', does open a way to grasp what the *particular* truly is. But he himself merely opens it and cannot extend and develop it because he acknowledges that the absolute of the system is not absolute, and that for this reason we must go on to something else in an infinite, objective world.

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<sup>56</sup> Harris, 'Introduction', in Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>57</sup> Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 57; cf. Harris, 'Introduction', in *Faith and Knowledge*, pp. 7, 11-12.

Fichte cannot reach the *totality*. Hegel asks whether we can reach the totality by proceeding from one part to another in the form of *pure knowing*. It seems possible at a glance. But it is impossible in truth since in cognition the parts must be absolutely determined by the *whole*; and the whole must be the *first* of cognition. And Fichte's formal cognition cannot reach the totality since he is confined to the fixity of the finite. This completely destroys any true *idea* of totality. In other words, Fichte's starting point is *absolute*, yet *finite*; its finitude cannot lead to the cognition of a genuine whole.<sup>58</sup>

Fichte fails in the grasp of the absolute although he removes the shortcoming of Kant, i.e. the 'unthinking inconsistency' of Kant's whole system which lacks the speculative unity. Fichte establishes the *absolute form*, i.e. the absolute being-for-itself, absolute negativity, which is not individuality but the *concept* of individuality, and thus the concept of actuality. Fichte's philosophy is in this sense the development of form in itself, i.e. 'the absolute form' stated above. In Fichte's philosophy the *I* is the absolute principle, according to which reason is in itself a synthesis of the *concept* and actuality. The *I* is the self-distinction of opposites within itself. Fichte's philosophy at least succeeds in uniting what is subjective knowledge with what is actual, by establishing the *I* which is all-embracing. But he does so in an equally one-sided manner as in Kant's. That is, Fichte's *I*, like in Kant's system, remains *subjective* and merely that which realises *finitude*.<sup>59</sup>

This entails that the concept of the *I* in the Fichtean form cannot develop to the absolute. This point will be solved by Schelling, at first.<sup>60</sup>

Fichte's *I*, with merely reciprocal motion, cannot reach the *spirit*, i.e. the *objective* that embraces within itself the *subjective*. Hegel says that Fichte's *I* is absolutely determined in *opposition* only, i.e. only as *self-consciousness* which does not go beyond the opposition, and which does not reach the *spirit*. The *I* in Fichte's system is in truth the absolute *concept* only insofar as it does not reach the unity of thought, nor the difference, and nor does it have rest in motion. In other words, the *I* does not comprehend the infinite repulsion, i.e. the *not-I*. In Fichte's system self-consciousness determines the *not-I*, but does not know how to make this *beyond (not-I)* its own. Hence the deficiency of Fichte's system can be detected in three points: (1) The *I* still

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<sup>58</sup> *Faith and Knowledge*, pp. 156-57, 160-62.

<sup>59</sup> Hegel, *Hist. Phil.*, III, pp. 481-82.

<sup>60</sup> See Chap. 3.



retains the significance of the individual, actual self-consciousness, as opposed to that which is universal or absolute, or to the spirit in which it is itself merely a moment. (2) Fichte does not attain to the idea of *reason* as the perfected, real *unity of subject and object*, i.e. the unity of the *I* and *not-I*. (3) Therefore the whole process of Fichte's system, in which the *I* is fixed in its one-sidedness, making this process in the content of knowledge, merely progresses from certain determinations to other ones which do not turn back into *unity*, or successively proceeds through finitenesses which do not embrace within themselves the *absolute*.<sup>61</sup>

Therefore Hegel implies that the concept of the *I* must necessarily develop to the concept of the *absolute*, which, however, Fichte cannot reach nor acknowledge. Here lies the next task of Schelling and Hegel in philosophy, i.e. the task of deeper and higher investigation into reason, speculation, and the *absolute* (Schelling) or *absolute spirit* (Hegel).

#### **(e) Historical Assessment: Concluding Remarks**

The historical assessment of Kant and Fichte by Hegel is as follows. Philosophy, since Locke and Hume, had tried to compute and explain the world from the standpoint of subject. Kant wanted to supersede it, but for him the world was split into the *ideal* side and the *real* side. As a result the objective universal aspect of the real was searched for by him within what belongs to the ideal side, and there remains an impassable discrepancy between subject and object. For Fichte, on the other hand, the universal aspect of the world that is opposed to the subject, is posited as the *I* because it is posited as universal, as ideal, as thought. But Fichte's philosophy has a defect in that the particular is therefore necessarily left behind, and in that the reality of the objective world remains unexplained. Sensation was for Kant merely empirical, and for Fichte merely subjective. Their grasp of sensation was both unsatisfactory.<sup>62</sup>

Kant's philosophy sets forth the *formal* aspect of the task of modern German philosophy as taking as its objects *the unity of thought and being* in laying hold of the inmost significance of *necessity*, i.e. the *concept*. But Kant's philosophy has the *abstract* absoluteness of reason in self-consciousness as its sole result, and it also has a feature in which a mere critical and negative attitude (not a positive and constructive

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<sup>61</sup> *Hist. Phil.*, III, pp. 498-501.

<sup>62</sup> *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 154.



attitude) is seen; and, in other words, it sticks to the facts of *consciousness* and to mere *conjecture* while, at the same time, it in fact renounces *thought* and returns to sensibility. However, from Kant's philosophy there emerges Fichte's philosophy, which *speculatively* grasps the essence of self-consciousness as concrete *I-ness* (*Ichheit*), but which does not go beyond this *subjective* form pertaining to the *absolute*. Then, from Fichte's philosophy there appears Schelling's philosophy, which subsequently rejects Fichte's teaching and sets forth the *idea* of the *absolute*, i.e. the truth in-and-for-itself.<sup>63</sup>

However, Fichte's contribution to philosophy also consists in that he clarified that the thought-determination (*Denkbestimmung*) is exhibited in its *necessity* and is deduced from the 'thinking' itself. Thinking must be capable of proving its own peculiar content, and able to gain insight into the necessity of this content.<sup>64</sup>

To conclude: Fichte effectively points out the defect of Kant's dualism by positing his own all-embracing concept 'the *I*' as the absolute subject and its three logical principles which are, to some extent, dialectical. However, he himself is not yet free from dualism itself in that he leans on the subjectivity of the *I* by retaining the impassable split between subject and object, or between the theoretical and the practical, which entails that the objective as nature remains unexplained by him. But Fichte greatly contributes to philosophy by bringing the concept of *reason*, *speculation* and the *absolute* to the centre of philosophy in a more dialectical form than in Kant's system. All these points are to be succeeded to, and surpassed by, a younger, brilliant philosopher who will explicate and develop the concepts of reason, speculation, the organic, *nature*, and above all, the *absolute*. This philosopher is Schelling.

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<sup>63</sup> *Hist. Phil.*, III, pp. 409-10.

<sup>64</sup> Hegel, *Enc. Logic*, § 42 Remark, p. 84.

## Chapter 3

### The Search for the Absolute: Schelling

#### Preliminaries

In this chapter I will discuss Schelling's philosophy only as far as his philosophy directly influenced the formation of Hegel's dialectic, focusing on the two major works of his youth, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (1797) and *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800).

To explicate his influence on Hegel, I will also refer to Hegel's related comments in *Difference Essay* (1801) and *History of Philosophy*. Although Hegel's comments are ambivalent in both praising and criticising Schelling's philosophy, yet his great influence on Hegel should not be neglected – not only because, as is well-known, Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel were close friends in their student days at the Lutheran Theological Institute (*Stift*) at Tübingen University and influenced one another, but also because Schelling, the youngest of the three, five years younger than Hegel, was the very person who introduced Hegel into the kingdom of philosophy and even recommended him to write *Difference Essay*, *Faith and Knowledge* and other works which document the developing phases of the young Hegel's thoughts. *Critical Journal of Philosophy* (1801-03), for which Schelling and Hegel were co-editors and main writers, was the main stage of their co-operation for a short period.

Although the whole of Schelling's philosophy – which continuously changed its stance as his thoughts deepened along with his maturity, namely his later proclamation of Positive Philosophy – is truly ambitious, and he surely surpasses the status of a merely precursory figure to Hegel, yet in this chapter I will almost exclude the arguments related to mature Schelling since they are not directly related to the formation of Hegel's dialectic.

Schelling might have influenced later generations, namely young Marx and Heidegger.<sup>1</sup> However, Schelling's influence on the philosophical ideas of those writers should not be overemphasised although it is surely fair for one to re-recognise Schelling's contribution to philosophy, namely the development of dialectic, which has been largely neglected in both German and English-speaking philosophical scholarship.

## Section 1

### Beyond Fichte

Schelling at first started as a Fichtean philosopher. But his departure from Fichtean philosophy can be traced even in his very early writings. In the logical development of philosophy Schelling reaches his own principle of philosophy as *freedom*, and thus he departs from Fichte. Already in 1795 when Schelling was only twenty years old, in *From the I as Principle of Philosophy, or On the Unconditioned in Human Knowledge*,<sup>2</sup> he rather characterises the relation between *being* (as *nature*) and *thought* (as *idea*) as the fundamental principle of philosophy, than the Fichtean relation between the *I* and its activity. Schelling's philosophical analysis starts from his contention that the positing itself of an absolutely unconditioned *I* must be found in the freedom of the *I*. If the *I* is truly unconditioned (*unbedingt*), then it cannot be a thing (*Ding*). This is possible only if the ground of its being is freedom. This is equal to saying that the principle of philosophy is likewise freedom; i.e. the beginning and end of all philosophy is freedom. Hence he could surpass the grasp of Fichte's *I* (as the primordial act of self-consciousness) and reach the grasp of freedom and nonsensuous intuition as some sort of spiritual being.<sup>3</sup>

This stance of Schelling will lead to the concept of the *absolute* in his future work, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, since freedom is the unconditioned, and then the unconditioned is the absolute.

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<sup>1</sup> Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy* (hereafter abbreviated as *Schelling*), on Marx, pp. 39, 58, 148; on Heidegger, pp. 39, 64.

<sup>2</sup> *Von Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie, oder Über das Unbedingte im menschlichen Wissen*.

<sup>3</sup> Esposito, *Schelling's Idealism and Philosophy of Nature*, pp. 37-38.



For Schelling the *I* without a world is impossible. Fichte's *I* had nothing to posit, and thus had no content. Schelling's view is no longer the simple positing *I*, but is what he will later name variously as the *absolute*, *spirit*, the *world soul*, or the *world system*. The *I* itself is constituted out of a *primordial activity* (*eine ursprüngliche Tätigkeit*) that lies beyond the represented *I*.<sup>4</sup>

For Schelling *nature* is no longer dismissed as Fichte's *not-I*, i.e. an obstacle to the *I*'s realisation in the practical sphere. Nature is itself a magazine of intelligible forms. For Schelling, to work out the intelligible system of nature, exhibiting its essential oneness with the intelligent nature of the *I*, is a truer *idealism*.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore Schelling proceeds to establish his own system of philosophy based on more subtle account of *being*, or rather, *nature*. He has to write *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* as a necessary step to develop his overall system of philosophy as *idealism*.

## Section 2

### Philosophy of Nature: The Organic View of Nature and Reason

Here<sup>6</sup> I will mainly discuss how Schelling develops the organic, unified and dialectical view of *nature* in his system which centres around the concept 'the absolute'.

In *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* Schelling tries to find the law of nature within nature itself. He opposes and criticises the method which tries to apply philosophy to natural science. His purpose is not to apply philosophy to natural science, but to allow natural science itself to arise philosophically. He describes his Philosophy of Nature as nothing else than natural science.<sup>7</sup> Here Schelling shows his seemingly scientific approach (or at least his endeavour toward that stance) to the lawfulness of nature. It will implicitly lead to the concept of dialectic as the truth of reality.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Esposito, p. 56.

<sup>5</sup> Seth, *The Development from Kant to Hegel*, p. 53.

<sup>6</sup> In Sections from 2 to 4 below.

<sup>7</sup> Schelling, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (hereafter abbreviated as *Phil. Nature*), p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapters 9-11.

Schelling expresses his *organic*, not mechanistic, view of nature and its relation to philosophy. For him philosophy is a natural history of our mind. The system of ideas is not in its *being* but in its *becoming*. In the realm of *organic nature* all mechanical linkage of cause and effect ceases. Every organic product exists for itself. The *organic* ‘produces itself, arises out of itself; every single plant is the product only of an individual of its own kind, and so every single organism endlessly produces and reproduces only its own species. Hence no organisation progresses forward, but is forever turning back always into itself’. (This is an Aristotelian and pre-Darwinian view in which the universe, or the world-system, is eternal and unchanging. This passage is also a precursory expression to Hegelian view of nature.) Therefore an organisation is neither *cause* nor *effect* of anything outside it. It is not in the nexus of mechanism. The unity of every organisation, which is itself a *whole*, lies in itself. Cause and effect is something transitory, mere appearance. However, the *organism* is not mere appearance, but is itself ‘an object subsisting through itself, in itself whole and indivisible, and because in it the form is inseparable from the matter, the *origin* of an organism ... can no more be explained mechanically than the origin of matter itself’. The matter (the first thing) and the concept (the second) are connected by the *mind* (the third). The form and matter cannot be separated; both come into being only together and reciprocally, each through the other.<sup>9</sup>

If we consider *nature* to be a universal *organism*, we can rather reach the more appropriate explanations of more sophisticated interactions of events and subsume mechanistic laws under organic laws, than remain at the level of the explanation of simple, mechanical cause-effect between two single and isolated events. Mechanical explanations are based on the assumption that nature can only be understood as a succession of individual events.<sup>10</sup>

Schelling’s organic view is not confined to nature; it is also extended even to *ideas*. For him the relationship of ideas, whose centre is the absolute, is analogous to *procreation*.<sup>11</sup> This is closely related to his organic view of *reason*.

If we divide the intuitive knowledge of ourselves asunder between *rational* and *animal*, this would cause a problem which Fichte could not resolve – i.e. the problem of being unable to clarify the relationship between sensible and intellectual intuition –

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<sup>9</sup> *Phil. Nature*, pp. 30-33.

<sup>10</sup> Esposito, p. 100.

<sup>11</sup> *Phil. Nature*, p. 151.



when we think of our inner world as a composite of both types of intuition. This problem is to be solved by Schelling. Our self-awareness is in the fullest sense *organic* and thus *grows*. A philosopher's view based on an intuition of a special kind is only the culminating phase of its perfect maturity. Therefore the role of *reason* is *organic* – both constitutive and regulative. Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, especially its second part, Critique of Teleological Judgement, was a first footstep toward genuinely speculative philosophy. Hegel and Schelling have some reservations about Fichte. That is, although Fichte started a new speculative philosophy upon critical foundations, yet his endeavour was to accomplish this speculative philosophy by systematising the most problematic aspect of Kant's theory; i.e. he tried to systematise the *sundering* of human nature into reason and senses, of human experience into phenomenal and noumenal ones, and of *reason* into *pure* reason and *practical* reason. Schelling's system of two philosophical sciences (philosophy of nature and transcendental idealism) is the effort in the right direction although his system is rather a program than a reality. The difference between Fichte and Schelling consists in that Fichte considers the reconstruction of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* to be sufficient while Schelling thinks that he has to set out the whole of Critical Philosophy again.<sup>12</sup>

Schelling's (and Hegel's) organic view of *reason* is a definite advance from the dualistic view of reason firmly retained in the philosophical systems of Kant and Fichte, which is expressed by the clear distinction between the pairs of concepts mentioned above.<sup>13</sup>

For Schelling *spirit* (*Geist*) is the culmination of the organically viewed *nature*. Nature is visible spirit, and spirit is invisible nature. Nature is not the mechanically ordered, lifeless realm of *not-I*. Nature is a living, self-organising system of dynamic relations between forces. Nature is a self-developing, organic whole; it contains within itself its own purpose, producing higher natural forms, and culminating in *spirit*.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> H. S. Harris, 'Introduction', in Hegel, *Difference*, pp. 9, 13-15.

<sup>13</sup> As for Kant's both dualistic and organic view, see Chap. 2 Sections 3 and 5(a); as for Fichte's dualistic view, see Chap. 2 Sec. 4(b).

<sup>14</sup> Breazeale, 'Fichte and Schelling', p. 166.



## Section 3

### The Absolute

Schelling describes what his concept 'the absolute' is. The *absolute* is *pure identity* and this absoluteness is only to itself. This pure identity, independent of subjectivity and objectivity, is itself matter and form, subject and object since the *absolute* alone is the *absolute-ideal*, and vice-versa. It is not the knowing of a kind in which the subjective and the objective are united as opposites. In this sense the absolute is an *eternal cognition*, itself matter and form, i.e. *producing*, in which it *converts* itself (in its totality as *idea* as sheer identity) into the real, into the form, and conversely *resolves* itself (as form and as object) into the essence or subject. This conversion and resolution is *eternal*.<sup>15</sup> (This shows that Schelling's view on this point is also Aristotelian – in the sense of not having the concept of *evolution*.) In brief, the absolute is itself the pure identity as the eternal activity, eternal cognition, absolute knowing in which, through *idea*, form is essence, and vice-versa.

Schelling then describes what philosophy is, in relation to the absolute: 'Philosophy is the science of the absolute, but as the absolute in its eternal activity necessarily grasps two sides in one, one real and the other ideal, so philosophy, seen in its formal aspect, necessarily has to divide itself in accordance with the two sides, although its essence consists just in seeing both sides as one in the absolute act of cognition.'<sup>16</sup>

In this context of the absolute as eternal cognition, or rather, eternal absolute knowing, *thought* and *being* are united in the *organic* but *idealistic* grasp of nature in Schelling's philosophy of nature. The absolute is *the identity of thought and being*. The *absolute* is the idealistically grasped *truth* of *reality* and of *thought*.<sup>17</sup>

The 'absolute-ideal', above mentioned, is in contrast to Fichte's 'relative-ideal' (Schelling's expression). Schelling explains the absolute *idealism* as the development from Fichte's system. For Schelling his own *absolute idealism* is the whole of philosophy and comprehends within itself both *realism* and *idealism*. He argues that Fichte's Science of Knowledge (*Wissenschaftslehre*) sets the relative-ideal over the real

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<sup>15</sup> *Phil. Nature*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>16</sup> *Phil. Nature*, p. 50.

<sup>17</sup> See Chapters 9-11.

and also apprehends the relative idealism as the absolute philosophy. Schelling's own Philosophy of Nature as the absolute idealism is in sharp contrast to Fichte's defective system.<sup>18</sup>

The absolute is also the identity of thought and being, as stated above. Schelling's system of identity asserts the unity of thought and being, i.e. as the idea of the absolute or of reason. For Schelling the *idea* is also *being*, and the absolute is the first presupposition of knowing and is itself the knowledge. This clearly indicates that the unity of thought and being, or the idea of absolute identity, is simply presupposed.<sup>19</sup>

Hegel says that one must admit *separation* just as he admits *identity*. Philosophy posits separation only conditionally just as an identity is also only relative. The *absolute* is therefore the identity of identity and non-identity; being opposed and being one are both in the absolute as this identity.<sup>20</sup>

The absolute is the identity of identity and non-identity (difference, separation), as stated above by Hegel. This identity can be explained as the *original unity*. This original unity has within itself three levels of *potency*. The first potency is the *relative identity* as the transition of unity to difference. The second potency is the *relative difference* as the opposite and complementary movement of difference into unity. The third, in fact *primary*, potency is the *absolute identity* as the identity of identity and difference. The reason why the third potency is primary consists in that the first and the second emerge from the third only after the eternal self-division of the absolute into subject and object, which brings about the introduction of difference into this unity. Hence the absolute is the unity of the twofold movement as (1) unity into difference (or universal into particular, or infinite into finite) and also as (2) difference into unity (or particular into universal, or finite into infinite). The absolute is the *original unity* in this sense. Therefore the three levels of potency of the absolute as the original unity appear as follows. The first potency appears as the movement of the infinite into the finite. The second is that in which the unity of the infinite gives rise to the spatially differentiated material bodies that make up the world. It is the unity of the reverse embodiment of the particular into the universal or essence. The expression of this universal is 'light'. The third and *primary* potency (as stated above), as the original unity, is represented in the

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<sup>18</sup> *Phil. Nature*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>19</sup> Breazeale, pp. 169-70.

<sup>20</sup> Hegel, *Difference*, p. 156.



natural world by the *organism* as the perfect mirror-image of the absolute in nature and for nature.<sup>21</sup>

What is Schelling's influence on Hegel in the context of the absolute identity? Schelling's 'system of absolute identity' shows to Hegel a parallel between philosophy of nature (as the non-conscious production of objective reality by reason) and transcendental philosophy (as the absolute subject). That which is 'intellectually intuited' is an infinite *life* (as substance and subject). But it is to be also noted that for Schelling, unlike for Hegel, *intuition* is still confined to *finite* categories: for Schelling the categories of finite experience are exhibited merely as a chain of successive 'powers' of the absolute identity, and therefore Schelling himself in fact does not reach the full grasp of the *infinite* (for example, *life* as both substance and subject, as stated above).<sup>22</sup>

That which so-called German Idealism, including Schelling's philosophy, sought to find was the *unconditioned*, i.e. 'the absolute' as it is usually named. For the absolute cannot be grasped as in its relation to something else; the absolute is that which conditions the objects.<sup>23</sup>

## Section 4

### What Philosophy of Nature Aims At

What is the basic tenet of Schelling's Philosophy of Nature? His fundamental idea is that the organised character of *spirit* (*Geist*) and the organised character of nature cannot be absolutely separate. Philosophy of nature articulates the system of nature on the basis of a fundamental principle of difference within identity. He is not a naïve thinker who simply advocates *identity*. His conception of natural science may even be considered to be precursory to that held by the early Marx, Heidegger and the first-generation Frankfurt School.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Phil. Nature*, pp. 51, 150, 180-81; cf. Stern, 'Introduction', in *Phil. Nature*, pp. xxi-xxii.

<sup>22</sup> Harris, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> Bowie, 'Rethinking the History of the Subject', p. 112; Bowie, *Schelling*, p. 20.

<sup>24</sup> Bowie, *Schelling*, pp. 38-40.



Schelling's task in philosophy of nature is to bring metaphysics back to its earlier unity of mythological era, but now including the hard-won advances in human freedom and knowledge which includes the scientific knowledge.<sup>25</sup>

Schelling describes what his system of Philosophy of Nature aims at. The beginning of philosophy of nature is no longer the finite or human *I* as in Fichte's system, but the absolute and infinite subject. It is the *absolute* subject since it is also *immediately* certain, and it is the *infinite* subject since it can never stop being subject, can never be lost in the object, and can never become mere object as in Spinoza's system. In this sense Schelling's philosophy of nature is a definite step beyond Fichte's still finite *I*. But Schelling is also aware that philosophy of nature is only the first part or the foundation of the whole. For him *nature* is 'only *one* side of the universe or of the absolute totality in which the absolute subject is first completely realised; nature is the relatively ideal world. The world of spirit was the *other* side. Philosophy had to descend into the depths of nature in order to raise itself from there to the heights of spirit'.<sup>26</sup> These expressions by Schelling clearly indicate that philosophy of nature necessarily has to proceed to transcendental philosophy, i.e. transcendental idealism.

The above mentioned merit of Schelling over Fichte and Spinoza is explained by Hegel: 'in the philosophy of nature Schelling sets the objective subject-object beside the subjective subject-object and presents both as united in something higher than the subject'.<sup>27</sup>

## Section 5

### Transcendental Idealism: Toward What Philosophy Truly Is

Schelling then proceeds to his next major work, *System of Transcendental Idealism*.<sup>28</sup> It was written as the logical, necessary development from *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*.<sup>29</sup> That which both Schelling and Hegel seriously endeavour to explicate

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<sup>25</sup> Esposito, p. 33.

<sup>26</sup> Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, pp. 114, 120.

<sup>27</sup> Hegel, *Difference*, p. 82.

<sup>28</sup> I will discuss *System of Transcendental Idealism* in Sections 5 and 6 below.

<sup>29</sup> See Sec. 4 above.

throughout their whole lives is what is the dynamism of the absolute, or absolute identity. Therefore it is necessary for Schelling to proceed to his next step, i.e. to write *System of Transcendental Idealism*.

Schelling at first explains the relation between transcendental philosophy and philosophy of nature. Transcendental Philosophy is that which endeavours to move from the subjective (as primary and absolute) to the objective while Philosophy of Nature (*Naturphilosophie*) is that which moves from the objective to the subjective. Both philosophies are possible in that philosophy has divided itself into two directions which are necessary for philosophy to grasp the absolute and the primary. Transcendental philosophy is thus the necessary basic science of philosophy, together with philosophy of nature as another basic science of philosophy.<sup>30</sup>

Hegel summarises the above view of Schelling on the division of philosophy, saying that the science of the subject, i.e. the subjective subject-object, has been called transcendental philosophy, and the science of the object, i.e. the objective subject-object, has been called philosophy of nature.<sup>31</sup>

Schelling then emphasises, like Fichte, that one must start from the immediately certain proposition 'I exist'. Only with this certain proposition can the other proposition 'there are things outside us' be certain. Only interpreted in this way can the certainty of both propositions be equal. Transcendental philosophy proceeds with inner sense as its sole organ.<sup>32</sup>

Schelling then explains what philosophy truly is. The resolution of 'what philosophy *may* be' can only be the outcome of philosophy itself. Whether the accomplishment of the task of clarifying what philosophy is, is philosophy, can be known only in that 'by achieving this task we simultaneously solve all the problems whose solution has hitherto been sought in philosophy'. Therefore the so-called 'philosophy' as previously regarded was merely a science of *knowledge* which has, as its object, only knowledge and its own principle; it could not become a science of *being*.<sup>33</sup> He seems to suggest that even Kant's and Fichte's philosophical systems are not exceptions to this.

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<sup>30</sup> Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism* (hereafter abbreviated as *Trans. Idealism*), pp. 5-7.

<sup>31</sup> Hegel, *Difference*, pp. 161-62.

<sup>32</sup> *Trans. Idealism*, pp. 8, 13.

<sup>33</sup> *Trans. Idealism*, pp. 18-19.



## Section 6

### Toward Dialectical View of History: History of Human Mind

Schelling describes the history of the development of the human mind although Hegel is usually considered to be the first person who did this. Schelling rightly interprets the *myth* as the important first step of human mind, which at first transcends the level of the *instinct* and will finally upgrade to *freedom*, although his explanation is only germinative when compared to Hegel's.<sup>34</sup>

Kant's influence on Schelling on this issue can be traced from Kant, *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose* (1784). This work of Kant is an important step to the organic grasp of history. Kant's organic view on the philosophical *system* (i.e. the system of ideas) as the *whole* could be already seen in *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781).<sup>35</sup>

Schelling then describes the three stages of the history of mankind and the ruling power of each stage. (1) The first stage was ruled by *destiny*, (2) the second was ruled by *nature* (or natural law), and (3) the third stage, which is yet to come, will be ruled by *providence*. Destiny and nature in the previous stages of history will be known to have been providence imperfectly revealing itself. Only through this whole process of the history of mankind can the presence of God be known. 'History as a whole is a progressive, gradually self-disclosing revelation of the absolute'.<sup>36</sup>

The originality of *System of Transcendental Idealism* consists in that philosophy becomes a history of self-consciousness. This history of self-consciousness retraces the path that leads to the point at which self-consciousness finally becomes able to write the history by seeing what stages it itself has experienced to reach that point. Hegel will adopt this model of Schelling in *Phenomenology of Spirit*.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Trans. Idealism*, p. 200.

<sup>35</sup> See Chap. 1 Sec. 3 above.

<sup>36</sup> *Trans. Idealism*, pp. 211-12.

<sup>37</sup> Bowie, *Schelling*, p. 47.



## Section 7

### Hegel's Critique of Schelling

Hegel's critique of other philosophies than his own, although deep and thought-provoking, is sometimes unfair, with his typically biased paraphrasing. Therefore when we read his critique, we have to have some reservations. His critique of Schelling is not any exception.<sup>38</sup>

#### (a) Schelling's Contribution to Philosophy

Hegel says that Schelling's great achievement mainly consists in perceiving the seemingly separate (or independent) moments in their truly necessary *unity*.<sup>39</sup>

One of the main characters of Schelling's philosophy is expressed in the possibility of a knowledge of God through the principle of the unity of thought and being. Schelling also finds the *concrete unity* – of thought and being, subjectivity and objectivity, the infinite and the finite – as the process and as the living movement in a proposition. In God alone they are inseparable. The finite, on the other hand, has separability within it. Only insofar as it is a *truth*, the finite is likewise the *unity*. But this unity is in a limited sphere, and for this very reason it is in the separability of both moments.<sup>40</sup>

Schelling finds this 'concrete unity' in *nature*, which is the concrete unity of subjectivity and objectivity, and this is the great merit of Schelling. First, Schelling grasps the true as the concrete, as the unity of the subjective and the objective. Therefore the interest of Schelling's philosophy centres round the deep, speculative content with which Philosophy in its entire history has had to do. The *thought* (as free, independent, not abstract, but concrete) comprehends itself as an intellectually actual world. This is the truth of nature. Second, Schelling points out in nature the form of *spirit*. For him electricity, magnetism, etc., are thus only external modes of the *idea*.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> As for the same problem on his critique of Fichte, see Chap. 2 Sec. 4.

<sup>39</sup> Hegel, *Hist. Phil.*, III, p. 516.

<sup>40</sup> *Hist. Phil.*, III, p. 512.

<sup>41</sup> *Hist. Phil.*, III, pp. 541-42.

Schelling's contribution to Philosophy therefore consists in that he alters the categories by which thought applies itself to nature, by introducing the forms of *reason* instead of the ordinary categories of the understanding.<sup>42</sup>

### (b) Hegel's Criticisms of Schelling

Schelling's contribution, however, stops here. Although his philosophy has a great merit, namely in that he grasps the *idea* as the form of *spirit* in nature, as stated above, yet he does not proceed further. Schelling's defect consists in that (1) the *idea* in general, (2) its distinction into the ideal and the natural world, and also (3) the totality of these determinations, are not necessitated by the *concept*. For Hegel the *idea* is the truth, and all that is true is the idea. The systematising of the idea into the world must be proved to be a necessary revelation. For Schelling, on the other hand, form is an external scheme, and his method is the artificial application of this scheme to external objects.<sup>43</sup>

Although Schelling succeeds in grasping the contradiction of the *I* and *not-I* as being dissolved as infinite *becoming*, yet his defect may be also explained as the abstraction in which he cannot solve this contradiction. For Schelling the *I* is *unlimited* as the *I* only insofar as it is *limited* in its relation to the *not-I*. This *contradiction* is to be *dissolved* by the *I*'s becoming *infinite* to itself in its finitude, i.e. infinite becoming. On the other hand, for Schelling the *I* is also *limited* only insofar as it is *unlimited* in order for itself to be able to get beyond it. This contradiction between limitedness and unlimitedness remains if the *I* always limits the *not-I*. They presuppose each other, yet they cannot be dissolved by Schelling. In other words, this contradiction, as the process (development) of *spirit* necessitating both the affirmative (the *I*) and the negative (*not-I*) in their unity, is not to be solved by Schelling.<sup>44</sup>

Hegel also accuses Schelling of borrowing the principle of his philosophy from other sciences. Schelling employs the method of *geometry* in that he lays down *axioms* and proves them by means of *propositions*, then proceeds to deduce other propositions from them. Hegel firmly asserts that philosophy must not take any forms from other

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<sup>42</sup> *Hist. Phil.*, III, pp. 535-36.

<sup>43</sup> *Hist. Phil.*, III, p. 542.

<sup>44</sup> *Hist. Phil.*, III, p. 522.

sciences, as here from mathematics. Hegel points out Kant's influence on Schelling – in the form of *triplicity*, as the first, second, and third potency.<sup>45</sup>

Although both the process from nature to the subject and the process from the *I* to the object, are firmly found by Schelling, and this is the very merit with which he surpasses Fichte, yet he still cannot find the *logical necessity* of this process, and with him this process remains merely the aesthetic act of imagination.<sup>46</sup>

The next, difficult task in philosophy is to grasp the truth of *nature* as the unity of subjectivity and objectivity in the forms of *spirit* which necessarily culminates the highest at the *concept*. In other words, the task is to systematically clarify how subject (reason, the *I*, intelligence, etc.) has its own relation to object (nature, world, universe, etc.), i.e. to clarify the self-relation of *reason* as the *absolute*. This task is to be handed over to, and taken up by, Hegel.

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<sup>45</sup> *Hist. Phil.*, III, p. 529.

<sup>46</sup> *Hist. Phil.*, III, p. 518.



## **Part II**

### **Dialectic in Hegel's *Logic***

## Chapter 4

### Preliminary Remarks on Hegel's Dialectic in *Logic*

#### Preliminaries

The dialectic of Hegel can be described variously. But I will discuss it by focusing on his *Science of Logic* (*Wissenschaft der Logik*) since his conception of dialectic is described most precisely and systematically in his *Logic*, without the accurate grasp of which one cannot adequately grasp what he means by the term 'dialectic'.

As is well-known, Hegel wrote two versions of *Logic*. The larger one, as three books in two volumes, which appeared earlier (1812-16),<sup>1</sup> develops the most systematic exposition of his *logical* thought (in the deepest sense which I will elaborate later) in the whole of his philosophy. Another, shorter version has also the same title. It is Part One of *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences* (1818-30).<sup>2</sup> This shorter version is also important to grasp what the *logical* is, together with its *Additions* (*Zusätze*). These additions are based on his spoken words in lectures (although some are from his own lecture manuscripts), but they are significantly useful to grasp his thought – in that they illuminate the deep meaning of his often difficult (in *Larger Logic*) or brief (in *Shorter Logic*) expressions, even if their authenticity is less certain than his own writings in both versions. I will discuss what *dialectic* is by focusing on the content of both versions of *Logic*.

The word 'dialectic' (*Dialektik*) can be traced back to an ancient Greek word *dialegein*, which means 'speaking through' or 'double-speak' – *dia* is 'through' or

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<sup>1</sup> Book One was revised in 1831. I will call this version *Larger Logic* or *Science of Logic* (*Sci. Logic*).

<sup>2</sup> There appeared three editions in his life time. I will call this version *Shorter Logic* or *Encyclopaedia Logic* (*Enc. Logic*).

‘two’ (dyad); *legein* is ‘to speak’ and is related to *logos* (word, language, speech, etc.). In other words, the ‘dia’ (two) of *dialectic* would already be the prelude to the self-contradictory expression of the *truth*, i.e. to the thought thinking of itself in the other.<sup>3</sup>

‘What *dialectic* is’ cannot be prescribed nor defined beforehand. ‘What *logic* is’, by the same token, cannot be stated in advance, either. They will be explicated only in the sequel, as Hegel says: ‘what logic is cannot be stated beforehand, rather does this knowledge of what it is first emerge as the final outcome and consummation of the whole exposition’.<sup>4</sup> This seems to be an echo of Schelling’s description of philosophy.<sup>5</sup>

## Section 1

### Three Moments of the Logical

At first, dialectic in the phase of logic can be stated in the following context. The *logical* can be expressed as three sides, as three moments of everything *logically real*. They are (1) the side of *abstraction*, or of the *understanding*, (2) the *dialectical* side, or *negatively rational* (*vernünftig*) side, and (3) the *speculative* side, or *positively rational* side. All these moments are to be put under the first moment, the understanding, which has the main character of separation, fixity and abstraction. These three moments are thus often considered as separate from one another; but this consideration does not have a truth in it.<sup>6</sup>

Briefly, the *logical* can be divided into two aspects, i.e. between the understanding and reason. The latter, *reason*, can be further divided into two phases, the dialectical moment and the speculative moment.

These three moments, which are necessarily related to, or rather, inseparable from, one another, yet should be elaborated one by one.

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<sup>3</sup> Desmond, ‘Thinking on the Double’, pp. 226, 231-32. I have already referred to this point in Introduction. But at the beginning of the discussion of Hegel’s dialectic, this etymological origin should be clearly reminded.

<sup>4</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 43.

<sup>5</sup> See Chap. 3 Sec. 5 above; cf. Schelling, *Trans. Idealism*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>6</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 79 and Remark, p. 125.



### (a) The Understanding

The first moment, the *understanding* (*Verstand*) has the main feature of *fixed determinacy* and *distinctness*, i.e. *abstraction* and *separation*.<sup>7</sup> On the relationship between the understanding and reason, Hegel says: ‘The understanding *determines*, and holds the determinations fixed; reason is negative and *dialectical*, because it resolves the determinations of the understanding into nothing; it [reason] is [also] positive [i.e. positively rational, speculative] because it generates the universal and comprehends the particular therein.’<sup>8</sup> The understanding certainly has the above limit. Yet this is also a great merit. Without the fixed determinacy of the understanding, other two moments (dialectical and speculative) cannot even emerge. Those two moments *merely* (in a sense) negate and sublimate the former limitations of the first form of logical thinking. The understanding is the beginning from which the living, mature conception of reason stems and grows. This point is surely the positive feature of the understanding. However, the understanding must not go too far; it is not the last word. It is only *finite*, and when the understanding is pushed to an extreme, it overturns into its opposite. Hegel associates the character of the understanding, i.e. *abstractions* or abstract *either-or*, with the limitation of youth.<sup>9</sup> Reason is the more mature phase of logical thinking.

### (b) The Dialectical Moment

The second, *dialectical* moment (the first phase of *reason*, i.e. the negatively rational moment) is the *self-sublation* of finite determinations which are grasped by the understanding, and is their passing into their opposites. This dialectical moment, if it is taken separately on its own by the understanding, constitutes scepticism. But scepticism is limited; it only contains the mere negation which results from the dialectic; i.e. it does not reach the sublation of the negation, i.e. speculation.<sup>10</sup> In this context philosophy contains within itself the sceptical as its moment, i.e. as the dialectical

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<sup>7</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 80 and Addition, pp. 125-26.

<sup>8</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 28.

<sup>9</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 80 Addition, p. 128.

<sup>10</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 81 and Remark, p. 128.

moment in the sense of the negatively rational. Scepticism is at least valid in pointing out the nullity of everything finite.<sup>11</sup>

A common misunderstanding should be pointed out. Dialectic is often considered to mean the negation of, or to neglect, the validity of the understanding. But, on the contrary, dialectic is 'the genuine nature that properly belongs to the determinations of the understanding, to things, and to the finite in general'.<sup>12</sup>

Dialectic and *reflection* (reflective understanding) share one thing in common. Both are the *transcending*. But reflection is the transcending of the isolated determinacy and a relating of the determinacy, by which the determinacy is posited in relationship, but only in isolation. Reflection is rather an *externally* grasped transcending whereas dialectic is the *immanent* transcending. This immanent transcending is the *negation* of the one-sidedness and restrictedness of the determinations of the understanding. This character of dialectic as the immanent transcending, as their negation, is what everything finite is, i.e. its own *sublation*. Dialectic, as the immanent transcending, negation, sublation, thus constitutes the moving soul of scientific progression.<sup>13</sup> In this context dialectic can be described as 'the principle of all motion, of all life, and of all activation in the actual world'.<sup>14</sup>

Hegel suggests the importance of Kant in the development of the conception of dialectic although Kant himself discarded dialectic after all.<sup>15</sup> Kant's contribution mainly consists in pointing out the *antinomies of reason* (i.e. contradictions), which show how abstract determination of the understanding overturns immediately into its opposite.<sup>16</sup>

### (c) The Speculative Moment

The third, the highest phase of logical thinking is the *speculative* moment (the second phase of *reason*, i.e. the positively rational moment). The *speculative* apprehends the unity of the determinations even in their opposition; i.e. it apprehends the *affirmative* in their dissolution and transition. In this context *speculation* is to be considered as the

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<sup>11</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 81 Addition 2, pp. 130-31.

<sup>12</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 81 Remark, p. 128.

<sup>13</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 81 Remark, p. 128.

<sup>14</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 81 Addition 1, pp. 128-29.

<sup>15</sup> See Chap. 1 Sec. 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 81 Addition 1, p. 130; § 48 Addition, p. 93.



*result* of dialectic. In other words, the positive (the positively rational) is the *negation* of the negative (the negatively rational, i.e. the dialectical); this is *sublation*. This result of dialectic is not empty, abstract nothing; it is rather the negation of certain determinations; and it also has a determinate content. Hence this rational result of dialectic, as speculation, is *concrete* since it is not a formal unity but a unity of distinct determinations.<sup>17</sup>

Hegel also points out that *logic* is in truth the descriptive collection of determinations of *thought* which, although being in their finitude, count for the *infinite*.<sup>18</sup> This seems to suggest that the truth of logic is the returning unto itself, i.e. becoming *infinite*. The understanding should be apprehended as the necessary path toward the dialectical and rational, i.e. *reason* as both dialectical and speculative (in Hegel's terminology) – since *dialectic* (as the immanent transcending of the understanding confined to finitude) is the negation of the one-sided abstraction of the understanding.<sup>19</sup> That is, the *logical* thinking, as stated above, contains both the understanding and reason (as dialectical and speculative). Any expression of logical thought has the feature of both reason and understanding. In other words, the *truth* of logical thought consists in the unity of the understanding and reason. Any expression of the *logical* is the self-explication of the *absolute* – in that the self-movement (as self-development and self-explication) means that it departs from itself and returns to itself; i.e. this movement is *infinite*. In this sense the truth of logic consists in being *infinite*.<sup>20</sup>

## Section 2

### The Features of Dialectic and Thought

Then, there have to be the descriptions of some of the features of *dialectic* and *thought* which are expressed in Hegel's *Logic*.

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<sup>17</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 82 and Remark, p. 131.

<sup>18</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 82 Remark, p. 132.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Enc. Logic*, § 81 Remark.

<sup>20</sup> I will elaborate this issue in Chap. 8.



### (a) What Thinking Is

Granted that the nature of thinking (or thought) is dialectic,<sup>21</sup> then, *what thinking is* should be stated. *Thinking (Denken)* at first appears in the ordinary, subjective way, as one *spiritual activity* or *faculty*, with sensation, intuition, volition, etc. The determinacy or form of *thought* which the thought produces is the *universal*, the abstract in general. Therefore *thinking*, as an activity (*Tätigkeit*), is the *active universal*, or more precisely, the *self-actuating universal*. Thinking, when represented as a subject, is *that which thinks*, i.e. the *I*.<sup>22</sup> Hegel explains further. (1) Thinking or cognition (*Erkennen*), at the preliminary level, starts from *senses* (or sensibility). (2) Thinking, then, proceeds to *representations (Vorstellung)*. At this stage it has the features of universality, self-relation, simplicity, and isolation (e.g. God is God; right is right). Here thinking is at the level of the *understanding*, which posits the relationship of the universal and the particular, of cause and effect, etc. (3) Then, thinking must appear as *philosophy*. Philosophy is that which transforms such representations into *thoughts*; or more precisely, philosophy transforms the mere thought into the *concept (Begriff)*.<sup>23</sup> Hence genuine *philosophy* is the stage of reason. Both the *representation* (the phase of the understanding) and philosophy are the stages of the *logical*.<sup>24</sup> The term ‘thinking’ has a broader application than ‘the logical’ since *thinking* includes the thinking with senses, as stated above.

### (b) Thought Is Objective

Contrary to the commonsensical misconception of *thought* as only subjective, *thought* is *objective* – although this does not mean the denial of the subjective.<sup>25</sup> Hegel even says that the *logical* should be ‘sought in a system of thought-determinations in which the antithesis between subjective and objective (in its usual meaning) disappears’. Hegel here uses the term ‘thought-determination’ (*Denkbestimmung*) in the sense of *thought*.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> See Sec. 1 above.

<sup>22</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 20, p. 49.

<sup>23</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 20 Remark, pp. 49-50.

<sup>24</sup> See Sec. 1 above.

<sup>25</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 24 and Remark, p. 56.

<sup>26</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 24 Addition 1, p. 56.

There is an interesting description by Hegel of the difference between the *objective* and the *subjective* in three senses. (1) In the common terminology, the *objective* is what is externally present (outside us) whereas the *subjective* is only subjective (meant, dreamed, etc.). (2) Kant differentiates *between* what is universal and necessary (the objective as thought-product (*das Gedachte*)) and what is sensed (the subjective, or the contingent, particular). Kant's terminology does not coincide with the ordinary, commonsensical distinction between the objective and the subjective, and he has been actually accused by many as confused. But Kant's merit consists in that he suggests that thinking is rather objective than subjective. Kant endeavours to step beyond subjective scepticism. But he is not so successful at this point. He is still doubtful on the issue of whether the *concept* is *objective*. Kant's defect on this issue stems from his position that 'thoughts, although they are universal and necessary determinations, are still *only our* thoughts, and are cut off from what the thing is *in-itself* by an impassable gulf'. (3) Much higher conception of the objective and the subjective is as follows. The *objective* is 'the *in-itself* as thought-product' (*gedachten Ansich*) as 'what is there' (*was da ist*) whereas the *subjective* is 'what is only thought by us' (*nur durch uns Gedanken*). The objective is thus distinct from the 'matter itself' (*Sache selbst*) or the 'matter *in-itself*' (*an sich Unterschiedenen*).<sup>27</sup> Hegel, of course, does not think that this expression is the final word to describe what the objective is.<sup>28</sup>

### (c) Dialectic and the Truth: The Identity of Thought and Being

*Truth*, in the ordinary sense, is the agreement between an object and *our* representation of it – whereas in Hegel's *philosophical* sense the *truth* is the self-identity of the content itself. In this sense God alone is the genuine agreement between the *concept* and reality.<sup>29</sup> This would suggest *the identity of thought and being*, which is the crucial point to grasp what *dialectic* is.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 41 Addition 2, pp. 82-83; cf. de Vries, 'Hegel's Logic and Philosophy of Mind', p. 226.

<sup>28</sup> I will elaborate this issue in Chap. 7.

<sup>29</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 24 Addition 2, pp. 59-60.

<sup>30</sup> I will discuss this issue in Chap. 8 Sections 2 and 3.



#### (d) Reason, the Infinite and the Absolute

Reason is the faculty of the *unconditioned*. (This is the continuation of Kant's theme in Hegel's system.) Reason itself sees the conditioned in the awareness of things, i.e. in Kantian *intuition*. The unconditioned, the *infinite*, is the original identity of the *I* in things. This is *reason*.<sup>31</sup> The unconditioned can be grasped as the *absolute*.

Reason is also *infinite thinking* while the understanding is finite thinking. As the infinite, 'thinking is at home with itself, it relates itself to itself'.<sup>32</sup> Hence reason is to be grasped as the absolute thinking since it is the *self-returning* thought (thinking). Reason is thus closely associated with *sublation* (*Aufhebung*), which means the self-returning process, or the negation of the negative, or the resolution of the *contradiction*, which is a key concept in dialectic.<sup>33</sup>

#### (e) The Limits of the Understanding

Hegel explains that the *speculative* thought consists in the *dialectic*; i.e. it consists in the grasp of opposites in their unity or of the positive in the negative. This is 'the most important aspect of dialectic', but it is 'the most difficult' for those whose thinking is 'as yet unpractised and unfree', i.e. for those whose thinking remains at the level of the abstraction, the understanding, and does not reach the level of *reason*.<sup>34</sup>

In the dogmatism of the metaphysics of the understanding, if one is *true*, then the other is *false*; or an assertion can be *either true or false*. This is the dogmatism of *either-or* (*Entweder-Oder*). Contrary to this dogma, the *truth*, or what is genuine and speculative, as totality, goes beyond such one-sidedness and contains the determinations (held by dogmatism as *fixed* in separation) as *united* within itself. The one-sidedness is, in truth, contained within the whole as *sublated*.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 45, p. 87.

<sup>32</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 28 Addition, pp. 66-67.

<sup>33</sup> I will elaborate the *contradiction* in Chap. 6, and will discuss the relations among *dialectic*, *reason* and the *absolute* in Chap. 8.

<sup>34</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 56.

<sup>35</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 32 and Addition, pp. 69-70.



## Section 3

### Logic as the System of the Truth: Preliminary Remarks

#### (a) Three Key Concepts of Hegel's Dialectic

Dialectic in Hegel's *Logic* can be grasped with three key concepts: (1) the *absolute*, (2) *sublation* and *contradiction*, and (3) *the identity of thought and being*.

Dialectic is the *truth*, the *self-movement* (as self-departing and self-returning, and also as self-developing and self-explicating) of the *absolute*. The absolute is the *unconditioned* and thus *free* (since it is only of its own necessity), and thus *necessary*. The absolute is also *infinite* since it returns to itself – through the *sublation* of *contradictions* immanent in every category in the whole system of *logic*. That is, the *absolute* starts to develop from pure *being*, then *essence*, and reaches the *concept*, the culmination of which is the *idea* that is its truth itself. This whole process of *logic* is the *infinite* process – as the unity of unities, as the double-movement of opposites, as self-returning, as the affirmation (as the negation of the negative). The driving force of this infinite process of the system of logic is *sublation* and *contradiction*. As the infinite process the end of logic returns again to the beginning, but not temporally – since there is no temporality in the system of *logic*, which is the sphere before the creation of *nature* that has *time*. (Hence when I render the German term *zugleich*, I will mostly avoid the use of 'at the same time', but will prefer the use of 'also'.) Only in the above context, i.e. only by going through the whole process of the system of logic, can the identity of thought and being which is the *truth* as the self-thinking thought, be grasped as the infinite process of the absolute self-identity. Dialectic is hence the exposition of the *absolute* as the identity of thought and being as the truth.

The above descriptions of dialectic and logic can only be explicated in the sequel, in the following chapters.

#### (b) God as the Self-Thinking Thought

The content of logic, says Hegel, is 'the exposition (*Darstellung*) of God as he is in eternal essence before the creation of nature and a finite spirit'.<sup>36</sup> Here 'God' can be

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<sup>36</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 50, trans. emended.

grasped in Aristotle's sense as *the thought which thinks of itself*, i.e. *the self-thinking thought*. God, says Aristotle, is 'a mover which moves without being moved, being eternal, substance, and actuality (*energeia*)' which is without matter.<sup>37</sup> God is the *unmoved mover* in this sense. Then, *thought* thinks that which is the most divine, precious, and eternal; and thought itself cannot but be the most excellent in this sense. Hence the object of thought is the same as the thought itself. That is, 'thought thinks itself'. Then, God is in the best state, and it has *life* since 'the actuality (*energeia*) of thought is life, and God is that actuality; and God's essential actuality is life [which is the] most good and eternal'.<sup>38</sup> And thought is the most excellent and eternal without matter, as stated above. Therefore, in Hegel's view, Aristotle's God and *thought*, which thinks itself, are identical. God is the thought which thinks of itself. God, as the unmoved mover, is to be grasped as the self-thinking thought in this sense.

Hegel, in describing Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, designates Aristotle's God as the *concept* (*Begriff*) which causes movement, and also designates the *thought*, which is identical to the object of thought, as the absolute *idea* regarded as in-itself the Father, God. God is the absolute *being* as the circle of *reason* which returns to itself. That is, the *unmoved* which causes movement, is the self-identical *idea*. In *thinking*, that which is moved and that which moves are identical. *Thought* is to *think itself* – since the thought is itself the most excellent; hence the *thought* is the thinking which is the thinking of thinking; and this 'most excellent' is God. Hegel, here in describing Aristotle's philosophy, suggests the identity of this self-thinking thought and God in this context.<sup>39</sup>

However, it is Hegel himself who combines the unmoved mover, God, with the self-thinking thought (*noesis noeseos*). Aristotle does not explicitly identify these two concepts.<sup>40</sup> However, Hegel's identification of God and the self-thinking thought cannot be considered as arbitrary nor biased. For Hegel correctly translated *Metaphysics* from the Erasmus edition, which has the structure that implicitly suggests the identity of the unmoved mover, God, and the self-thinking thought – not from the

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<sup>37</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1071b-72a.

<sup>38</sup> *Metaphysics*, 1072b.

<sup>39</sup> Hegel, *Hist. Phil.*, II, pp. 146-49, 151.

<sup>40</sup> Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle*, pp. 115-28. Ferrarin refers to Norman's interpretation of Aristotle's God as 'strikingly similar to Hegel's', Ferrarin, p. 128; cf. Norman, 'Aristotle's philosopher-God', pp. 67-73.

Jaeger edition, which was published long after Hegel's death, and has been accepted as the more authentic version.<sup>41</sup>

Having described it thus, then, Hegel's *dialectic* is to be discussed precisely in the whole system of *Logic*, which starts from the sphere of *being*.

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<sup>41</sup> Ferrarin, pp. 120-25.



## Chapter 5

### Dialectic in the Doctrine of Being

#### Preliminaries

In this chapter I will describe the development of categories and their moments in the realm of *being*, only through which can one clearly grasp the typically ‘Hegelian’ terminology and conception that are nothing but *dialectical*. To explicate the basic tenet of his manner of description of dialectic which is necessarily also dialectical, I will follow the precise details of his argument rather meticulously. Therefore this chapter will be the most descriptive and the least argumentative in the whole of this thesis.

#### (a) Pure Being as the Beginning of Logic

Hegel’s *Logic* starts from the doctrine of *being*, the beginning of which is *pure being*. For him phenomenology is the science of consciousness, i.e. the science of manifested spirit, and logic is pure science, i.e. the science of *pure knowledge* in the entire range of its development. The relation between these two sciences is that phenomenology is the presupposition of logic, and logic is the result of such phenomenological consideration. *Pure knowing* – which, as the absolute knowing, is the final point phenomenology reaches and is thus the starting point of logic – sublates all reference to an other and to mediation. As a result, what is present is only *simple immediacy*. But ‘simple immediacy’ is itself an expression of reflection and thus contains a reference to its distinction from what is mediated. Therefore in its true expression the simple immediacy is *pure being*, i.e. *being* in general. The *beginning (Anfang)* of the science of logic cannot possess or contain any determination and content related to anything else beforehand. Therefore the beginning of the science must be *pure being*, i.e. the

simple immediacy. In the science of logic, however, what is more important than having its beginning in pure being as pure immediacy, is that the whole of this science must be a *circle* in which the first is also the last and the last is also the first. In this circle of the science the advance is a retreat into *ground* (*Grund*), i.e. into what is primary and true. Ground is that into which the advance is made and from that which philosophy or logic starts. The beginning must be *pure* being, as stated above. This beginning necessarily has only the one-sidedness which lets the beginning itself be *pure immediacy*. This entails that the beginning also contains nothing as non-being which is also being; and being is also non-being. In other words, the beginning is the unity of identity (non-differentiatedness) and non-identity (differentiatedness).<sup>1</sup>

The above *pure knowing* can be considered as a mode of being, i.e. a being in a position to *know*. That is, the identity of thought and being (in general terminology) is already expressed here.<sup>2</sup>

Hegel describes the confusion or miscomprehension held by those who grasp the *pure knowing* as only the *I*. This probably includes an indirect criticism of Fichte's *I*. Their misconception consists in that they try to find the *I*'s development in ordinary consciousness. This becomes an unsolvable task when they try to find pure knowing in appearance. The truth, on the contrary, is that the mere simple being, i.e. the simple determination, must be the beginning.<sup>3</sup>

*Being* in general is described as 'the absolute' as its first, preliminary description. That is, *being* (*Sein*) itself and the logical determinations in general can be also grasped as the 'definitions of the *absolute*, as the metaphysical definitions of God'.<sup>4</sup> The *absolute*, in Hegel's terminology, should be understood as the *unbounded* and *unconditioned* by anything else; and, to be so, what is *absolute* must logically contain or comprehend *all* finite relations and necessities.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 68-74.

<sup>2</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 69-70; cf. de Vries, 'Hegel's Logic and Philosophy of Mind', p. 237.

<sup>3</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>4</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 85, p. 135. As for Hegel's conception of God as the self-thinking thought, see Chap. 4 Sec. 3(b).

<sup>5</sup> Geraets *et al.*, Note 3 to *Enc. Logic* § 85, p. 324.

## (b) General Division of Being

Being is to be grasped in the following considerations. First, *being* (*Sein*) is determined as against another in general. Being is thus distinct from *essence* (*Wesen*) since being is only one sphere of the *concept* (*Begriff*) and since being opposes another sphere, *essence*.<sup>6</sup>

Second, being is also determined as immanently self-determining. Being thus posits itself in three dimensions *as* (1) determinateness as such, i.e. *quality*, (2) sublated determinateness, i.e. magnitude, i.e. *quantity*, and (3) qualitatively determined quantity, i.e. *measure*. Contrary to the commonsensical conception in which quantity is prior to quality, Hegel clearly states that quality is logically prior to quantity since quantity is already negative; quantity as magnitude is already sublated quality. Hence quality, as the immediate determinateness, is primary, i.e. prior to quantity, and thus the description of being necessarily starts with that of quality.<sup>7</sup>

Third, setting aside the above stated character of the division *between* the first as against essence *and* the second as being posited as three determinations (quality, quantity and measure), being must be stated as *quality* since being is reduced to a single determinateness as abstract immediacy.<sup>8</sup>

The being which is *indeterminate* lacks all quality. But this indeterminateness of *being* in general constitutes the quality of this being. Hence (1) *being* in general (which includes being, nothing and becoming) passes over into (2) *being-there* (*Dasein*), which is finite being. Then this being-there passes over into (3) *being-for-itself* (*Fürsichsein*), which is the infinite relation of *being* into its own self.<sup>9</sup> These are the three stages of the progress of *being* in the realm of *quality*, and they must be elaborated one by one.

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<sup>6</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 79.

<sup>7</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>8</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>9</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 81.



## Section 1

### Being

#### (a) Being, Nothing and Becoming

Being (*Sein*), as *pure* being, is the beginning since it is the pure thought and the undetermined, i.e. the simple immediate, and since the beginning cannot be mediated nor further determined.<sup>10</sup> But this *pure* being, which is without any further determination, is in fact equal to *nothing* because of this indeterminateness. But this *nothing* (*Nichts*), as *pure* nothing, is in fact also the same as pure being because of this complete emptiness, absence of all determination and content. However, pure being and pure nothing are not only the same but also *not* the same. Yet they are *also* inseparable in that each of them immediately vanishes in its opposite.<sup>11</sup>

This seems to suggest that pure being and pure nothing are *distinguishable in thought*, and they transit into each other, i.e. into their own opposites, *vanishing*. Only because of this *distinction in thought*, they are also inseparable.

Therefore the truth of being and nothing is *becoming* (*Werden*). Becoming is the movement of the immediate vanishing of the one in the other, i.e. the movement in which both being and nothing are distinguished by a difference which has equally immediately resolved itself.<sup>12</sup>

It is to be pointed out here that the *absolute* can be defined firstly as *being*. But this definition, an Eleatic one, is the most abstract, the poorest definition of the absolute.<sup>13</sup> The absolute is secondly *nothing* because of its sameness as being and because of its pure indeterminacy.<sup>14</sup> (The description of 'the absolute' will be further upgraded along with the absolute's self-development in the realm of *being* in this chapter, and also in *essence* and the *concept* in the following chapters.)

The proposition that being and nothing are one and the same, is true but is *incomplete* since in this expression their sameness or identity alone is emphasised, and

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<sup>10</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 86, p. 136.

<sup>11</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>12</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 83.

<sup>13</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 86 Remark, p. 137.

<sup>14</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 87, p. 139.

their difference or distinguishedness is likely to be neglected. This self-contradiction, i.e. the identity-difference between being and nothing, cancels itself out. This is a moment which involves the vanishing of the above proposition itself. In this very vanishing does emerge becoming. Although the above proposition does in fact contain its result, i.e. becoming, yet that this point is not clearly expressed in this proposition, is surely a defect.<sup>15</sup>

The basic tenet of Hegel's dialectical terminology is clearly expressed in the above description of the self-contradiction as the identity-difference between being and nothing, and in the resulting emergence of becoming. The further explication of dialectic of the *absolute* (at first in being, then in essence and in the concept) will be found in more developed forms in the sequel throughout the whole of *Logic*.

The term *Werden* (becoming) can be also expressed as *Übergehen* which translates into 'transition'<sup>16</sup> or 'passing-over'.<sup>17</sup> The only difference between these two terms is that with *Übergehen* one is more clearly reminded of the movement between being and nothing.<sup>18</sup>

Hegel shows an example of his own definition of *dialectic*, in stating the contrast between sophistry and dialectic. Sophistry is an argument which uncritically and unthinkingly adopts a baseless presupposition. Dialectic, on the contrary, is the higher movement of *reason* in which seemingly utterly separate terms pass over into each other. In other words, dialectic is a movement in which the presupposition of such separation *sublates* itself. The dialectical immanent nature of being and nothing manifests their unity as becoming, which, through this passing-over, is the truth of being and nothing.<sup>19</sup>

The above is the clear description of dialectic by Hegel himself in that he refers to passing-over into opposites (here as being and nothing) and their sublation into a higher category (here as becoming), and in that dialectic is described as the movement of *reason*. However, this is not all the descriptions of dialectic as will be shown in the upgrading of these descriptions in the sequel.

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<sup>15</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 90.

<sup>16</sup> Often in Miller's *Larger Logic*.

<sup>17</sup> Often in Geraets *et al.*'s *Shorter Logic*, but sometimes also in Miller.

<sup>18</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 93.

<sup>19</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 105.



### **(b) Coming-to-be and Ceasing-to-be**

Being and nothing, in becoming as the unseparatedness of themselves, are only the vanishing, sublated moments. They are still distinct moments, but *also* the sublated moments of becoming. This means that becoming contains being and nothing as two *unities*, each of which is itself a unity of being and nothing. One of the unities is *being* as immediate and relation to nothing, and the other is *nothing* as immediate and relation to being. In each of these two unities the emphasis is on either being or nothing. Becoming is a double determination in this way. This double determination is expressed as a *double* movement. In it nothing passes over into being – this is *coming-to-be* (*Entstehen*); and being turns into nothing – this is *ceasing-to-be* (*Vergehen*). In this double movement being and nothing do *not* reciprocally or externally sublimate each other. Instead each of them sublates itself in itself and is the opposite of itself.<sup>20</sup>

The above is the further description of dialectic of the absolute – in that becoming is expressed as a double movement of coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be between being and nothing, and in that only in this double movement do being and nothing sublimate themselves into becoming.

### **(c) Sublation of Becoming into Being-there**

The result of coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be is becoming. But this becoming also settles into a *stable unity*. In this unity being and nothing are only the *vanishing* moments of becoming, and yet becoming as such is possible only through the distinguishedness between being and nothing. This means that the vanishing of being and nothing is the vanishing of becoming or ‘the vanishing of the vanishing itself’.<sup>21</sup>

The above stated can be also expressed as follows. Becoming is the vanishing of being and nothing generally, but becoming *also* rests on the distinction between being and nothing. Therefore becoming is to be grasped as inherently *self-contradictory* since the determinations, as coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be, which becoming unites within itself, are opposed to each other. This unity destroys itself. The result, as such a unity, is the vanishedness of becoming. This is the unity of being and nothing which has settled into a *stable oneness*, which was expressed as the above ‘stable unity’. This

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<sup>20</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 105-06.

<sup>21</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 106.



‘stable oneness’ is not nothing but *being*. Becoming is now known to be this being as a stable oneness, i.e. *being-there (Dasein)*. Being-there is the becoming which has now *passed over* into the stable oneness, i.e. into the one-sided *immediate* unity of being and nothing as in the form of being. Being-there is the *sublation* of becoming in this way.<sup>22</sup>

#### (d) Sublation

The concept ‘to sublimate’ (*aufheben*) or ‘sublation’ (*Aufhebung*) must be explained here. ‘To sublimate’ has a twofold or speculative meaning: one is (1) ‘to preserve’ (*aufbewahren*) or ‘to maintain’ (*erhalten*); the other is (2) ‘to cause to cease’ (*aufhören lassen*) or ‘to put an end to’ (*ein Ende machen*). What-is-sublated or *the sublated (das Aufgehobene)* cannot be reduced to, and is thus different from, *nothing*. What-is-sublated is the result of *mediation* whereas *nothing* is immediate. Although the sublated has lost its immediacy, yet it is not annihilated. The sublated still preserves or maintains the *determinateness* from which it originates, through the non-temporal process of causing-to-cessate or putting-an-end-to the becoming which is a double movement of coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be, and the vanishing moments of which are being and nothing. The result of this sublation of becoming is being-there, as stated above. Being-there is the unity in which being and nothing are *preserved* as its own determined moments; they are preserved through the mediation or sublation. In being-there, however, being and nothing do no longer have the abstract significance which they used to have in becoming.<sup>23</sup>

It is to be also pointed out that *sublation*, as a result of the above stated ‘put an end to’ (cancel, cease) and ‘preserve’ (retain), does necessarily also mean (3) ‘raising up to a higher level’, i.e. upgrading. That is, ‘What is *aufgehoben* [sublated] is *held in suspension*, thus *cancelled yet preserved*; the inadequacies are *superseded*, and the contradictions *resolved*, yet the differences prompting them are *retained*, although what is *sustained* is nevertheless (in the new context) *transformed* [i.e. raised up to a higher level].’<sup>24</sup> In this way the concept ‘the absolute’ will develop itself as the succession of the sublation of previous categories one after another into higher and higher descriptions which will finally be explicated as the absolute *idea* in the realm of the

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<sup>22</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 106.

<sup>23</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 106-08.

<sup>24</sup> E. E. Harris, *An Interpretation of the Logic of Hegel*, p. 31. my italics.

*concept*. This process of the self-development as the self-sublation of the absolute will be shown throughout all the sections of the *Logic*,<sup>25</sup> therefore also in all the pages of this thesis related to *Logic*.

## Section 2

### Being-there: Quality (1)

#### (a) Being-there

*Dasein* has been variously translated into 'determinate being',<sup>26</sup> or 'a being',<sup>27</sup> or 'there-being',<sup>28</sup> or 'thereness', etc. To designate *Dasein* I will consistently use the term 'being-there' which is its literal translation.<sup>29</sup> However, although it includes the word 'there' (*da*), this does not connote anything related to place or spatial entity.<sup>30</sup>

Being-there (*Dasein*) is the result of the sublation or mediation of becoming, as stated above. Being-there is thus the simple *oneness* (*Einsein*) of being and nothing. It has the form of immediacy, but becoming lies behind it as mediation. Through the sublation of becoming which results in being-there, being has become more *concrete*; i.e. more determinations and the more distinct relation of its moments have emerged. Being is now *quality* (*Qualität*). Quality is the determinateness (*Bestimmtheit*) which is isolated by itself in the form of being. Quality is here wholly simple and immediate.<sup>31</sup>

#### (b) Negation and Reality

Being-there as quality can appear as both *negation* and *reality*. Negation is posited in the determination of *nothing*; or, in other words, negation is the immediate quality of

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Harris, p. 32.

<sup>26</sup> In Miller's *Larger Logic*.

<sup>27</sup> In Burbidge's commentary.

<sup>28</sup> By J. H. Stirling.

<sup>29</sup> I follow the usage employed by Geraets *et al.* in the *Shorter Logic*.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Geraets *et al.*, Note 10 to Glossary, *Enc. Logic*, p. 348; and its Introduction, pp. xx-xxi.

<sup>31</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 109-11.



nothing. With *nothing*, the immediate or the determinateness is posited as distinguished and reflected. The *negative* is the determinate element of a determinateness. Although, taken as deficiency, negation is equivalent to nothing, yet it has determinateness as being-there, as a quality.<sup>32</sup>

Here one can detect Spinoza's influence on Hegel in that everything determinate is negation (*omnis determinatio est negatio*). However, this is the compressed and biased interpretation of Spinoza by Hegel, and may be even a misquotation.<sup>33</sup>

Reality (*Realität*) is the quality as in the distinct character of being. Reality, as burdened with a negative, is negation in general. This negation as deficiency is determined as *limit* or *restriction* (*limitation*).<sup>34</sup> Limit (*Grenze*), in its progress toward the *ought* (*Sollen*), becomes *restriction* or *limitation* (*Schranke*).<sup>35</sup>

Reality, however, in contrast to negation, has the emphasis in being *positive*. That is, although, to be positive or determinate, reality also has negation within it, yet this is hidden. Reality and negation are opposed to each other – in that the *positive*, as reality reflecting the negation, is opposed to negation. In the reality the negative merely *seems-to-be* (*scheint*); i.e. negativity is still hidden in the reality.<sup>36</sup>

### (c) Something

The sublation of the distinction between reality and negation results in the being-there (*Dasein*) which has become more concrete as what-is-there (*Daseiendes*). This is *something* (*Etwas*). *Something* is the *negation of negation* as simple self-relation in the form of being. It is the restoring of the simple relation to itself. The *negation of negation* is the *concrete, absolute* negativity whereas the *negation* in general (the first negation) is only *abstract* negativity. Yet it cannot be denied that *something* still remains to be quite abstract determination.<sup>37</sup>

However, having said this, the being of *something* is already determinate: something is a determined and limited quality; something is an *affirmative*, stable

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<sup>32</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 111.

<sup>33</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 91 and Addition, p. 147; cf. Geraets *et al.*, Note 15 to *Enc. Logic*, p. 326.

<sup>34</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 111.

<sup>35</sup> Geraets *et al.*, Note 28 to Glossary, *Enc. Logic*, p. 350.

<sup>36</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 111, 114.

<sup>37</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 115-16.



being. Something is now known to be the *finite* or *finitude*.<sup>38</sup> Finitude, as affirmative, is the negation of the first negation. Finitude is therefore the identity with itself. This self-identity supposes the *other* of the finite. That is, finitude supposes, as its own other, the above first negation in order for itself to be determinate. This *other* of finitude is the *infinite* or *infinity*.<sup>39</sup>

#### (d) Infinity

The category of *infinity* (*Unendlichkeit*) is crucial for the appropriate grasp of Hegel's dialectic. He emphasises the importance of distinguishing the genuine concept of infinity from the *spurious* infinity (the so-called 'bad infinity'), i.e. distinguishing the infinite of *reason* from that of the understanding.<sup>40</sup>

The *infinite* can be grasped as its three stages. At first it is the affirmative as the negation of the finite in its *simple determination*, as simple non-finite. Secondly it is in *alternating determination* with the finite and is thus the abstract, *one-sided* infinite. Thirdly it is the *self-sublation* of this second infinite and of the finite, as a *single* process; only here is it the *true* or *genuine* infinite.<sup>41</sup> These three stages of infinity should be further elaborated as follows.

##### (i) The Infinite in General

The *infinite* in general is the *negation of the negation*, i.e. the affirmation as *being* which has restored itself out of the limitedness of the finite. The *finite* is raised up to the infinite by its own nature which relates itself to itself as restriction (limitation) (*Schranke*) and negates this limitation and goes beyond it. That is, the finite transcends itself: the finite has the nature to become the infinite. The infinite is the affirmative determination of the finite. The finite vanishes in the infinite, and 'what *is*, is only the infinite'.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 129.

<sup>39</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 136-37.

<sup>40</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 137.

<sup>41</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 137.

<sup>42</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 137-38.

### (ii) Alternating Determination of the Finite and the Infinite

At the second phase of infinity the infinite emerges as 'the nothing of the finite'. Here the *infinite* is what the finite is in itself, i.e. what the finite *ought to be*, and the infinite is *also* the realised *ought* (*ausgeführte Sollen*). Finitude (*Endlichkeit*) is 'the limitation posited as limitation'. The infinite here still remains the *spurious infinite*, i.e. the infinite of the understanding, since it is entangled in an unsolvable contradiction in which the finite and the infinite are opposed to each other, and here the infinite is only the limit of the finite and is thus only a determinate infinite, i.e. an *infinite* which is itself *finite*. Here the *finite* is finite only in its relation to the ought or to the infinite, and the *infinite* is only infinite in its relation to the finite. This is *the alternating determination of the finite and the infinite*. Here they are *inseparable*, yet they are *also* mutually related as sheer *others*. Each of them arises immediately and independently in the other; i.e. the infinite emerges in the finite, and vice versa, *externally*. Each of the finite and the infinite has the other of itself in its own self. Therefore each of them is the unity of itself and its own other; i.e. the infinite is the unity of the infinite and the finitude, and the finite is the unity of the finite and the infinite. Each is, in its determinateness, not what it itself truly is, nor what its other truly is. Here the *infinite* still remains to be the *beyond* of the finite (as against the finite), and thus remains to be *finite*.<sup>43</sup>

### (iii) Affirmative Infinity as True Infinity

In the infinity as stated to this point, the content of the *concept* (*Begriff*) was in fact posited, but it was posited as merely external, as the separation between the finite and the infinite. The infinite and the finite were not yet in their ultimate truth. At the third, ultimate phase of infinity, both the finite and the infinite are the *movement* (*Bewegung*) in which each of them returns to itself through its negation. That is, the infinite and the finite *are* only as the *mediation* (*Vermittlung*) within themselves, and the affirmative of each of themselves contains the negative of each and is thus the negation of the negation.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 139-42.

<sup>44</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 143, 146-47.



In the true infinite, in my view, both the infinite and the finite together constitute a double circle (*Kreis*) in which each of them mutually penetrates into its own other; they become the moments of a *singular double-movement*.<sup>45</sup> This movement was in fact already shown in the unity of coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be as *becoming*.<sup>46</sup>

True infinity *is* this movement as becoming. But becoming is now *further determined* in its moments (the infinite and the finite). Becoming at first had its abstract determination as being and nothing as its moments, and then had what-is-there (*Daseiend*) as something (*Etwas*). All those determinations are now expressed as the finite and the infinite. They are now known to be the moments within the non-temporal process of becoming. The infinite has now returned to itself, and is thus as self-relating being. But this being is no longer indeterminate, abstract being since it is now posited as negating the negation. Hence the infinite is also being-there (*Dasein*) since it contains negation in general and thus also determinateness. Now the infinite '*is and is there (ist da)*'.<sup>47</sup>

#### **(e) Reality and Ideality, and Transition to Being-for-itself**

The *infinite* alone is the *real* – in that the true infinity as being-there posited as *affirmative* contra the abstract negation, is *reality* which has become concrete by negating the first abstract negation, the *ideal*. In this sense reality is to be further determined as essence, then as the *concept*. Ideality (*das Ideelle*) is the negation, and reality is the negation of this first negation and is thus affirmative. Only through the procession to *infinity*, i.e. through the negation of negation, do the *ideal* and the *real* proceed from its finite, spurious stage (as *das Ideelle* and as *das Reelle*) to the infinite, true *ideal* and *real* (as *das Ideale* and as *das Reale*). However, Hegel himself describes that the differentiation between *das Ideelle* and *das Ideale* is important in that, until this point in *Logic*, the true *ideal* (i.e. *das Ideale*) has not emerged whereas there is not an importance in the differentiation between *das Reelle* and *das Reale* since they are almost synonymous.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> I will elaborate this issue in Sections 2(f) and 6 below.

<sup>46</sup> See Sec. 1(b) above.

<sup>47</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 148-49.

<sup>48</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 149.



Ideality as negation is the quality of infinity which is essentially the process of becoming. Sublation of finitude and infinity, as stated above, is a return to being as *self-relation*. This being is being-there which has now become more determinate. This being-there contains within itself the negation of negation as *self-related* negation. In this sense being-there is now known to be *being-for-itself*.<sup>49</sup>

#### (f) The Character of the Development of Categories

The character of Hegel's descriptions of the development of categories has to be described here briefly. It has been clarified, up to this point, that being-there, as the sublation of becoming, is now at the stage of quality. Being-there as quality is grasped as both negation and reality. The result of the sublation of this distinction between reality and negation is something, which is the negation of negation. This is the concrete negativity in contrast to the abstract negativity characteristic of the negation in general.

Then, the category of *infinity* played an important role. True infinity consists in that both the finite and the infinite are in a *double* movement in that they *are* as the mediation within themselves. Only in this double movement does the affirmation of each of the finite and the infinite contain the negative of each and is thus the negation of negation.

As shown above, the *absolute* has now, from the simple pure being, arrived at the stage of being-there which is going to pass over, through the categories of reality and ideality, into being-for-itself. What has been shown, up to this point, is the non-temporal self-movement (as both self-development and self-explication) of the *absolute* through the upgrading categories. But this progress is not a mechanical development. For it cannot be pictorially grasped, but is the *organic* development – in that a category departs from itself (i.e. negates itself) and returns to itself again (i.e. negates the first negation), but as a more developed, further enriched, more concrete, or more grown-up, category. That is, the *absolute* only organically self-develops and self-explicates itself as new, upgraded categories; and the movement as this organic self-development is a singular double-movement which contains both distinction and its sublation.

This is the character of Hegel's dialectical descriptions of categories insofar as they have been expressed up to this point in the realm of being. However, the organic

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<sup>49</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 150.

character of this self-development at the stage of being-there, is only implicit or *in itself* (*an sich*). This basic tenet of organic development of categories will be further enriched in the more concrete forms in the sequel.<sup>50</sup>

### Section 3

#### Being-for-itself: Quality (2)

To designate *Fürsichsein* I will consistently use the term 'being-for-itself'.<sup>51</sup> Being-for-itself (*Fürsichsein*) falls into three stages. First, it is *a* being-for-itself; it is the *one* (*das Eins*). Secondly the one passes into a plurality of ones; it is *repulsion* which, as sublated in their ideality, is also *attraction*. Thirdly it passes over into *quantity*.<sup>52</sup>

##### (a) Being-for-itself and Being-for-one

Being-for-itself is *infinity* as well as *being-there* insofar as the negative nature of infinity, i.e. the negation of negation, is in the explicit form of the *immediacy* of being, as only negation in general and as simple qualitative determinateness. In being-there the determinateness was an *other*, and thus *a* being-for-other. Therefore this determinateness of being-there is bent back into the infinite unity of being-for-itself; and the moment of being-there is present in being-for-itself as a *being-for-one*.<sup>53</sup>

The moment of *being-for-one* (*Sein-für-Eines*) expresses the manner in which the finite is present in its unity with the infinite, or in which the finite is an ideal being (*Ideelles*). There is only *one* being-for-other, and this is equivalent to saying that there is only a being-for-one. This means that there is only *one* ideality which supposes a determination as moment in itself and which is itself a moment in itself. Therefore being-for-one and being-for-itself are not genuinely opposed determinations. A being-for-itself relates itself to itself as the sublated otherness and is thus *for one* (*für Eines*):

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<sup>50</sup> I will elaborate this issue in Sec. 6 below.

<sup>51</sup> I follow the usage employed by Geraets *et al.* in the *Shorter Logic*; Miller more often uses 'being-for-self' than 'being-for-itself' in the *Larger Logic*.

<sup>52</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 157.

<sup>53</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 158-59.



in its own otherness it is related only to itself. Ideal being (*das Ideelle*) is necessarily *for one*, not for an other; the one, for which the ideal being is, is only itself. To-be-for-itself (*Fürsichsein*) and to-be-for-one (*Für-Eines-Sein*) are not different meaning of ideality. Rather, they are the essential, inseparable moments of ideality.<sup>54</sup>

Being-for-itself is therefore the simple unity of itself and its moment, i.e. being-for-one. The being-for-itself (*Fürsichsein*) is thus *a-being-for-itself* (*Fürsichseiendes*). In the immediacy as identity or unity the inner meaning of being-for-itself vanishes. Therefore being-for-itself is known to be wholly abstract limit of itself. This is the *one*.<sup>55</sup>

### **(b) The One (as the One, the Void and Many Ones), and Transition to Quantity**

The *one* (*das Eins*) shows its own *development* (*Entwicklung*) as *moments* one after another as follows. They are (1) negation in general, (2) *two* negatives, (3) two that are therefore the same, (4) sheer opposites, (5) self-relation, identity as such, and (6) relation which is *negative* and yet to *its own self*. The reason why these moments are to be separated is that the *immediacy* of being enters into being-for-itself as *a-being-for-itself* (*als Fürsichseiendem*). But these moments are also *inseparable*. For each moment the opposite assertions, i.e. separation and inseparability, are possible.<sup>56</sup> This is a *contradiction* as Hegel affirms. This, in my view, is a typical example where the etymological origin of dialectic, *dialegein* (double-speak), illuminates its significance.<sup>57</sup>

The *one* is the simple self-relation of being-for-itself, as stated above. The *ideality* of being-for-itself as a totality reverts back to *reality*, as the one in its most fixed, abstract form. In the one, being-for-itself is the posited unity of simple being and being-there.<sup>58</sup>

The *one* in general *is* on its own; i.e. the one simply *is*. That the being of the one is neither being-there, nor a determinateness as a relation to an other, nor a constitution (*Beschaffenheit*), shows that this circle (*Kreis*) of categories is now negated. Therefore the one cannot become an other; the one is *unalterable*. The one returns to itself since it

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<sup>54</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 159-60.

<sup>55</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 163.

<sup>56</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 163-64.

<sup>57</sup> I discussed this etymological issue in Introduction and Chap. 4 Preliminaries; cf. Desmond, 'Thinking on the Double', pp. 226, 231-32. I will elaborate the *contradiction* in Chap. 6 Sections 1(b)(iii) and 2.

<sup>58</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 164.



has nowhere to go except to itself – in that the one is self-determining as self-related negation and therefore has a turning away from itself to an other, but this movement is immediately turned back on itself since there is no other to which it can go.<sup>59</sup>

In this simple immediacy of the *one*, the mediation of there-being and of ideality vanishes; and accordingly all the difference and manifoldness vanish. That is, there is *nothing* here. But this nothing is a *posited* nothing which is to be distinguished from the *one* as the being-within-itself, as the one's determination. This *nothing*, posited as *in the one*, is the nothing as the *void* (*das Leere*). This void is therefore the quality of the *one* in its immediacy.<sup>60</sup>

The *one* is the negation in the determination of being, and the *void* is the negation in the determination of non-being. But the one is equal to the void as the abstract relation of the negation to itself. Each of the one and the void has the negative relation to itself for their common base. This is parallel to the relation of simple *being* to *nothing* as each of them has its negative relation to itself. Each of the one and the void is the relation of negation as an *other* to its own other – in that the one is the negation in the determination of being, and the void is the negation in the determination of non-being.<sup>61</sup> However, the one is essentially the self-relation as related negation; and the void, outside the one, is supposed to be the one itself. However, each of the one and the void is also posited as an affirmative being-there – one as a being-for-itself as such, and the other as an unspecified being-there in general. Here each is related to its own other as to another being-there. However, the being-for-itself of the one is essentially the ideality of being-there and of other. Here the one relates itself not to an other, but only to itself. However, since being-for-itself is fixed as a one – as affirmatively for itself, and as immediately present –, the one as being-for-itself has its negative relation to itself as also a relation to an affirmative being. And since the *relation* is considered to be just as much negative, that which the one relates itself is determined as a being-there and an *other*. Here the *other*, as self-relation, is not a determinate negation as the void, but is likewise another *one*. Consequently the one is a *becoming of many ones* (*Werden zu vielen Eins*). However, strictly speaking, this is not a genuine becoming since, as stated before, becoming is a transition between being and nothing.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 165.

<sup>60</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 165.

<sup>61</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 165.

<sup>62</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 167.

The relation of the *negative* (i.e. the void as the other) to itself is negative relation, and it is thus the distinguishing of the one from itself. This is the *repulsion* of the one; i.e. this is the positing of *many ones*.<sup>63</sup> Each of the *many* is *one*. The relation of many ones to each other is repulsion as the negative behaviour (*Verhalten*) of the many ones against each other. That is, the one relates itself to itself because the one relates itself in its repelling to ones. Therefore repulsion is equal to its own other, *attraction*. In this way being-for-itself, as the excluding *one*, *sublates* itself. Quality as qualitative determinacy, here at the stage of the *one*, has reached the determinateness-in-and-for-itself (*An-und-für-sich-Bestimmtsein*). At this stage, being-for-itself (in the two sides, as repulsion and attraction) is now known to be the sublating of itself and is therefore the sublating of *quality* in the totality of all previous moments. However, this sublating quality is neither an abstract nothing nor the abstract being which lacks any determination, but is only a being which is indifferent with regard to determinacy. This is *quantity*. In quality the determinacy was identical with their being. In *quantity*, on the contrary, the determinacy is the indifferent, external determinacy – even when quantity alters (e.g. larger or smaller), a thing still remains what it is.<sup>64</sup> In other words, *quantity* is the determinateness which has become indifferent to being. In this sense quantity is being-for-itself which is absolutely identical with being-for-other. This is a repulsion of many ones which is at once the non-repulsion, the continuity of ones.<sup>65</sup>

## Section 4

### Quantity

#### (a) Pure Quantity

Quantity (*Quantität*) is pure being in which determinacy is *sublated* (*aufgehoben*) or indifferent (*gleichgültig*). In *quantity* determinacy is no longer posited as one with *being* itself. The term ‘quantity’ can be also expressed as *magnitude* (*Größe*). But ‘magnitude’ is not always an appropriate term since it designates the already

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<sup>63</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 97, p. 154.

<sup>64</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 98 Addition, p. 157.

<sup>65</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 185.



determinate quantity. Here, up to this point, quantity has not yet reached such determinacy.<sup>66</sup>

When *matter (Materie)* is taken as having *form* as an indifferent determination, ‘the *absolute* is pure quantity’ is an appropriate expression. Distinctions of what is absolutely undifferentiated are only *quantitative*. In this sense, quantity is the fundamental determination of the absolute.<sup>67</sup> Even the quantity, as *pure* quantity, is a stage of the *idea*, as which the absolute will be ultimately expressed. Quantity is at first as a *logical* category, and then is in the world of both *natural* and *spiritual* objects, i.e. throughout the entire system of *Encyclopaedia*. However, as Hegel says, quantity has a more important meaning in *nature* than in the spiritual realm.<sup>68</sup>

Quantity is both *continuous* and *discrete* magnitude. In its immediate self-relation, or in the self-equivalence posited by the attraction, quantity is *continuous* magnitude. As *discrete* magnitude, on the other hand, quantity is the *one*. But both determinations, as continuity and discreteness, pass over into each other. As only the continuity of the *many*, continuous quantity is also discrete. Many ones, each of which is the one as discrete quantity, are known to be *the same* or *unity*. Hence the one is also the continuity of those many ones; i.e. discrete quantity as the one is also continuous. Therefore both continuous and discrete magnitudes should not be regarded as *species (Arten)*. Rather, both magnitudes are distinguished only in that *the same whole (dasselbe Ganze)* is posited, first as one of them, and then in the other. In this sense the antinomy of space, of time, or of matter, is to be considered as the affirmative of quantity as continuous, then as discrete, quantity.<sup>69</sup>

### **(b) Quantum (as Number, Degree and Ratio), and Transition to Measure**

Quantum, or limited quantity, is the quantity which is posited with its own excluding determinacy. The structure of the progress in the realm of *quantity* is parallel to that in *quality*: pure quantity is parallel to pure being; quantum is parallel to being-there since quantum is the being-there (*Dasein*) of quantity; degree is parallel to being-for-itself.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 99 and Remark, p. 157.

<sup>67</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 99 Remark, p. 158.

<sup>68</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 99 Addition, p. 159.

<sup>69</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 100 and Remark, p. 160.

<sup>70</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 101 and Addition, p. 161.



Quantum has its perfect determinacy in *number (Zahl)*. Number contains within itself the *one* as its element. Number contains both *enumeration (Anzahl)* as discreteness and *unit (Einheit)* as continuity. Rather, number is the unity of these two qualitative moments.<sup>71</sup>

The whole of quantum is the same as *limit (Grenze)*. Limit, as multiple within itself, is *extensive* magnitude. Limit, on the other hand, as *intensive* magnitude, is *degree (Grad)*. Degree is the determinacy which is *simple (einfache)* within itself. However, whatever has extensive magnitude has intensive magnitude as well, and vice versa.<sup>72</sup>

The concept of *quantum* is posited within that of degree. Degree is the magnitude as indifferent *for itself (für sich)* and simple – in that the magnitude has, outside of itself in other magnitudes, the determinacy through which alone it is quantum. In such *contradiction* – that although this magnitude *is for itself (fürsichseiende)*, yet the indifferent limit is absolute *externality (Äußerlichkeit)* – the infinite quantitative *progress* is posited. This ‘progress’ means that both *immediacy* and *being mediated*, i.e. a going-beyond (*Hinausgehen*) the quantum just posited, pass over into each other.<sup>73</sup> This contradiction is thus being resolved.

Quantum, in its determinacy of being on its own account, is external to itself. But this self-externality (the quantitative feature) of quantum constitutes its quality. Quantum, in the very self-externality, is itself and is related to itself. In quantum the quantitative (as externality) and the quality (as the being-for-itself) are thus united. In this way, quantum is now quantitative relationship, *ratio (Verhältnis)*.<sup>74</sup> But the sides (*Seiten*) of ratio, as both *immediate* quantum and *mediation* (viz. the relation of a quantum to another), are still immediate quanta, and the qualitative and quantitative determinations are still external to each other. But even in such externality the quantitative itself is relation to itself. Or rather, the being-for-itself and the indifference of the determinacy are united.<sup>75</sup>

Quantum, at this stage, is no longer an indifferent or external determination: quantum, the last stage of quantity, is here sublated and is quality. That is, quality and

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<sup>71</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 102 and Remark, pp. 161-62.

<sup>72</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 103 and Remark, p. 163.

<sup>73</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 104, p. 165.

<sup>74</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 105, p. 168.

<sup>75</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 106, p. 169.

quantity are to be united as something higher. Quantum – at its final stage, ratio – is now known to be the unity of quality and quantity, *measure*.<sup>76</sup>

## Section 5

### Measure, and Transition to Essence

Measure (*Maß*) is the *qualitative quantum*. Measure, at first as *immediate*, is a quantum, with which being-there or quality is bound up. Measure is the complete being as the unity of quality and quantity. Hegel even says that measure can be the definition of the *absolute* – in that ‘God is the measure of all things’.<sup>77</sup>

The *measureless* (*Maßlose*) occurs when a measure goes beyond its qualitative determinacy in virtue of its quantitative nature. But the measureless is also measure since the new quantitative ratio as the measureless is just as qualitative. That is, the transition from quality to quantity and conversely from quantity to quality, can be presented once more as *infinite progress* as the *self-sublation* and restoration of measure in the measureless.<sup>78</sup>

In this infinite progress the *immediacy*, which still belongs to measure as such, is *sublated*. That is, quality and quantity were initially as *immediate* in measure, which was only the relational identity of quality and quantity. But now in this infinite progress the measure sublates itself in the measureless. But measure is *also* only going together *with itself* in the measureless which is its own negation and is itself a unity of quantity and quality.<sup>79</sup>

The unity of measure and the measureless seems to be parallel to that of coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be, and to that of the infinite and the finite – in that they are all likewise in a singular double-movement between opposed categories.<sup>80</sup>

At this stage of measure the *infinite*, i.e. the affirmation as the negation of negation, has acquired both quality and quantity for its own sides. These sides have

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<sup>76</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 323-24.

<sup>77</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 107 and Addition, p. 170.

<sup>78</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 109, p. 172.

<sup>79</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 110, pp. 172-73.

<sup>80</sup> See Sections 1(b) and 2(d)(iii) above.



passed over into each other, i.e. from quality to quantity,<sup>81</sup> and from quantity into quality;<sup>82</sup> these transitions are exhibited as *negations*. But these sides (quality and quantity), as in their unity in measure, appeared at first *distinct* and was only *through the mediation (vermittels)* of the other. After the immediacy of this unity has proven to be self-sublating, this unity of quality and quantity in measure is now posited as what it is in itself. This unity is now the simple *self-relation (Beziehung-auf-sich)* which contains being in general and its forms as *sublated*. Being or immediacy is *mediation* with itself and relation to itself, only through *self-negation*. Being is thus the mediation which sublates itself into immediacy. This being or immediacy as *mediation* is *essence*.<sup>83</sup>

In other words, although quality and quantity may have appeared as mutually confronting, they have passed over into each other through measure. The result of this dialectic is *essence*, i.e. the *sublated being*, in which being was negated in its determination. In the sphere of *being*, *passing-over (Übergehen)* was an important category in that one category became its own other. In the sphere of *essence*, on the other hand, passing-over is also not passing-over; it is to be considered as *diversity (Verschiedenheit)* which is the *relation (Beziehung)* between the one and its own other since there is no *genuine* other. That is, in the passing of what is diverse into another diversity the first one does not vanish in another but they both remain within their relation. In the sphere of *being* the relatedness (*Bezogenheit*) was only *in itself (an sich)* and everything was immediate (*unmittelbar*). In *essence*, on the other hand, the relatedness is *posited* and everything is relative or relational (*relativ*). This point is what distinguishes between being and essence.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Cf. *Enc. Logic*, § 98.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. *Enc. Logic*, § 105.

<sup>83</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 111, p. 173.

<sup>84</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 111 Addition, pp. 173-74.



## Section 6

### The Basic Tenet of Hegel's Dialectical Description of Categories

The basic pattern or manner of Hegel's dialectical progress of the description of categories and their moments, which go up higher and higher and become more and more concrete, has to be clarified here.<sup>85</sup>

As aforementioned, measure, the qualitative quantum, is the complete being as the unity of quality and quantity and is thus the highest stage in the realm of being. Measure and its opposite, the measureless, pass over into each other – in that the transition from quality and quantity and its reverse (from quantity and quality) is presented as *infinite* progress as the self-sublation and the restoration of measure in the measureless. The unity of measure and the measureless is a singular double-movement between opposed categories, just as in previous examples of coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be and of infinity and finitude. At the stage of measure the *infinite* (the affirmation as the negation of negation) acquires both quality and quantity as its own sides which pass over into each other (from quality and quantity, and vice versa), and this movement as transition is negation, or negation of negation. This movement as negation is also a singular double-movement. At the stage of measure *being* or immediacy is *mediation* with itself and relation to itself through *self-negation*. Being has now arrived at the stage of the *mediation* which sublates itself into *immediacy*. Essence is this being which has arrived at the stage of *immediacy as mediation*.

Here one can detect the basic pattern of Hegel's description of the development of categories. That is, each category has its own self-contradictory character in having an opposite (as its negative) which is also self-contradictory – in that the original category is also the negative to this opposite. In addition to this, each of the categories and their opposites (as their negative) is the *unity* of itself and its opposite. Or rather, the truth consists in that they are all likewise in a *self-contradictory unity of unities* between opposites. This unity has to be grasped as *double-movement*. But this 'double-movement' does *not* mean that *two* separate movements are united in *a* unity. Instead it is a singular movement which is double-sided, having double-circulation. Hence it has to be expressed as *a singular double-movement*. This may be a contradictory expression

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<sup>85</sup> I discussed this issue briefly in Sec. 2(f) above. This section is its continuation.

from an ordinary, commonsensical viewpoint. But this contradictory feature is the truth of the matter. Then the *contradiction* (i.e. the self-contradiction of the unity of unities) is to be considered as the self-movement which necessarily entails its own resolution as *sublation* (the negation of negation) into higher, enriched next category. This movement is *infinite* in that it is the affirmation, as the negation of negation. The sublation of the contradiction of previous categories into newer and higher categories is non-temporal singular double-movement, which is infinite in that it is self-circular (self-departing and self-returning). However, in this infinite self-circulation a category does not remain the same but turns into an enriched next category. This double movement of sublation as self-circulation is thus not mechanical nor external but *organic* and *internal* (or *immanent*).

Then, *whose* self-development was this all self-growing development of categories? It was the self-development and thus the self-explication (one after another of categories) of *the absolute*. It at first started as simple pure *being*. Then it was disclosed that its truth is being a moment of *becoming* (together with its negative, *nothing*). But the result of becoming (through coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be) was the more determinate being, *being-there*. But even this being-there was still *indeterminate* and *abstract*. It had to be further *sublated* into a higher, more *determinate* and *concrete* category, *being-for-itself*.<sup>86</sup> Then being-for-itself, the last stage of *quality* – through the process from *being-for-one*, then the *one*, the *void*, and to *many ones* – sublated itself into *quantity*. Then the quantity, the sublated being, from the stage of pure quantity and through the sublation of continuity and discreteness, turned into *quantum*. The quantum, the being-there of quantity, through the stage of *degree* and *ratio*, developed to *measure*. Then the measure, the qualitative quantum, which has already reached the stage of the mediation sublated into immediacy, has finally turned into *essence*, the sublated being.

Through this whole process of the development of the categories which have become more concrete and determinate, one can know that this is the self-circular (i.e. self-departing and self-returning) movement which is double-sided, having double circulation as the unity of unities, as stated above. All of this is the movement of *the absolute*. This movement will be further developed in the next phase of logic, *essence*.

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<sup>86</sup> I discussed the feature of the development of being-there through infinity in Sec. 2. esp. (f) above.



## Chapter 6

### Dialectic in the Doctrine of Essence

#### Preliminaries

In this chapter on *essence* I will discuss Hegel's dialectic which has more developed features than in *being*, emphasising the three key-concepts in my interpretation, i.e. *contradiction*, *the absolute* and *the identity of thought and being*, along with the descriptions of the development of categories in the realm of essence.

#### (a) What Essence Is

Hegel's own preliminary remarks on *essence* are as follows. Knowledge or knowing (*Wissen*) aims at the *true* (*die Wahre*), i.e. what *being* is in-and-for-itself. Knowledge thus does not stop at the immediate, being. Knowledge, as a result of its own development, reaches a point at which there must be something other than *being* as its background which is the truth of being. This knowledge is a *mediated* knowing; it starts from the preliminary path which goes beyond being, or rather, penetrates into being. This mediated knowledge is that of *essence* (*Wesen*) which is *the truth of being*. Hence only after this knowledge (knowing) inwardises or recollects (*erinnert*) itself out of immediate being does the knowing find *essence* through this *mediation*. Hegel points out that in German the verb *Sein* (to be) has its past participle *gewesen* which leads to *Wesen* (essence); but essence is *timelessly past being* (*zeitlos vergangene Sein*).<sup>1</sup> (This would suggest that essence is *sublated being*.)<sup>2</sup> Although the movement or path of

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<sup>1</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 389.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Enc. Logic*, § 112 Addition, p. 176.



this mediated knowing, through the process of which it starts with being and sublates it and reaches essence as a mediated result, *appears* (*erscheint*) to be an activity of knowing that is external to being and irrelevant to being's own nature, yet this movement is that of *being* itself. Being inwardises (*erinnert*) itself through its own nature; and through this movement into itself, *being* becomes *essence*. But essence is what it is through its own *negativity* which is the infinite movement of being. Essence is *being-in-and-for-itself* (*Anundfürsichsein*) – in that essence is absolute being-in-itself (*Ansichsein*) since it is indifferent to every determinateness of being, and here otherness and relation-to-other have been completely sublated – and also in that essence is equally being-for-itself (*Fürsichsein*) since it is itself this *negativity* which is the *self-sublating* of otherness and determinateness. Essence is in this sense being-in-and-for-itself.<sup>3</sup>

In other words, briefly, *essence* is the *concept* (*Begriff*) as posited concept. But it is not a complete concept, i.e. not yet *for-itself* (*Fürsich*), since the concept is not yet as reflected strictly within the determinations in the realm of essence. Essence is the relation to itself only by being to an other. But this other is not as what *is* but as something posited and mediated. Being has not vanished in that essence is being which mediates itself through its own *negativity*. In *essence*, on the other hand, *being* is also degraded to something merely negative or to a mere semblance (*zu einem Scheine*). That is, essence is being as *shining* (*Schein*) within itself.<sup>4</sup>

### (b) Remarks on Essence

The *absolute* is now *essence*. Is this statement contradictory to the previous one that the absolute is *being*? The answer is *no* since this is the higher definition of the absolute. Essence is being which has gone into itself. The absolute has within itself *negativity*. But this negativity is not external to being but is being's own *dialectic*. Hence the truth of the absolute is essence, in this sense.<sup>5</sup>

Contradiction (*Widerspruch*), in the realm of being, was still implicit or *in itself* (*an sich*). In the doctrine of essence, on the other hand, contradiction is explicit – in that the sphere of essence is that of *posited contradiction* since essence is posited as a being

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<sup>3</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 389-90.

<sup>4</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 112, p. 175.

<sup>5</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 112 Remark, p. 175.

of *reflection*, i.e. a being within which an other shines and which shines within an other.<sup>6</sup>

It is to be noticed that *being*, *nothing* and *becoming* in the realm of being correspond to the positive, the negative and *ground* in the realm of essence: (1) The *positive* as *identity*, in the realm of essence, corresponds to the *being* which lacks antithesis. (2) The *negative* as shining within itself develops as *distinction*; i.e. *nothing* in the realm of being corresponds to *distinction* (difference) in the realm of essence. (3) Then *becoming* develops, in *essence*, to the *ground* of *being-there*, i.e. *existence*.<sup>7</sup>

The parallel positions of *essence* and *quantity* in the system of *Logic* are also to be recalled. Essence and quantity have the same absolute indifference to *limit*. In this sense *essence*, in the whole system of *Logic* (which starts from *being*, then passes over to *essence*, and reaches the *concept*), holds a parallel position to that which *quantity* has in the doctrine of *being* (which starts from *quality*, then passes over to *quantity*, and reaches *measure*).<sup>8</sup>

### (c) The Development of Essence in its Movement

The development of *essence* in its movement is as follows. First, essence *shines* (*scheint*) within itself; it is *reflection*. Secondly essence *appears* (*erscheint*); it is *appearance*. Thirdly essence *manifests itself* (*offenbart*); it is *actuality*.<sup>9</sup> They will be explicated one by one in the following sections.

## Section 1

### Reflection and *Schein*

*Schein* can be variously translated as ‘illusory being’,<sup>10</sup> ‘seeming’,<sup>11</sup> ‘show’,<sup>12</sup> or even ‘shining’ or ‘semblance’. Any English word to designate this term can be insufficient or

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<sup>6</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 114, p. 178. I will elaborate *contradiction* in Sections 1(b)(iii) and 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 114 Remark, p. 179.

<sup>8</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 391.

<sup>9</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 391.

<sup>10</sup> In the *Larger Logic* by Miller.



misleading since *Schein* does not necessarily have the negative meaning of 'illusory' as the later descriptions will show. Essence *shines* (*scheint*), then *shines-forth* or *appears* (*erscheint*), and then reaches actuality in that it manifests itself. Therefore when I refer to this term, I will employ the most appropriate English term within the context, often adding the original *Schein* (noun) or *scheinen* (verb) in parentheses, or sometimes directly using the original German terms.

In the realm of *reflection* (*Reflexion*) essence *shines* within itself (*scheint in sich*) or is pure reflection. Essence here as reflection is only relation to itself as reflected relation; it is *identity* with itself. But this *identity* is still formal identity, i.e. the identity-of-the-understanding (*Verstandesidentität*) which holds firmly to the impassable gulf between identity and distinction. In other words, this is only the *abstract* identity.<sup>13</sup>

#### (a) Reflection

*Schein* is *nothingness* (*das Nichtige*) or the *essenceless* (*das Wesenlos*) whose being is equality with itself, i.e. not in an other. This equality with itself is the interchange of the negative with itself as the absolute *reflection* of essence. This reflection is thus the essence's own self-negation. Hence this is sublated negativity which is both the negative and the immediacy (simple equality with itself). Therefore this equality consists in a single unity of both being-itself and being-not-itself.<sup>14</sup>

Reflection is (a) self-coinciding negation, and then (b) simple equality-with-itself, i.e. immediacy, and (c) transition as the sublation of the transition – since the reflection is immediate coincidence of the negative with itself (as stated in (a) and (b) here). Here the self-relation of the negative is its return into itself; it is a *self-sublating immediacy* which is the sublation of the negative in its self-relation or is a return from the negative.<sup>15</sup>

In other words, this immediacy, which is only a return of the negative into itself, is that which constitutes the determinateness of *Schein* and which previously seemed to

<sup>11</sup> In Burbidge's commentary.

<sup>12</sup> By Taylor, and in the *Larger Logic* by Struther and Johnston.

<sup>13</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 115 and Remark, p. 179. The issue of abstract or concrete identity will be elaborated in Sec. 1(b)(i) below.

<sup>14</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 400.

<sup>15</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 401.



be the starting point of the reflective movement. Reflection is this movement which starts or returns only insofar as the negative has already returned into itself. In this sense reflection is a returning movement, or the negative of itself. Reflection is a *positing* (*Setzen*) insofar as it is immediacy as this returning movement. This is what (1) *positing reflection* (*setzende Reflexion*) is. Reflection determines the return-into-itself (*Rückkehr in sich*) as the negative of itself; and this sublation of reflection is essence. In other words, the *immediacy*, which reflection (as sublation) presupposes for itself, is a *positedness*, i.e. an immediacy which is in itself sublated and is not distinct from the return-into-itself and is itself only this returning movement. But this immediacy is also determined as *negative*, as immediately opposed to *something*, therefore to an *other*. Reflection is therefore *determinate*. Thus stated, reflection, as *determinate*, has a presupposition and starts from the *immediate* as its *other*. Reflection is therefore considered now as (2) *external reflection* (*äußere Reflexion*). External reflection is the reflection which presupposes itself as *sublated*, as the negative of itself. It is a positing of the *immediate* which becomes the negative or the *determination*; but it is also the sublation of this positing. Therefore although named 'external', it is not external but the *immanent* reflection of immediacy. Positing reflection thus results in essence-in-and-for-itself. Hence reflection is to be considered now as (3) *determining reflection* (*bestimmende Reflexion*). Determining reflection is the unity of positing reflection and external reflection. The determination of reflection is the *positedness* (*Gesetzsein*) as negation which bends back into itself the relation to other and as negation which is equal to itself (the unity of itself and its other), and is, only through this, an *essentiality* (*Wesentheit*). Therefore the determination of reflection is positedness, negation – in the sense that as reflection-into-itself it is *also* the *sublatedness* (*Aufgehobensein*) of this positedness, i.e. infinite self-relation.<sup>16</sup>

### **(b) Determinations of Reflection**

The explanation of the *determinations of reflection* (*Reflexionsbestimmungen*) is as follows. Reflection is determinate reflection, and essence is therefore determinate essence. Reflection is the showing or seeming (*Schein*) of essence within essence itself. Essence is infinite return-into-itself (*Rückkehr-in-sich*) and is negative simplicity. That is, essence reflects into its three moments which are determinations reflected into

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<sup>16</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 401-05, 408.

themselves. Hence essence as reflection is firstly simple self-relation, i.e. pure *identity*. Secondly it is *distinction* (or difference), which is *opposition* as opposed diversity. This opposition is reflected into itself and withdraws into its *ground*. That is, essence as reflection is thirdly *contradiction*.<sup>17</sup>

### (i) Identity

Essence shines within itself (*scheint in sich*) or is pure reflection. It is the relation to itself as reflected relation. That is, essence is in this sense *identity* with itself (*Identität mit sich*). However, identity is, in truth, that which presupposes *distinction*. The identity of the understanding (*Verstandesidentität*), i.e. the *abstract* identity, stubbornly sticks to the viewpoint of rigid separation between identity and distinction. In the viewpoint of the *concrete* identity, on the contrary, everything identical embraces within itself something distinctive, and vice versa. In the abstract understanding, the manifold for our cognition is not grasped as the concrete whole, but is severed into abstract, simple elements by so-called *analysis*. To elaborate: The so-called universal law of thought, as the principle of identity, can be expressed as ‘Everything is identical with itself,  $A=A$ ’, or negatively, ‘A cannot be both A and non-A at the same time’. But this law of thought, as the law of abstract understanding, cannot reach the proper grasp of the matter since this abstract understanding is not aware that this law *contradicts* itself as the above propositions themselves presuppose both distinction and identity between subject and predicate. That is, this law is to be *sublated* by the *speculative* insight into the concrete *identity* which presupposes *distinction*. Only by such speculative insight does the law of identity become meaningful and fulfil the completion of those proposition. But the abstract understanding can never grasp this truth. The proper grasp of the *concrete* identity, which can be fairly called genuine identity, is that which knows the above relationship of identity and distinction. They are distinguishable, but also inseparable. Or rather, identity can be the identity only insofar as it embraces within itself distinction, and vice versa.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 409.

<sup>18</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 115 and Remark, pp. 179-80; *Sci. Logic*, pp. 411-16. What I intend to emphasise in this subsection is the difference between the abstract understanding of the *identity* and the proper (or speculative) grasp of identity, which was clearly emphasised in *Enc. Logic* § 115 Remark. When there is a slight difference of emphasis between the Shorter Logic and the Larger Logic, I follow the Shorter Logic which was revised twice.



## (ii) Distinction

Essence is pure identity or shining within itself (*Schein in sich selbst*) only because essence is negatively relating itself to itself by being self-repulsion from itself. That is, essence thus essentially contains within itself *distinction* or difference.<sup>19</sup> (1) Distinction (*Unterschied*) is firstly the immediate distinction as *diversity* (*Verschiedenheit*). Distinction as diversity appears as *comparison* (*Vergleichung*) in which both *equality* (*Gleichheit*) and *inequality* (*Ungleichheit*) appear. Equality is an *identity* of the terms which are not identical with one another whereas inequality is the *relation* (*Beziehung*) between unequal terms. Each of both equality and inequality is a shining into the other (*ein Scheinen in die Andere*). Diversity is distinction of reflection.<sup>20</sup> (2) Distinction is secondly the essential distinction between the positive (i.e. the identical relation to itself) and the negative (i.e. what is distinct on its own account). Each of the positive and the negative *is* only in virtue of not being the other one. Distinction is therefore *opposition* (*Entgegensetzung*) through which what is distinct has its own other facing itself. In opposition each has its own determination only insofar as it is related to the other. In other words, each is the other's own other.<sup>21</sup>

## (iii) Contradiction and Ground

Both the *positive* and the *negative* are the posited *contradiction*. They are the same in themselves (*an sich dasselbe*); and they are also the same for themselves (*für sich dasselbe*) since each of the positive and the negative is the *sublating* of itself and its other. The result of this sublation is that the positive and the negative go to the *ground*. In other words, the essential *distinction* is only the distinction of itself from itself. The distinction thus contains the *identical* (*das Identische*). Essential distinction belongs, together with identity, to the whole distinction which is in-and-for-itself. Essential distinction is already expressed equally as what-is-*identical*-with-itself (*das mit sich Identische*); and what-is-*opposed* (*das Entgegengesetzte*) is precisely what contains the *one* and its own other. The being-within-itself (*Insichsein*) of essence is *ground*.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 116, p. 181.

<sup>20</sup> *Enc. Logic*, §§ 117-18, pp. 182-84.

<sup>21</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 119, pp. 184-85.

<sup>22</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 120, p. 188.



Contradiction sublates itself by its own doing. The result of this sublation, i.e. the sublated contradiction, is no longer the abstract identity. The result of opposition posited as contradiction is *ground*, which contains within itself both identity and distinction as sublated and reduced to merely its own ideal moments.<sup>23</sup> In this context ground is the unity of identity and distinction. It is the truth of identity and distinction as the inward reflection (i.e. identity) which is also reflection-into-another (i.e. distinction), and vice versa. In this sense ground is essence as totality.<sup>24</sup>

The above stated can be also described as follows. The positive is the contradiction-in-itself whereas the negative is the positive contradiction. Each of the positive and the negative *sublates* itself; i.e. *contradiction* resolves itself. Contradiction (*Widerspruch*) withdraws to the *ground* (*Grund*); in other words, the resolved contradiction is ground, i.e. the essence as the unity of the positive and the negative. The *infinite* was in truth the contradiction as displayed in the sphere of being. External motion (movement) is the immediate being-there (*Dasein*) of contradiction; in other words, motion is existent (*daseiende*) contradiction itself. Contradiction is the root of all movement and life; only insofar as something has a contradiction within itself does it move and have urge and activity. Opposites (e.g. the positive and the negative) contain contradiction insofar as they are negatively related to one another or sublate each other and are indifferent (*gleichgültige*) to one another.<sup>25</sup>

#### (iv) Existence, Thing, and Transition to Appearance

Essence is at first as shining and mediation within itself. But as totality of mediation the essence's unity with itself is now posited as the *self-sublation* of distinction and so of mediation. Therefore it is the restoration of *immediacy* or *being* as mediated through the sublation of mediation. Essence is now *existence* (*Existenz*).<sup>26</sup> Existence is the immediate unity of inward reflection and reflection-into-another. The relation between ground and existence is that ground is itself existence and the existent is also ground as well as *grounded*.<sup>27</sup> In other words, the ground is self-sublating: that toward which the

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<sup>23</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 119 Addition 2, p. 187.

<sup>24</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 121, p. 188.

<sup>25</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 432-35, 439-41. I will elaborate *contradiction* and *ground* in Sec. 2 below.

<sup>26</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 122, p. 192.

<sup>27</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 123, pp. 192-93.

ground *sublates* itself (i.e. the result of its negation), is *existence*. Therefore existence, although it emerges from the ground, contains within itself the ground.<sup>28</sup> What-exists or *existents* (*das Existierende*) contains relativity or relationality (*Relativität*) and its own manifold connectedness with other existents in itself. The existent is reflected within itself as ground. Therefore what-exists is *thing*.<sup>29</sup>

Thing (*Ding*) is the totality as the development of the determination of ground and of existence posited all in *one*.<sup>30</sup> Thing falls apart into *matter* (*Materie*) and *form*, each of which is the totality of *thinghood* (*Dingheit*) and is independent on its own account. Matter involves the reflection-into-another (*Reflexion-in-Anderes*) and being-within-itself (*Insichsein*). Matter is in this sense the totality of the form. On the other hand, form contains inward reflection and constitutes the determination of the matter. Form and matter are thus *the same*. The unity of matter and form, once posited, is the relation of matter and form as *distinction*.<sup>31</sup> Thing is hence this *contradiction* of form and matter. Therefore as the essential existence which sublates itself inwardly, *thing* is *shining-forth* or *appearance*.<sup>32</sup>

## Section 2

### Contradiction Further Described

#### (a) The Fundamental Point of Contradiction

The fundamental point of contradiction is to be recalled here. Although *contradiction* was described, together with *ground*, as an important category or moment in the realm of reflection, yet, as Hegel says, contradiction does not remain there alone but is also the generator of all movement and life, including nature, spirit and the logical,<sup>33</sup> and is thus the generating force of the self-movement of *logical thinking* or *logic*. Therefore

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<sup>28</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 123 Addition, p. 193.

<sup>29</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 124, p. 193.

<sup>30</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 125, p. 194.

<sup>31</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 129, p. 198.

<sup>32</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 130, p. 198.

<sup>33</sup> See Sec. 1(b)(iii) above.



any propositional form, which is the explication of the logical, does necessarily include within itself contradiction. One of the main points of contradiction is that it withdraws to the ground; in other words, the concept of contradiction cannot be separated from that of *sublation*. But it is to be noticed that sublation had clearly appeared earlier in the sphere of being while contradiction was only implicitly or in-itself expressed as *infinity* in the realm of being.<sup>34</sup>

### (b) Contradiction for Kant and Hegel

Here the issue of contradiction has to be referred back to the relation between Kant's view and Hegel's. For Kant the law or principle of (non-)contradiction means that any predicate which is contradictory of a thing cannot belong to it;<sup>35</sup> i.e. this is the contradiction between the statement (predication) and the fact (determinateness) of an object. For Hegel, however, having admitted the above grasp of contradiction by Kant, what is more important is that *everything is in itself contradictory*,<sup>36</sup> and that the validity of the law of (non-) contradiction consists *not* in that to attribute to things contradictory determinations and determinateness is false (as stated just above as Hegel's description of contradiction), *but* in that *objective* contradiction is only as *self-disclosing*.<sup>37</sup>

For Kant contradiction is mainly as *antinomies* or *opposition*. Kant's *opposition* consists of (1) *analytic* opposition, (2) *dialectical* opposition (this is a predecessor to Hegel's doctrine of contradiction), and (3) *real* opposition (this presages the concept of *negativity* which is basic to *contradiction* for Hegel). Hegel does not deny the differences between these three types of opposition set forth by Kant. It is only that Hegel *critically* assesses the above difference while Kant emphasises the term 'contradiction' to *analytic* opposition. Therefore although for Kant the *negativity* results in a determinate sublation, yet what is sublated is *not* considered by analytical judgement (including Kant's) to be the determinations which genuinely belong to a thing. Hence although it was supposed to be 'sublated', yet the thing as a subject of predication is also *not* sublated. For this analytical judgement the consequences of

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<sup>34</sup> See Preliminaries (b) above.

<sup>35</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, A151=B190.

<sup>36</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 439.

<sup>37</sup> Wolff, 'On Hegel's Doctrine of Contradiction', p. 2.



opposed determinations mutually sublimate themselves; i.e. consequences merely equal *zero*.<sup>38</sup> That is, the gist of the sublation as development is not grasped by this sort of judgement. This is what Hegel criticises in Kant.

For Hegel two determinations that differ in content are to be related to the substrate of logical reflection and thus to become *opposed* determinations. This point clarifies the meaning of *negativity*. Negativity is what is needed for the opposition to be opposition. Without negativity there would be no opposition. For Hegel opposition is a relation between the positive and the negative.<sup>39</sup>

What is *contradiction* for Hegel, then? (1) For Hegel contradiction consists in a relation between (a) one of two opposed determinations (*Bestimmungen*) and (b) the substrate of logical reflection on the mutually opposed determinations, i.e. the substrate of the reflection of the determinateness (*Bestimmtheit*) of the objects. The reflection of the former (a) is the *negative* reflection (for opposition presupposes the negative), and the reflection of the latter (b) is the *positive* reflection. Therefore the gist of contradiction consists in that the self-sufficient determinations of reflection are related, in one and the same regard, as both negative and not-negative. For Hegel contradictory opposites are *real predicates*, i.e. they are the positive determinations whose opposition or negativity depends on their relation to the substrate of logical reflection. (2) Therefore contradiction is an *objectively logical* relation – in contrast to Kant and analytical thinkers who treat the *logical* as only *subjective*. More precisely, contradiction is a relation of objective *logical reflection*. Hegel transforms the traditional logic of reflection into an ‘objective logic’ in two ways: (a) *From* relations among logical predicates *to* relations among determinations (that are already presupposed by the relations among logical predicates); i.e. by identifying, distinguishing and opposing the logical predicates, we already presuppose the identity, difference or opposition of determinations. For Hegel the concepts such as identity, difference and opposition, become meaningful only as the determinations of reflection (i.e. determinations of relations among determinations), not as the concepts of subjective reflection. (b) *Logical relation* cannot be deduced from logical reflection alone, but only when it is related to the *substrate* of logical reflection. That is, determinations of reflection (such as diversity and opposition), which correspond to the logical relations of contrariety and contradictoriness, cannot obtain by themselves, but

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<sup>38</sup> Wolff, pp. 8-9, 13.

<sup>39</sup> Wolff, pp. 14-15; cf. *Sci. Logic*, pp. 424-31.

depend on, the internal determinations to specifically determined objects. In other words, the external relations (as opposition) of the determinations of reflection are mirrored in the internal contradiction of individual things. (3) Genuine judgement, which explicates the objective contradiction, consists in that it sees the fundamental reason for the objective contradiction in objects themselves.<sup>40</sup>

### (c) The Feature of Contradiction in Essence

Contradiction in the realm of essence is the more developed form of *infinity* which was only implicitly explicated in the realm of being.<sup>41</sup> Infinity was the *unity of unities*, i.e. the unity as a singular double-movement consisting of infinity and finitude, having double-sided circulation between them (each of them is the unity of itself and its opposite). In this sense the relation between contradiction and ground has a parallel position to that between infinity and finitude. Contradiction withdraws to the ground. Ground is the sublated result of contradiction. Contradiction and ground are in the unity like that of infinity and finitude. However, in the realm of essence there is no longer passing-over or transition (*Übergehen*) between opposites. The singular double-movement of infinity as the unity of unities which was clearly explicated in the realm of being, is now significantly *transformed* or developed to the *sublation* of contradiction into the ground. As just before mentioned, contradiction does not pass over into the ground, but withdraws into the ground. This is the expression of how *sublation* occurs and is carried on. The sublated result of contradiction has the more determinate, developed form of categories, here in the realm of reflection, as the ground.

More broadly speaking, in the realm of essence, the double-movement of categories which was there in the realm of being, now has to be grasped rather in a more *organic* form, the *interpenetration*, than be called *circulation* which may retain somewhat *mechanical* connotation. This interpenetration is, of course, a form of the unity of unities, as infinity is. But it is still better described by this organic term to express the organic feature of categories in the realm of essence, in which categories do

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<sup>40</sup> Wolff, pp. 18-19.

<sup>41</sup> See Preliminaries (b) above.



no longer pass over into others. Instead they grow like living creatures: they develop to the more mature categories.<sup>42</sup>

### Section 3

#### Appearance

Essence must *shine-forth* or *appear* (*erscheinen*). The inward shining of essence is the sublating of itself into immediacy. Shining (*Schein*) is the determination in virtue of which essence is not being but essence; and the developed shining is *shining-forth* or *appearance* (*Erscheinung*). Therefore essence is not behind nor beyond appearance. Existence is in this sense *appearance* since the essence is what exists.<sup>43</sup> Appearance should not be confused with *semblance* (*Schein*) which remains the truth in the sphere of being or immediacy.<sup>44</sup>

What-appears (*das Erscheinende*) does exist in that its subsistence (*Bestehen*) is immediately sublated. Therefore what-appears has its ground in the *form* (*Form*) as its essence or as its inward reflection vis-à-vis its immediacy.<sup>45</sup> As regards the relation between content and form, *content* (*Inhalt*) has the form *within itself* just as much as the form is something *external* to it. In other words, form is firstly the content as *inwardly* reflected and secondly the *external* existence as *not* reflected inwardly. Content and form can reciprocally overturn into each other. Or rather, content is the overturning of form into it, and form is the overturning of content into it. But this relationship between content and form is not what is *posited* until we reach the absolute relationship.<sup>46</sup> Appearance is *relationship* since immediate existence is the determinacy of subsistence itself and of the form, and content has the externality through the moment of its subsistence.<sup>47</sup> The difference between *relation* (*Beziehung*) and *relationship*

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<sup>42</sup> I will continue this issue of the more organic form of categories in Sec. 6 below.

<sup>43</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 131, p. 199.

<sup>44</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 131 Addition, p. 199.

<sup>45</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 132, p. 201.

<sup>46</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 133 Remark, p. 202.

<sup>47</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 134, p. 203.





(*Verhältnis*) should be noticed. Relationship is the unity of relation to itself and relation to another.<sup>48</sup>

The immediate *relationship* is that between the *whole* and the *parts*. In it the parts are parts only in their identical relation to each other, or insofar as they constitute the whole.<sup>49</sup> They are inseparable.<sup>50</sup>

Other examples of relationship are that between *force* and its *utterance* (i.e. the utterance of force is the mediation),<sup>51</sup> and that between what-is-inner and what-is-outer. What-is-inner (*das Innere*) is not separate from what-is-outer (*das Äußere*), but they are also opposed to each other as determinations of the form.<sup>52</sup> However, it should be emphasised that what-is-inner and what-is-outer (or external) are essentially *identical* as moments of the one form, and thus what is first posited only in one *abstraction* (as what-is-inner *or* what-is-outer) is also immediately only in the other one.<sup>53</sup> Such empty abstractions sublimate themselves into one another, as *identity*.<sup>54</sup> This identity is *actuality*.<sup>55</sup>

## Section 4

### Actuality

#### (a) Actuality as such

Actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) is the *unity* of essence and existence, or of what-is-inner and what-is-outer. In other words, actuality is the *positedness* of this unity. This unity is the relationship which has become identical with itself, and is thus exempted from passing-over (*Übergehen*) whereas being was unreflected immediacy, and passing-over was an

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<sup>48</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 135 Addition, p. 204.

<sup>49</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 135, p. 204.

<sup>50</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 136 Remark, p. 205.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *Enc. Logic*, §§ 136-37.

<sup>52</sup> *Enc. Logic*, §§ 138-39, p. 209.

<sup>53</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 140, p. 209.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. *Enc. Logic*, § 138.

<sup>55</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 141, p. 213.

important category in the realm of being. The being-there (*Dasein*) of actuality is only the manifestation of itself.<sup>56</sup>

### (i) Possibility

Actuality, as such identity or unity, is at first *possibility* (*Möglichkeit*). Possibility is the inward reflection which is posited as the *abstract* and unessential essentiality, in contrast to the *concrete* unity of the actual. Possibility is what-is-essential (*das Wesentliche*) to reality (*Wirklichkeit*) in such a way that it is also *only* possibility.<sup>57</sup> In other words, as being the *concrete* thought, actuality contains within itself the possibility as an *abstract* moment.<sup>58</sup>

### (ii) Contingency

As mere possibility the actual (actuality) is to be considered as something-contingent (*ein Zufälliges*), as mere *chance* (*Zufall*).<sup>59</sup> As such, possibility and *contingency* (*Zufälligkeit*) are the moments of actuality.<sup>60</sup> In other words, possibility is merely the *external* actuality, and contingency is the actuality considered as what is merely *possible*.<sup>61</sup> The *externality* (*Äußerlichkeit*) of actuality implies the contingency (as immediate actuality) as what is identical with itself only as positedness (*Gesetztsein*). But this positedness is sublated as an externality that is there (*eine daseiende Äußerlichkeit*). That is, it is to be sublated to be the possibility of an other, i.e. *condition* (*Bedingung*).<sup>62</sup>

### (iii) Necessity

The above stated *externality* is a *circle* (*Kreis*) of the determinations of possibility and immediate actuality. The reciprocal mediation of these determinations is *real possibility*

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<sup>56</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 142 and Remark, pp. 213-14.

<sup>57</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 143, p. 215.

<sup>58</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 143 Addition, p. 216.

<sup>59</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 144, p. 217.

<sup>60</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 145, p. 217.

<sup>61</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 145 Addition, p. 218.

<sup>62</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 146, p. 219.

in general. The externality of actuality, as this circle, is the totality (*Totalität*), i.e. the content (*Inhalt*), the matter (*Sache*); and it is the concrete totality of the form for itself which is the self-translation of the inner into the outer, and vice versa. This self-movement of the form is *activity* (*Tätigkeit*), i.e. the activation of the matter (*Sache*), as the *real* ground, which sublates itself into actuality; and it is the activation of the conditions of contingent actuality. The developed actuality as the coincident alternation (*Wechsel*) of what-is-inner and what-is-outer, or the alternation of their opposed movements that are united into *one* movement, is *necessity*.<sup>63</sup>

The three moments of *necessity* (*Notwendigkeit*) are *condition* (*Bedingung*), *matter* (*Sache*) and *activity* (*Tätigkeit*). But insofar as these moments remain independent of one another, the necessity is merely the external or restricted necessity.<sup>64</sup> The relationship among the three moments is that what is necessary (*was notwendig ist*) falls apart into the mediating ground (matter and activity) and into an immediate actuality as something-contingent (condition).<sup>65</sup>

### (b) Substantiality

The *necessary* (*das Notwendige*) is in itself the absolute relationship which sublates itself into absolute identity. It is the relationship of *substantiality* (*Substantialität*) and *accidentality* (*Akzidentalität*). Substance (*Substanz*) as such is the absolute identity of this relationship with itself.<sup>66</sup> Substance is the totality of accidents; substance reveals itself in accidents as their absolute negativity, i.e. as the absolute might and also as the richness of all content. ‘Substantiality is the absolute activity-of-form (*Formtätigkeit*) and the might (*Macht*) of necessity, and every content is just a moment that belongs to this process alone – the absolute overturning of form and content into one another’.<sup>67</sup> Substance is at first simply substance. Substance, then, as absolute might, relates itself to itself as a merely inner possibility (*innere Möglichkeit*) and is thus accidentality.<sup>68</sup> That is, *Schein* or accidentality is in itself *substance* through *might*, but substance is not posited as this self-identical *Schein*. Therefore, here substance has only accidentality

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<sup>63</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 147, pp. 220-21.

<sup>64</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 148, p. 224.

<sup>65</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 149, p. 225.

<sup>66</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 150, p. 225.

<sup>67</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 151, pp. 225-26.

<sup>68</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 152, p. 227.



for its positedness: it is not yet substance *as* substance. Therefore the relation of substantiality here is that substance manifests itself as formal might; this relation is in truth the *inner* of the accidents which are, however, only *in the substance*. In other words, the relation of substantiality is only the totality in the form of *Schein* as a *becoming*, but this relation is equally *reflection*; here the accidentality which is in itself substance, is also posited as such because of this same reason. Hence the relation of substantiality is determined as self-relating negativity toward itself, i.e. determined as self-relating simple self-identity. Substance therefore exists for itself and has might. Hence the relation of substantiality passes over into the relation of *causality* (*Kausalität*). For substance is the might which posits determinations and distinguishes them from itself; therefore substance, as self-relating in its determining, posits itself as a negative, or makes itself into a positedness; hence this is already the sublated substantiality, i.e. the merely posited, i.e. *effect*; however, substance is for itself *cause*.<sup>69</sup>

### (c) Causality

Substance is *cause* (*Ursache*) because firstly it is inwardly reflected – here it is the originating thing (*die ursprüngliche Sache*) – and because secondly it equally sublates this inward reflection (or its mere possibility); i.e. because it posits itself as the negative of itself, and here it produces an *effect* (*Wirkung*). Effect is an actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) which is thus only a *posited* one, but it is also a *necessary* one in this causality.<sup>70</sup> (It is to be reminded of the etymological viewpoint that in German the terms *Wirkung* (effect) and *Wirklichkeit* (actuality or reality) stem from the verb *wirken* (to have an effect), and therefore the category ‘effect’ cannot be separate from actuality or reality.) The cause is sublated in *effect* as *positedness*; i.e. the cause is *actual* only in the effect. In this sense the cause is in-and-for-itself *causa sui* which is the same as *effectus sui*.<sup>71</sup> The distinction between *cause* and *effect* is that between *positing* and *being posited*, and they are one and the same content. This distinction of form sublates itself again ‘since the cause is not only the cause of an other, but is also the cause of itself, and the effect

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<sup>69</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 557-58, trans. emended.

<sup>70</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 153, pp. 227-28.

<sup>71</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 153 Remark, p. 228.

is not only the effect of an other, but also the effect of itself'. Causality (*Kausalität*) is this infinite progression.<sup>72</sup>

The *effect* is *positedness*, but as inward reflection and immediacy. Although effect is diverse from *cause*, the effective action of the cause, i.e. its positing, is also a presupposing. At this stage there is consequently an *other substance* on which the cause acts. This second, other substance, as immediate, is not active but *passive* – in that it is not negatively relating itself to itself. However, this other substance, *as substance*, is also *active*: it sublates the presupposed immediacy and the posited effect. That is, this other substance *reacts*: it sublates the activity of the first substance (mentioned above). However, the first substance is likewise this sublation of its immediacy or of the effect posited in it. Therefore the first substance sublates the activity of the second, another substance, and reacts. Consequently *causality* has now passed over into the relationship of *reciprocal action*.<sup>73</sup>

#### (d) Reciprocal Action, and Transition to the Concept

The determinations which in *reciprocal action* (*Wechselwirkung*) are considered to be firmly *distinct* from each other, are in themselves *the same*. There is thus only *one* cause which sublates itself as *substance* in its *effect* and gives itself only in this *effective* action (*in diesem Wirken*). Or rather, reciprocal action itself is the sublating-again of each of the posited determinations and its conversion into the opposite one.<sup>74</sup> Reciprocal action stands on the threshold of the *concept* (*Begriff*). But reciprocal action still has to be comprehended in the way the cause and effect are considered to be the lower moments of the third, a higher whole, i.e. the concept.<sup>75</sup> The truth of substance is the concept.<sup>76</sup> The concept is the *truth* of being and essence, in such a way that being and essence return to the concept as their ground; and conversely the concept develops itself out of being as out of its ground. The concept is determined in relation to being and essence *as essence that has returned to being* as simple immediacy. Through this return the shining of essence has *actuality* which is a free shining within itself.<sup>77</sup> Why,

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<sup>72</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 153 Addition, p. 229.

<sup>73</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 154, pp. 229-30.

<sup>74</sup> *Enc. Logic*, §§ 155-56, pp. 230-31.

<sup>75</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 156 Addition, p. 231.

<sup>76</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 158, p. 232.

<sup>77</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 159 and Remark, pp. 233-34.



then, do we *not* start from the concept, the truth of being and essence? Because only when we start from the poorest, *being*, going through *essence*, and reach the richest, the *concept*, do we recognise and consider that this is the *dialectical* development and how being and essence sublate themselves into the unity of the concept.<sup>78</sup>

## Section 5

### The Absolute in Actuality

Here we move back to the *absolute*. In the *Larger Logic* the absolute is described before actuality (i.e. ‘Section 3: Actuality, Chapter 1: The Absolute, Chapter 2: Actuality’). But since I would like to discuss in detail the absolute in the whole range of *essence* consecutively, I discuss the absolute after the descriptions of actuality here in this section and the next.<sup>79</sup>

#### (a) The Exposition of the Absolute

The exposition of the *absolute* (*die Auslegung des Absoluten*) at the stage of actuality is as follows. (1) The absolute is not merely being nor even essence. Both being and essence are totalities within themselves, determinate totalities. (2) In the realm of essence, being emerges as existence, and the connection between being and essence progresses to the relation between the inner and the outer. The inner is essence as totality only in connection with being. The outer is being, but with the determination of *being* connected with reflection, and with a relationless identity with essence. (3) In this sense the absolute is itself the absolute unity of being and essence, and of the outer and the inner. (4) Hence the determination of the absolute is to be the *absolute form* as the identity and is the complete whole. But conversely the absolute is the *absolute content* in such a way that the content has the negative *form relation* by which the manifoldness of the content is only *one* substantial *identity*. (5) Therefore the identity of the absolute is the absolute identity since each of its parts is itself the whole, or each determinateness is the totality. The absolute as against the reflected determinations is

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<sup>78</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 159 Addition, pp. 234-35.

<sup>79</sup> See also the next Sec. 6 below.



the ground in which they have been *engulfed* (*untergegangen*). The absolute does not determine itself since the form, in the absolute, is only simple self-identity. The absolute itself is absolute identity; this is the determination of the absolute since all manifoldness of the world-in-itself and the world of *appearance*, or the manifoldness of inner and outer totality, is sublated. (6) There is no becoming in the absolute itself since the absolute is no longer mere being. The absolute is the absolute *identity* of the inner and the outer, as stated above. But the movement of reflection stands *over against* (*gegenüber*) this absolute identity of the absolute. In this identity the movement is *sublated* and is thus only the inner of the identity, but as the inner this movement is *external* to the identity. (7) Therefore the movement of reflection consists only in *sublating* its act in the absolute. It is the beyond (*Jenseits*) of the manifold differences and determinations and their movement, i.e. a beyond which lies at the back of the absolute. Hence although this movement accepts the differences and determinations, it also destroys them. This movement of reflection is thus the *negative* exposition of the absolute previously mentioned. This negative exposition of the absolute is now known to be the preceding whole of the logical movement of the spheres of being and essence. The content of being and essence has internally determined itself, through its inner necessity, as being's own becoming and as the reflection of essence, and has withdrawn into the absolute as into its ground. (8) But this exposition of the absolute also has a *positive* side – in that, insofar as the finite falls to the ground, the nature of the ground is to be connected with the absolute, or is to contain the absolute within itself. But this positive exposition is shining (*Scheinen*). The absolute is reflected in the shining in that the shining is a relation to the absolute. What is truly positive in the exposition is the absolute itself. (9) But the exposition of the absolute is in truth the absolute's own act which begins from itself and arrives at itself. The absolute only as the absolute *identity* is still *determinate* or *imperfect* since the absolute is here posited by external reflection merely as against opposition and manifoldness; it merely remains the *negative* of reflection. This is not yet the absolute *absolute*, but only the absolute in a determinateness, or it is attribute. (10) In other words, the *absolute* is the absolute only because it is not abstract identity but the identity of being and essence or of the inner and the outer. Therefore the absolute as this identity is the absolute form which makes it reflect itself into itself and determines it into attribute.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 530-33.

### (b) The Absolute Attribute

The above expression ‘the absolute *absolute*’ denotes the absolute which in its form has returned into itself or whose form is identical with its content. By contrast, the absolute *attribute* (*das absolute Attribut*) is merely the *relative* absolute, a connection which signifies simply the absolute in a form determination. But since form is also the form of the absolute, the attribute is the whole content of the absolute. That is, the attribute is ‘the totality which previously appeared as a world, or as one of the *sides* of the *essential relation*, each of which is itself the whole’.<sup>81</sup>

### (c) The Mode of the Absolute

The *absolute* is truly the absolute identity only as the *act* (*Tun*) of the reflective movement itself. The absolute is absolute *being* in that the exposition is the self-dissolving reflection which is the return-into-itself because the exposition is the shining (*Schein*) as shining. The expounding reflection seems (*scheint*) to begin from something external, but it in fact has, in the absolute itself, the determinateness from which it begins. This determinateness belongs to the *reflective movement*; through this alone it is determined and has absolute form, and is what posits itself as equal to itself.<sup>82</sup>

Therefore ‘the mode of the absolute’ (*der Modus des Absoluten*) truly means the absolute’s own reflective movement as a determining (*Bestimmen*). It is the manifestation (*Zeigen*) of itself as what it already is. It is the movement *out of* (*heraus*) itself. But this *being-outwards* (*Sein-nach-Außen*) is also *inwardness* (*Innerlichkeit*) and is thus also a positing (*Setzen*) which is not merely positedness but *absolute being*. The absolute manifests that the distinction between form and content is dissolved in the absolute. Or rather, *to manifest itself* (*sich zu manifestieren*) is the content of the absolute. The absolute is the absolute form which is identical with itself. The content is the exposition of the absolute form. The absolute is the absolute manifestation of itself for itself, as the absolute identity-with-itself. As such the absolute is *actuality*.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 533.

<sup>82</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 534-35.

<sup>83</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 535-36.



## Section 6

### The Absolute Further Described

As stated up to this point, in the realm of essence the *absolute* has developed from reflection, through appearance, to actuality. The absolute now shows its more mature form.<sup>84</sup> Here the absolute is already the absolute unity of being and essence, and the unity of the inner and the outer; the absolute is now not only the absolute *form* but also the absolute *content* whose manifoldness is the only *identity*, in which each of the parts is itself the whole. The absolute is the *ground* into which the reflected determinations (such as appearance, the inner and outer totality, form and content) are *engulfed* (*untergegangen*). This shows the more developed feature of the absolute than in the previous realm of being. Categories, the expressions of the absolute, do no longer pass over into other categories. They are engulfed into the ground.

The absolute is the identity, as stated before.<sup>85</sup> But it is the absolute identity in which the moment of reflection is *sublated*. In this sublated movement of reflection, the *differences* set forth by the absolute itself are also destroyed; or rather, they are *engulfed* into the ground (an expression of the absolute). This movement is therefore the *negative* movement, as a retreat to the ground, towards the truth of the absolute. This negative movement which is also positive as *shining*, is now clearly shown in the realm of essence, here at *actuality*. The absolute now *seems* to be fully exposed. But this exposition is itself the absolute's own act which makes the absolute be the absolute itself. However, here at the stage of actuality, the emphasis is still on the *identity*, which still remains to be the work of negative reflection. Therefore the absolute is not yet fully exposed. That is, the absolute is not yet the absolute *absolute* but the absolute *attribute* although the absolute has grown up, through several stages within the realm of essence, to the stage of actuality, as absolute attribute. The more developed or grown-up feature of the absolute will be shown only in the next, the highest stage of the absolute, the *concept*.

Here an important aspect of the development of categories (the expression of the absolute) is seen. Each category, in the realms of being and essence, has developed

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<sup>84</sup> I discussed this point of more mature, organic form explicated in the category of *contradiction* in Sec. 2(c) above. This section is its continuation.

<sup>85</sup> See Sec. 5(a) above.



from the preliminary forms to the more mature forms of categories. But even the most *mature* form of categories in the lower stage is to be considered as still *immature* or undeveloped, from the viewpoint of the higher stage. That is, the meaning of the *development* of many categories in *Logic* can be correctly grasped only when it is viewed from the perspective of the *organic growth* of categories – from the lower, immature to the higher, more developed and mature. (Here I use the term ‘organic’ in contrast to *mechanical* or *abstract*. The *organic* is in this sense *concrete*.) However, this organic feature of the development of categories, i.e. the development of the *absolute* itself, is not complete in *essence*. The full maturity will be attained only in the realm of the *concept*, which includes the category of *life*.

A general aspect of the absolute in *Logic* can be stated here. The absolute, in a certain phase of its own non-temporal self-movement (as self-development and thus also as self-explication, through self-mediation), finds itself in *contradiction*. Thus the absolute has necessarily to *sublate* itself, i.e. it raises itself up to a higher category by its own *freedom* as self-movement. Through all the phases of logic the absolute restlessly (but atemporally) develops itself until it finally (but atemporally) reaches the absolute *idea* as its own ultimate truth. This whole process as self-development is *dialectic*, the truth. In other words, dialectic is this self-development, and thus also the self-disclosure, of the *absolute*. This self-movement of the absolute, i.e. dialectic, has within itself contradictions and their sublation, as its own necessary moments. This self-movement is the *free*, and thus *necessary*, act of the absolute. For Hegel the absolute is in the ultimate sense God, which is the thought which thinks of itself.<sup>86</sup> The so-called *identity of thought and being*, when grasped in *thought*, is nothing but an expression of the thought’s self-identity to itself, i.e. the absolute’s self-identity to itself. *For thought*, when described in general terminology, being or reality is the realised thought, and thought is the idealised or sublated being. The identity of thought and being is the above whole process of the absolute’s own self-development as self-explication to itself. This whole process is dialectic, as stated above. This process is *organic* since the development of categories is organic, as mentioned before.<sup>87</sup> As has been shown through my clarification of *infinity*<sup>88</sup> and *contradiction*,<sup>89</sup> a category or

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<sup>86</sup> See Chap. 4 Sec. 3(b).

<sup>87</sup> See Chap. 5 Sections 2(f) and 6.

<sup>88</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>89</sup> See Sec. 2(c) in this chapter.

moment is a unity of unities, each of which is itself the unity of itself and its opposite, as the self-movement (self-development and self-explication) of the absolute. Moreover, it is to be remembered that here in the realm of essence the development of categories (expressions and moments of the absolute) has become more *organic* than in the realm of being<sup>90</sup> – for example, *sublation* has become more organic in that the determinations of reflection (identity, distinction and contradiction) do no longer pass over into others, but are to be engulfed into the ground. (The organic is to be also grasped as the unity of the *organic* and its opposite, the *inorganic*. Each of them is the unity of itself and its own opposite. As a *whole unity* of these unities, this unity is *organic*, embracing within itself the inorganic.) This whole process of the development of categories is the identity of thought and being. Hence this identity is *organic* – not the amalgamation of different moments but the interpenetration between distinguishable but inseparable moments of the absolute. Thought and being stem from, and withdraw into, their one and the same origin, the *absolute*, which is the thought which thinks of itself, and the act of which is dialectic, i.e. the self-development of categories through the whole process of logic.

The above stated is a general aspect of the *absolute*, the self-movement (as such a whole process) of which is dialectic, when referred to the identity of thought and being. However, this feature of the absolute is still *immature* in the realm of essence. This feature will be more clearly explicated by the absolute's own development to the higher realm, the *concept*.

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<sup>90</sup> Loc. cit.

## Chapter 7

### Dialectic in the Doctrine of the Concept

#### Preliminaries

To designate *Begriff* I will always employ the term 'concept'.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter I will follow the descriptions of the *concept* which is the ultimate phase of *Logic*, and which therefore shapes the *dialectic* in its richest form. The main issues on dialectic through my interpretation will be discussed not in this chapter but in the next chapter. For the discussion of dialectic in the *concept* has to be itself the *total* discussion of *dialectic* as such which embraces within itself all the previous expositions of dialectic sublated to its richest form, and which therefore needs another, independent chapter. This chapter therefore focuses on how Hegel describes the feature of dialectic in the realm of the concept.

#### (a) The Concept

The *absolute* has now reached the stage of the *concept* (*Begriff*). The concept is free and is totality since each of its moments is a whole. The concept is in *philosophy* (in the proper sense) the principle of all *life* and is thus the utterly *concrete* whereas in the understanding the concept is taken merely as dead, empty and *abstract* form of thinking. In the realm of the concept the antithesis between form and content is overcome dialectically through themselves. That is, the concept contains all the earlier determinations of *thinking* sublated within itself. The concept is not abstract but *concrete* (not in the meaning of 'sensibly concrete') since the concept contains being

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<sup>1</sup> I follow the usage in Geraets *et al.*'s *Shorter Logic*.



and essence and thus contains within itself their richness in ideal unity.<sup>2</sup> In the realm of the concept there is no longer passing-over (*Übergehen*) into another (like in *being*) nor shining (*Scheinen*) into another (like in *essence*). Instead, in the *concept* there is the movement of *development* (*Entwicklung*) since its distinguished moments are immediately posited as identical with one another and also with the whole. Through the development what is already implicitly present, is posited. The stage of the *concept* in logic is parallel to *organic life* in nature.<sup>3</sup>

The above stated is also described as follows. Being and essence are now known to be the moments of the becoming of the *concept*. Or rather, the concept is the *foundation* (*Grundlage*) and *truth* (*Wahrheit*) of both being and essence as the identity in which they are submerged and contained. In other words, the concept is the *result* (*Resultat*) of being and essence. The concept is the truth of *substance* – in that *necessity* is the substance's specific mode of relationship, and *freedom* is therefore known to be the truth of necessity and the mode of relationship proper to the concept.<sup>4</sup> Life, or organic nature, is a stage within nature at which the concept emerges, but as unconscious of itself and unthinking. In contrast, the *concept*, as self-conscious and thinking, pertains solely to *spirit*.<sup>5</sup>

### **(b) Logic as the Science of the Absolute Form Expressed as the Concept**

Logic is *the science of the absolute form* which is a totality and thus contains *the pure idea of truth* itself. This absolute form has within itself its content or reality. The concept is not an empty identity, and thus possesses the differentiated determinations in its moment of negativity or of absolute determining. Content (*Inhalt*) is solely these determinations of the *absolute form* which posits the content itself.<sup>6</sup> In order for *logic* (as the science of *absolute form*) to be *true*, it must possess within itself a *content* which is adequate to its form. Moreover, the formal element of logic is the *pure form*, and the truth of logic must be the *pure truth* itself. Therefore *logic*, i.e. the *formal*

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<sup>2</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 160 and Addition, pp. 236-37.

<sup>3</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 161 and Addition, p. 237.

<sup>4</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 577-78.

<sup>5</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 586.

<sup>6</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 592.

science in this sense, must be regarded as possessing richer determinations and content and as more closely related to the *concrete* than is usually considered.<sup>7</sup>

### (c) The Division of the Concept

The concept is the unity of being and essence in that essence is the first negation of being, and the concept is the second negation as the negation of the first negation of being. Therefore the concept is being-once-more (*das wiederhergestellte Sein*) as the being which has been restored as the infinite mediation and negativity of *being* within itself.<sup>8</sup> That is, the concept is the *absolute self-identity* as the negation of negation or as the infinite unity of the negativity with itself.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore the doctrine (*Lehre*) of the concept subdivides into (1) subjective (or formal) concept, (2) objectivity or the concept as determined to immediacy, and (3) the *idea* or the subject-object as the unity of the concept and objectivity, i.e. the absolute truth.<sup>10</sup>

## Section 1

### Subjectivity (or Subjective Concept)

#### (a) The Concept as such

The concept as such contains the moments of *universality*, *particularity* and *singularity*. Universality (*Allgemeinheit*) is the free equality with itself in its determinacy. Particularity (*Besonderheit*) is the determinacy in which the universal is serenely (*ungetrübt*) equal to itself. Singularity (*Einzelheit*) is the inward reflection of the determinacies of universality and particularity; it is the singular negative unity with itself, i.e. what is in-and-for-itself determined as what is identical with itself or

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<sup>7</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 594.

<sup>8</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 598.

<sup>9</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 601.

<sup>10</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 162, p. 238.

universal.<sup>11</sup> What is to be pointed out here is that each moment of the concept is itself the whole concept.<sup>12</sup> Singularity, i.e. subject, is nevertheless *the* concept which is posited as totality.<sup>13</sup>

When taken abstractly, universality, particularity and singularity are identical with identity, distinction and ground, respectively. Universality is the same as *identity* in the sense that universality contains within itself the particular and the singular. Particularity is the immediate or what is distinct – but only in the sense that the particular is inwardly universal and is actual as something-singular. Singularity is *ground* in the sense that the singular is *subject*. What is described here is the posited *unseparatedness* of the moments in their *distinction*<sup>14</sup> – this is the *clarity* (*Klarheit*) of the *concept*, i.e. the unseparatedness in distinction.<sup>15</sup> It should be remembered again that universality, particularity and singularity (or individuality) should not be considered to be apart (isolated) from one another; only mere *representational* (or *pictorial*) *thinking* (*Vorstellung*) supposes such false abstraction.<sup>16</sup>

Singularity posits the moments of the concept as *distinctions* inasmuch as singularity is the negative inward reflection of the concept. Singularity is thus initially the concept's free distinguishing, as its first negation. Therefore the determinacy of the concept is posited as *particularity*, firstly as the *distinct* moments over and against each other, secondly as their *identity*. This posited particularity of the concept, in this double-sided sense (i.e. with both distinction and identity), is *judgement*.<sup>17</sup>

## (b) Judgement

Judgement (*Urteil*) is the concept as the distinguishing *relation* (*Beziehung*) of the *moments* (i.e. universality, particularity and singularity) which are posited as being-for-themselves (*fürsichseiende*), i.e. as identical with themselves.<sup>18</sup> Yet it should be noticed

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<sup>11</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 163, p. 239.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Enc. Logic*, § 160.

<sup>13</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 163 Remark, p. 240.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Enc. Logic*, § 160.

<sup>15</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 164 Remark, p. 242.

<sup>16</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 620.

<sup>17</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 165, pp. 242-43.

<sup>18</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 166, p. 243.



that the *concept* is essentially *one* (*wesentlich einer*); the moments of the concept should not be considered to be diverse sorts of the concepts.<sup>19</sup>

Judgement should not be considered as *subjective*. Judgement is to be at first entirely *universal*. That is, every thing is a *singular* which is in its inner nature a *universality*, i.e. a universal that is made singular. In this sense every thing is a judgement. Universality and singularity distinguish themselves from each other, but are also identical.<sup>20</sup>

The standpoint of judgement is *finitude* (*Endlichkeit*). The finitude of things consists in their being a judgement – in that their thereness (*Dasein*) and their nature are united; otherwise the things would be nothing.<sup>21</sup>

In the abstract judgement the singular is the universal, the subject (the singular) is concrete, and the predicate (the universal) is abstract and undetermined. However, since in this judgement the singular and the universal are connected by the copula 'is', the predicate must contain within its universality the determinacy, the subject, i.e. *particularity*. This particularity is the *posited identity* of subject and predicate.<sup>22</sup>

### (i) Qualitative Judgement

Qualitative judgement is the *immediate* judgement which is the judgement of thereness (*Dasein*). Here the subject is posited in the universality (as its predicate) which is an immediate (and hence sensible) quality. Qualitative judgement initially falls into (1) the *positive* judgement (i.e. the singular is something-particular) and (2) the *negative* judgement (i.e. the singular is *not* something-particular). Then the judgement falls into itself as (3)(a) the judgement of identity (the empty *identity*-relation) and as (3)(b) the *infinite* judgement (the total incommensurability of subject and predicate).<sup>23</sup>

Hegel points out that *correctness* is not *truth*. Correctness (*Richtigkeit*) is merely the *formal* agreement of *our* representation with its content whereas *truth* (*Wahrheit*) is the agreement of the object with itself, i.e. with its *concept*.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 166 Addition, p. 245.

<sup>20</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 167, pp. 245-46.

<sup>21</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 168, p. 246.

<sup>22</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 169, pp. 246-47.

<sup>23</sup> *Enc. Logic*, §§ 172-73, pp. 249-50.

<sup>24</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 172 Addition, pp. 249-50.

### (ii) Judgement of Reflection

For the *singular* as the inwardly *reflected* singular, the *subject* is, as relating itself to itself, an *other* to the predicate. Unlike in qualitative, immediate judgement, the subject is in relationship (connectedness) with an other. In this sense the subject (the singular) is therefore something-*universal*; i.e. the subject is already above the mere singularity. This results in *particularity* – in that this judgement pertains to both the singular itself and something else. Hence the particular is extended to *universality*. The universality in the context of the singularity of subject is *allness* (*Allheit*), i.e. communality (*Gemeinschaftlichkeit*) or the ordinary universality of reflection (*die gewöhnliche Reflexions-Allgemeinheit*). Since the subject (as the singular) is also something-universal, as stated above, the universality which is identical with the negative inward reflection of subject, entails the *necessity* of judgemental relation.<sup>25</sup>

### (iii) Judgement of Necessity

Judgement of *necessity*, i.e. the identity of content in its distinction, falls into (1) *categorical* judgement (e.g. ‘Gold is a metal’), i.e. the immediate judgement, (2) *hypothetical* judgement (‘If A is, then B is’), i.e. the identity in which the actuality of the one is also *not* its own *but* is the uttering of the other, and (3) *disjunctive* judgement (‘A is either B or C or D’), i.e. the circle of its self-including particularisation, of which the *either-or* as well as *both-and* is the genus, and in which the genus is the totality of its species, and conversely the totality of the species is the genus. This unity of the universal and the particular is the *concept* which forms the content of the judgement.<sup>26</sup>

### (iv) Judgement of the Concept

Judgement of the *concept* is that which has the concept (the totality in simple form) as its content, i.e. the universal with its complete determinacy. Judgement of the concept falls into (1) *assertoric* judgement, i.e. the agreement or disagreement of two determinations about what is good, true, correct, etc., (2) *problematic* judgement, and (3) *apodeictic* judgement, which expresses what constitutes the content of predicate

<sup>25</sup> *Enc. Logic*, §§ 174-76, pp. 251-53.

<sup>26</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 177 and Addition, pp. 253-55.



(e.g. ‘*This* (immediate singularity) *house* (genus) *being constituted thus and so* (particularity) is good or bad’). In apodeictic judgement *all* things are a genus – this means that if the objective particularisation is posited in the subject, then the subject expresses its relation of how it is constituted to its determination, i.e. to its genus.<sup>27</sup>

What has been posited in *judgements*, stated up to this point, is *the unity of subject and predicate as the concept itself*. That is, the concept is the fulfilment of the empty ‘is’ of the copula. In this unity, as long as it is the unity, the moments (subject and predicate) are distinct. Therefore the concept is posited as the unity of these moments; it is the *relation* mediating between them. The unity as this relation is *sylogism*.<sup>28</sup>

### (c) Syllogism

Syllogism (*Schluss*) is the unity of the concept and judgement. It is (a) the *concept*; it is the simple identity into which the form-distinctions of judgement return. It is also (b) *judgement* insofar as it is posited *also* in reality, i.e. in the distinction of determinateness. Syllogism is the essential ground of everything. The *absolute* is now *sylogism*. In this context *everything is sylogism* since everything is a *concept* in that the *universal* nature of the concept realises external reality through *particularity*, and in that as the negative inward reflection the concept makes itself into the *singular*. In other words, the *actual* (*das Wirkliche*) is a *singular* which rises to *universality* by means of *particularity*, and which hence becomes *identical* with itself. In this sense the actual is *one* (*Eines*), but it is also the stepping asunder of the moments of the concept. Syllogism is the cycle of this mediation of the moments of the concept. Only through this cycle is the concept *one*.<sup>29</sup>

#### (i) Qualitative Syllogism

The forms of *qualitative* syllogism falls into (1) S-P-U (singular-particular-universal: S-M, M-P ∴ S-P), (2) U-S-P (universal-singular-particular: M-S, M-P ∴ S-P), and (3) P-

<sup>27</sup> *Enc. Logic*, §§ 178-79, pp. 255-56.

<sup>28</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 180, p. 256.

<sup>29</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 181 and Remark, pp. 256-57.



U-S (particular-universal-singular: S-M, P-M  $\therefore$  S-P).<sup>30</sup> Hegel highly praises Aristotle for his contribution to the formulation of syllogistic forms. Hegel rejects the fourth form (P-M, M-S  $\therefore$  S-P) as ‘superfluous and even absurd addition made by Moderns’.<sup>31</sup> Aristotle himself did not set this fourth form.<sup>32</sup>

Syllogism is truth only insofar as it is used in the process of *reason* or *speculation*. What Aristotle achieved is exactly this.<sup>33</sup> It can be even said that if syllogism is used for the understanding alone, it is meaningless.

The objective meaning of the forms of syllogism is that everything rational is a threefold syllogism – in the sense that each of the three terms holds the position both of an extreme and of a mediating middle. In this context the *logical idea, nature* and *spirit* are the three terms of *absolute syllogism*. Here each of them can be a middle-term to the other two of philosophical sciences.<sup>34</sup>

The significance of the difference among the three forms of syllogism is as follows. In the *first* form (S-P-U), S-P and P-U are still unmediated. But S-P is to be mediated in the *third* form (P-U-S), and P-U is to be mediated in the *second* form (U-S-P). Therefore the mediating unity of the concept has to be posited as the developed unity of singularity and universality. This is the *reflected unity* as the singularity which is also determined as universality.<sup>35</sup>

## (ii) Syllogism of Reflection

Syllogism of *reflection* is first of all (1) the syllogism of *allness* (*Allheit*), in which the middle term is not only the abstract *particular* determinacy of subject but also *all* singular concrete subjects. This syllogism of allness, however, entails a problematic point – that the major premise, which holds the middle term as the particular determinacy as stated above, inevitably already *presupposes* the *conclusion* itself which it itself has to prove. Therefore the syllogism of allness leads to (2) the *induction*, in which there is endless enumeration of singular instances as the middle term. Induction is therefore necessarily incomplete since it is based on (3) *analogy*. Although the

<sup>30</sup> *Enc. Logic*, §§ 183-87, pp. 259-62.

<sup>31</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 187 Remark, p. 262.

<sup>32</sup> Geraets *et al.*, Note 19 to *Enc. Logic*, § 187 Remark, p. 332.

<sup>33</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 187 Remark, p. 263.

<sup>34</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 187 Addition, p. 263.

induction based on analogy is actually important in empirical sciences, and Hegel does not deny the importance of induction, yet it is to be recognised that any induction is imperfect since whether it reaches the truth or not is arbitrary as long as it is based on analogy.<sup>36</sup>

### (iii) Syllogism of Necessity

Syllogism of *necessity* has the *universal* as its middle term whereas the syllogism of reflection had *singularity* as its middle term. Syllogism of necessity falls into (1) *categorical* syllogism, in which the *particular* is the mediating determination, (2) *hypothetical* syllogism, in which the *singular* in the sense of immediate being is its mediating determination, and (3) *disjunctive* syllogism, in which the *universal* is the mediating determination as the totality of its *particularisations* and as a *singular* particular or as excluding singularity. In all these determinations there is one and the same *universal* in the forms of distinction.<sup>37</sup>

### (iv) The Fundamental Point of Syllogism

The universal result of the process of syllogism is the self-sublation of these distinctions and of the self-externality of the *concept*. To elaborate: (1) Each of the moments which are in-themselves *identical*, is the *totality* of moments, i.e. the whole syllogism. (2) The *negation* of their distinctions (and the mediation of them) constitutes the being-for-itself (*Fürsichsein*) of the concept. Here one and the same *universal* is posited also as their *identity*. In the *ideality* of the moments in this context, syllogistic reasoning attains a *determination* as the *negation* of the determinacies through which the syllogistic reasoning itself proceeds, and it also attains a determination as a mediation through the sublation of mediation, and attains a concluding of subject – not with an other but with a *sublated* other, i.e. *with itself*.<sup>38</sup>

The concept is *subjective*. But this point is to be grasped in the context that the *subjectivity* of the concept itself breaks through its own barrier and opens itself up into

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<sup>35</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 189 and Remark, p. 264.

<sup>36</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 190 and Addition, pp. 264-66.

<sup>37</sup> *Enc. Logic*, §191, pp. 266-67.

<sup>38</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 192, p. 267.



*objectivity* by means of *syillogism*. In this sense the subjectivity of the concept is dialectical.<sup>39</sup>

This *realisation* of the concept, in which the universal is this *one* totality returned into itself, and which, through the sublation of the mediation, has determined itself as *immediate* unity, is the *object*. This realisation of the *concept* as the object was the passage *from subject* (i.e. from the concept in general and from the syllogism) *to the object*. The object is the *one whole* which is inwardly still undetermined, i.e. the objective world in general, God, the absolute object. But the object equally has *distinction* within it – in that each of isolated bits is also an object (objective world) or something-there (*Dasein*) which is inwardly concrete, complete and independent. The *ground* from which existence emerges, i.e. the relationship of reflection that sublates itself into actuality, was the still imperfectly posited concept; it was merely the unity of the *concept* at the level of *essence*. Contrary to this, the concept contains real distinctions as *totalities* within itself. It cannot be emphasised enough that the *concept* and *objectivity* are in-themselves *identical*.<sup>40</sup>

An important point of *syillogism* is as follows. Syllogism is the restoration of the *concept* in *judgement*; therefore it is the unity and truth of both the concept and judgement. The essential feature of syllogism consists in the *unity* of the extremes, and the *middle term* which unites them, and also the *ground* which supports them. However, if syllogism is considered as merely positing the unity of extremes, and if this unity is considered merely as a particular on its own and also as an external relation, and also if *non-unity* is considered as the essential relationship of syllogism, then *reason* (*Vernunft*) which constitutes the syllogism, contributes nothing to rationality (*Vernünftigkeit*).<sup>41</sup> Only when considered as the necessary path from subjectivity to objectivity – i.e. as the path to reach the objectivity of the concept in the aforementioned context – is the *syillogism* meaningful.

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<sup>39</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 192 Addition, p. 268.

<sup>40</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 193 and Remark, pp. 268-70.

<sup>41</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 664-65.



## Section 2

### Objectivity

#### (a) Objectivity as such, Mechanism and Chemism

The *object* (*Objekt*) is the immediate being as the sublated distinction and is the *totality* in itself. The object is also the same as its own unity since the identity as totality is the identity of its moments; it is the falling asunder into distinct moments, each of which is itself a totality. Therefore the *object* is the *absolute contradiction* between the complete *independence* of distinct moments and their equally complete *dependency*.<sup>42</sup>

Objectivity at first takes the forms of *mechanism* (*Mechanismus*) and *chemism* (*Chemismus*). They are equally the still imperfect concepts – i.e. both of them are the concepts existent only *in itself* – whereas *purpose* is the concept as existent *for itself*. But mechanism and chemism are also very different from each other – in *mechanism* the object is only the indifferent relation to itself (i.e. the object is not considered as related to the other) whereas in *chemism* the object at least presupposes its relation to the other.<sup>43</sup> The two forms in chemical process sublate each other reciprocally, and this shows the path from chemism to teleological relationship. Consequently the *concept*, which was still merely present *in itself* in mechanism and chemism, now becomes *free*, and this concept that is now *for itself* is *purpose*.<sup>44</sup>

#### (b) Teleology, and Transition to the Idea

Purpose (*Zweck*) is the concept which is now *free* and *is-for-itself* (*für-sich-seiende*) by means of the *negation* of immediate objectivity. The purpose itself is the *sublation* of the *contradiction* between the self-identity and the negation posited in the antithesis. In this sense *purpose* is the *activity* (*Tätigkeit*) which negates the antithesis; i.e. the purpose posits its self-identity. This is *the realising of the purpose* (*das Realisieren des Zwecks*). Here purpose sublates the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity since the purpose makes itself into the other of its subjectivity and objectifies itself.

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<sup>42</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 194, p. 272.

<sup>43</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 200 Addition, pp. 277-78.

<sup>44</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 203 Addition, p. 279.

Therefore purpose has *concluded itself alone* and has *preserved itself*. That is, purpose does not pass over (*nicht übergeht*) but *preserves itself* (*sich erhält*). Purpose is at the end what it was in the *beginning*; what is truly *original* is only through this *self-preservation* (*Selbsterhaltung*).<sup>45</sup>

Teleological relation is initially *external purposiveness*. Here the purpose is *finite*, and its self-determination is merely *formal*. Teleological relation is, then, *sylogism*.<sup>46</sup> Then teleological relation leads to the point at which the one-sided subjectivity is sublated in the realising of the *purpose*. The concept posits itself as the essence of the *object*, in taking hold of means. But the object is already posited as *null* and merely *ideal* since the accomplished purpose is determined only as means and material. Here the opposition between *content* and *form* has also vanished. The reason for this is as follows: Purpose concludes itself with itself by sublating the form-determinations, therefore *form* is posited as *identical* with itself, i.e. as *content*; and hence the *concept*, as the *activity of form*, has only itself for *content*. The concept of *purpose* is thus posited through such whole process. The unity *in-itself* of the subjective and the objective is now posited as *being-for-itself* (*als für sich seiend*). This is the *idea*.<sup>47</sup>

In other words, ‘Since the purpose (*Zweck*) is the concept that is posited as ... relating itself to objectivity and as sublating ... its defect of being subjective, the purposiveness (*Zweckmäßigkeit*) which is initially *external* becomes *internal* and the *idea* through the realisation of the purpose’.<sup>48</sup>

### Section 3

#### The Idea

The *idea* (*Idee*) is what is *true* in-and-for-itself, and is the absolute unity of the concept and objectivity. In other words, the *ideal* content (*ideeller Inhalt*) of the idea is the *concept* in its determination whereas the *real* content (*reeller Inhalt*) of the idea is only

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<sup>45</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 204 and Remark, pp. 279-80.

<sup>46</sup> *Enc. Logic*, §§ 205-06, pp. 281-82.

<sup>47</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 212, pp. 285-86.

<sup>48</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 710, trans. emended.



the presentation (*Darstellung*) that the concept gives itself in the form of *external thereness* (*äußerlichen Dasein*), i.e. in its *objectivity*. Therefore since this figure (*Gestalt*) is included in the *ideality* of the concept or in its might (*Macht*), the *concept* preserves itself (*sich erhält*) within its ideality.<sup>49</sup>

The *idea* is the truly genuine *concept*, i.e. the *true* as such or the objectively true. Anything possesses *truth* only insofar as it is through the *idea*. The *idea* is the unity of the concept and objectivity, but it should not be grasped as a goal, a beyond. That is, it must be recognised that everything actual *is* only insofar as it possesses the *idea* and expresses it.<sup>50</sup> At the stage of the *concept*, ‘*being* has attained the significance of *truth* in which the idea is the unity of the concept and reality; thus *being* is now only what the *idea* is’.<sup>51</sup>

The definition of the *absolute* has now reached the ultimate, *absolute* stage – as the *idea*, as stated above. All the previously given definitions return into this definition which is itself absolute. The idea is the *truth* since the term ‘truth’ means the correspondence between objectivity and the concept. The absolute is the *universal and one idea*, the particularisation of which is the *judging* into the system of *determinate* ideas. But these determinations return into this *one idea*, their *truth*. Because of this judging into *determinate* ideas, the *idea* is initially just the one and universal *substance*. But the more developed, authentic actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) of the idea is *subject* and thus *spirit* (*Geist*). However, it is to be remembered that the *idea* is essentially *concrete* since the *free* concept determines itself and thereby makes itself *real*.<sup>52</sup>

The *idea* can be grasped as (1) reason, (2) subject-object, (3) the unity of the ideal and the real, of finitude and infinity, (4) the possibility which has its actuality in itself, and (5) that whose nature can be comprehended only as existing, and so forth. The *idea* can be grasped in all these ways since the idea contains within itself all the relationships of the understanding in their *infinite self-return* and *self-identity*.<sup>53</sup>

The *idea* is not merely the unity of the concept and reality, but, more precisely, it is the unity of *subjective* concept and *objectivity*. That is, the *concept* as such is the identity of the concept itself and the *reality* since the term ‘reality’ means in general the

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<sup>49</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 213, p. 286.

<sup>50</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 755-56.

<sup>51</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 757, trans. emended.

<sup>52</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 213 Remark, pp. 286-87.

<sup>53</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 214, p. 288.



being-there (*Dasein*), and the concept possesses this being-there in its own particularity and singularity. Similarly, *objectivity* is the total concept that has withdrawn into the identity with itself.<sup>54</sup>

The *idea* itself is the *dialectic* which eternally distinguishes the self-identical from the differentiated, the subjective from the objective, the finite from the infinite. The idea is eternal creation, vitality and spirit in this sense. The above distinction or diversity is the one side of the idea, i.e. the *abstract understanding*. The other side of the idea is *reason* – in that through *dialectic* this diversity (the product of the understanding) is known to be *finite*, and the independence (also as the product of the understanding) is known to be a mere semblance, and its truth is known to be the *unity* of the moments differentiated by the understanding. There is a *double movement* between the understanding and reason, between distinction (or diversity) and unity. This double movement is *not temporal*; and in this movement the *distinction* (as independence, separation) as the feature of the understanding and the *unity* as the feature of *reason*, are *not separate*. In this way this double movement is the eternal *intuiting* of itself into the other. Through this intuiting (as double movement), the concept is the *objectivity* and *subjectivity*, i.e. as the object which is the inner purposiveness as essential subjectivity.<sup>55</sup>

In the negative *unity* of the *idea*, i.e. in this double movement, the infinite overgrasps (*greift hinüber*) the finite, thinking overgrasps *being*, and subjectivity overgrasps objectivity. Therefore the unity of the *idea* (as subjectivity or thinking or infinity) has to be essentially distinguished from the *idea* as *substance*.<sup>56</sup>

It is to be noticed that the *idea* is *process*<sup>57</sup> – in that it is within the process as the self-movement (self-development and self-explication) of the *absolute*.

The stages of the *idea* in its development in the *process* are (a) *life* (i.e. in the form of *immediacy*) and (b) *cognition* (as *mediation* or difference). The result of the process of *cognition* (i.e. the re-establishing of unity enriched by distinction) leads, through (c) *willing*, to (d) the *absolute idea*. This last stage of the logical process (i.e.

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<sup>54</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 758.

<sup>55</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 214 Remark, p. 289.

<sup>56</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 215 Remark, p. 290.

<sup>57</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 215, p. 290.

the *absolute idea*) proves also to be what is genuinely *first* and what is only *through itself*.<sup>58</sup>

### (a) Life

Life (*Leben*) is the *immediate idea*. Life is its own *result* as the *negative* unity that is *for-itself*. Life concludes itself only with itself in the dialectic of corporeity. Hence life is essentially the singular *living being* (*Lebendiges*) in its immediacy.<sup>59</sup> However, the significance of *life* as the *process* consists in the *overcoming* of the above *immediacy*. This process, a threefold one, results in the *idea* in the form of judgement, i.e. the *idea* as *cognition*.<sup>60</sup> Living beings are active syllogisms or *process*. In this sense it is to be noticed that within the subjective unity of living being, the three processes are only the aspects of *one* process (*ein Prozeß*).<sup>61</sup>

The details of the above 'three processes' of living being are as follows. (1) The first process is that of the living being *inside* itself. It sunders itself and makes its corporeity into its *object*, or into its *inorganic* nature. Here the emphasis is on the self-reproduction, and the living individual behaves itself inwardly as subject and the concept. (2) In the second process the judgement of the concept in its freedom goes on to release the above objectivity out of itself as an independent *totality*. The *dialectic*, through which the object *sublates* itself, is *the activity of the living being that is certain of itself*. Living being thereby maintains, develops and objectifies *itself*. Here the living individual assimilates its external objectivity to itself. (3) In this way the living individual posits the real determinacy within itself as the substantial universality.<sup>62</sup>

### (b) Cognition

The *idea* is freely *for-itself* inasmuch as the *idea* has itself as its object. The subjectivity of the *idea* is the pure distinguishing inside itself.<sup>63</sup> The *idea* is the certainty of the implicit (*an sich seiende*) *identity* of the objective world with it. Reason is that which

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<sup>58</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 215 Addition, p. 291.

<sup>59</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 216, p. 291.

<sup>60</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 216 Addition, p. 292.

<sup>61</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 217, p. 292.

<sup>62</sup> *Enc. Logic*, §§ 218-20, pp. 292-93.

<sup>63</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 223, p. 294.



posits this identity.<sup>64</sup> The *reason* acting as the understanding consists in that the *truth* reached by the understanding is only the *finite* truth – in that the understanding considers the infinite truth of the concept as *fixed* as a *goal* that is only *in-itself*, or as a *beyond* (cf. Kant's *noumenon*) since the understanding considers the conceptual *determinations* as merely diverse or different from one another. Yet, in truth, the understanding stands under the guidance of the *concept*, but the understanding does not know this.<sup>65</sup>

Cognition (*Erkennen*) can be grasped as the moments of both *analytical method* and *synthetic method*. The analytical method consists in making a *concrete universal* (e.g. the genus, or force and law) stand out through the *abstraction* from the seemingly inessential particularisation. The analytical method has formal identity or the *abstraction* of universality.<sup>66</sup>

The *synthetic* method is the taking up of the object into the form of the *determinate* concept of the understanding.<sup>67</sup> The difference between analytic method and synthetic method is as follows: The *analytic* method starts from the *singular* and advances to the *universal*. In contrast to this, the *synthetic* method starts with the *universal* (as a definition), and through the *particularisation* (in division) it advances to the *singular* (in the theorem). Therefore the synthetic method is known to be the development of the moments of the *concept* in the object.<sup>68</sup>

The details of *synthetic method* are as follows. (a) *Definition* is the object which is brought first into the form of determinate concept by cognition. The material and justification of definition are provided by the *analytical method*.<sup>69</sup> Three moments of the *concept* which *definition* contains are (1) the *universal* as the proximate genus, (2) the *particular* as the determinacy of species, and (3) the *singular* as the defined object itself.<sup>70</sup> (b) *Division* is the determinacy of the *universal* as *particularisation*; this is the specification of the second moment of the *concept*, as stated above.<sup>71</sup> *Theorem* is, as its

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<sup>64</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 224, p. 295.

<sup>65</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 226, p. 296.

<sup>66</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 227 and Addition, p. 296-97.

<sup>67</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 228, p. 297.

<sup>68</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 228 Addition, p. 297.

<sup>69</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 229, p. 297.

<sup>70</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 229 Addition, pp. 297-98.

<sup>71</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 230, p. 298.



object, a synthetic relation of distinct determinations when taken in its *concrete singularity*.<sup>72</sup>

Necessity as such, in itself, is now known to be the concept that relates itself to itself. In this way the subjective *idea* reaches what is in-and-for-itself determinate, and is thus *immanent* in the subject. The subjective idea as cognition is now to pass over into the idea of *willing*.<sup>73</sup>

### (c) Willing

The *drive (Trieb)* of the subjective *idea* as the *good (das Gute)* to realise itself has, as its converse, the drive of the idea of the *true*; and it aims to determine, by its own purpose, the world which it finds already there. The *willing (Wollen)*, then, ascertains itself that the presupposed object must be null and void (*Nichtigkeit*); the drive, however, as being *finite*, considers *the purpose of the good* as merely *subjective idea*, and this drive presupposes the independence (*Selbständigkeit*) of the *object*.<sup>74</sup>

Therefore the finitude of this activity of the drive is the *contradiction* – in that the purpose of the good is both achieved and not achieved in the self-contradictory determinations of the objective world. In other words, the purpose of the good is posited as both essential and inessential purpose, and as both actual and merely possible purpose. This contradiction is the *infinite progress* in the actualisation of the good, as fixed in this progress as a mere *ought (Sollen)*. How can this contradiction be resolved? The above activity of the drive *formally* sublates the subjectivity of the purpose and hence also sublates the objectivity which is the subjectivity's antithesis that makes both (subjectivity and objectivity) *finite*. That is, the activity of the drive *sublates* the *subjectivity in general*, not the finitude of *this* or *that* subjectivity. Moreover, in this infinite progress of willing, the subjectivity, as the re-production of its antithesis (objectivity), cannot be distinguished from the previous subjectivity. This is the return or recollection (*Erinnerung*) of the *content* (which is both the good and the identity in-itself) into itself. Or rather, it is the recollection of the theoretical activity, cognition.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 231, p. 299.

<sup>73</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 232, p. 301.

<sup>74</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 233, p. 301.

<sup>75</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 234, pp. 301-02.

In other words, in the above infinite progress, the finitude of *willing* (which has been considered as only *practical*, not theoretical), through this process of the willing itself, is *sublated* as the will's returning to the presupposition of *cognition*. Therefore such sublation or recollection is the unity of the theoretical and practical *idea*.<sup>76</sup>

That is, the *truth* of the *good* is posited as the *unity* of the theoretical and the practical *idea*. This is the truth that the good has been reached in-and-for-itself, i.e. that the objective world is in-and-for-itself the *idea*, positing itself as *purpose*, and also bringing forth its actuality through its activity. This *life* (*Leben*) is the *speculative* or *absolute idea* – in that *life* has returned to itself from the difference and finitude of cognition, and in that life has become identical with the *concept* through the activity of the concept.<sup>77</sup>

#### (d) The Absolute Idea

The *idea* is the *concept* of the *idea*, as the unity of *subjective* and *objective* idea. For the concept of the idea, the idea as such is the object, i.e. the object is itself. Therefore the unity of subjective and objective idea is the absolute *truth* and all truth. This unity is *the idea that thinks itself* (*die sich selbst denkende Idee*).<sup>78</sup> It should be pointed out that in the realm of logic the *idea* is presented as *thinking*, i.e. as *logical* idea, of course.<sup>79</sup>

The *absolute idea* is the unity of the *practical* and *theoretical* idea. It is thus the unity of the idea of *life* and the idea of *cognition*. Here the idea of *life* is only the idea *in-itself*, and the idea of *cognition* is only the idea *for-itself*. Therefore the unity and truth of these two ideas is *the idea in-and-for-itself*, hence it is *absolute*.<sup>80</sup>

The above stated can be explained thus as follows. The *absolute idea* is the identity of the theoretical and practical idea, as stated above. The rational concept, by virtue of its immediacy of objective identity, is the return to *life*, and is also the sublated form of its immediacy as life, and contains within itself the highest degree of opposition. The *absolute idea* alone is *being*, imperishable *life*, self-knowing *truth*, and

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<sup>76</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 234 Addition, p. 302.

<sup>77</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 235, p. 303.

<sup>78</sup> I discussed this point, i.e. the influence from Aristotle, in Chap. 4 Sec. 3(b).

<sup>79</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 236, p. 303.

<sup>80</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 236 Addition, p. 303.



is all truth. The absolute idea is the sole subject-matter (*Gegenstand*) and content of philosophy.<sup>81</sup>

In the *absolute idea* there is no longer passing-over nor presupposing. Therefore the absolute idea is for itself the *pure form* of the *concept* which intuits its *content* as itself. The absolute idea is its own *content*; and this content is the system of the *logical*. All that remains as the *form* for the idea is the *method* of this content. The true content of the absolute idea is the entire system; it is the *absolute form*. All determinations as the whole of the content return into this absolute form.<sup>82</sup>

The moments of the speculative method are (1) the *beginning*, (2) the *progression* and (3) the *end*. They are explicated as follows.

(1) The *beginning* (*Anfang*) is *being* or the *immediate*. But it is the self-determining which judges and posits itself as the negative of itself. Hence being is *negation*, *positedness* (*Gesetzsein*), *mediatedness* (*Vermitteltsein*) and *presupposition* (*Vorausgesetztsein*). But being is the concept that is not yet posited as the *concept*. It is merely *the concept in-itself* (*der Begriff an sich*) which is still indeterminate. This being is just as much the universal. The beginning, in the sense of *immediate* being in the finite cognition, is taken from sense-intuition: this is the beginning of the *analytical* method of finite cognition. Here the *logical* is something that simply *is*, and is the concept itself in its *immediacy*. On the other hand, the beginning, in the sense of *universality*, is the beginning of the *synthetic* method of finite cognition. Here the *logical* is something-universal; i.e. it is something that the *concept* presupposes to itself.<sup>83</sup> Hegel points out an important issue. That is, the philosophical method is both analytic and synthetic – in that the philosophical method contains the analytic and synthetic methods sublated within itself, and the philosophical method thus behaves both analytically and synthetically in every one of its movements.<sup>84</sup>

(2) The *progression* (*Fortgang*) is the posited judgement of the idea. Progression is the *immediate universal* as the concept in-itself; it is the dialectic of spontaneously (*an ihm selbst*) reducing its own immediacy and universality to a moment. Therefore what-was-first (*das Erste*), i.e. the negative of the beginning, is now posited in its *determinacy*, compared to the indeterminacy of the beginning. This

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<sup>81</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 824.

<sup>82</sup> *Enc. Logic*, §237 and Addition, p. 304.

<sup>83</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 238 and Remark, pp. 304-05.

<sup>84</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 238 Addition, p. 305.



progression is both *analytical* and *synthetic*. It is *analytical* because, through the immanent dialectic, only what is contained in the immediate concept is posited. It is also *synthetic* because this distinction had not yet been posited in the immediate concept<sup>85</sup> – since philosophical method is both analytic and synthetic, as stated above. Progression has taken its various shapes in the system of logic. In the realm of *being* the abstract form of progression was *an other* (*ein Anderes*) and *passing-over* (*Übergehen*) into an other. In *essence* the progression was *shining* within what-is-opposed (*Scheinen in dem Entgegengesetzten*). In the *concept* the progression is at first the *distinctness* of singularity from universality, and this distinctness reaches the point at which this distinctness is also as *identity*.<sup>86</sup> The development of *essence* (the second sphere of logic) becomes a return into the first sphere of logic, *being* – in that the concept, which was *in-itself* in *being*, has come to *shine* in *essence*. That is, the *concept* was already *in-itself* the *idea*. Each of these two spheres (being and essence) consummates itself into the totality, and works out its unity with the other. Only through this *double movement* (*gedoppelte Bewegung*) does the distinction between the two spheres (being and essence) get its due. That is, the *self-sublating* of the one-sidedness of these spheres prevents the unity from becoming one-sided.<sup>87</sup>

(3) The *end* (*Ende*): The above second sphere of essence develops the relation of the distinct terms into what it is initially; i.e. into the *contradiction* in these terms themselves – in the *infinite progress*. This contradiction resolves itself into the *end* where what is different is posited as what it is in the concept. This *end* is a unity in the sense that it is the negative of the first and the negativity of its own self. Here both of these first terms (as ideal and as moments) are there as *sublated* and thus also as *preserved*. The concept as the *end* is the *realised* concept. Here the concept is the *idea* for which the end is also only the vanishing of the semblance that the beginning may be something-immediate. In this sense the idea is a *result*. This is the cognition that the idea is the *one totality*.<sup>88</sup>

What is the *method* is to be stated here. Method (*Methode*) is in truth the *self-knowing concept* – as the *absolute*, as the subjective-objective for its subject-matter (*Gegenstand*), and therefore as the pure correspondence between the concept and its

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<sup>85</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 239 and Remark, pp. 305-06.

<sup>86</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 240, p. 306.

<sup>87</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 241, p. 306.

<sup>88</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 242, pp. 306-07.

reality, i.e. as the *concrete* which is the concept itself. That is, the *method* is, as Hegel grasps, the *movement* of the concept itself. And what is explicated here is that the concept is *everything (alle)*, and its *movement* is the universal absolute activity, i.e. the self-determining and self-realising movement.<sup>89</sup>

The *method* is not a mere form, but the soul and concept of the content. Method is distinct from the *concept* only inasmuch as the moments of the concept do reach the point where they appear as the totality of the concept. Here the *idea* presents itself as a systematic totality, i.e. as only *one idea* – in that the content as determinacy leads itself back to the idea. The particular moments of this *one idea* are in-themselves (*an sich*) this same idea. This leads to that, through the *dialectic* of the *concept*, these moments produce the simple being-for-itself of the *idea*. Therefore the science of logic concludes itself at the point where it grasps the concept of itself *as* the concept of the *pure idea* for which the *idea* is.<sup>90</sup>

According to the above unity, the *idea* that is *for itself* is *intuiting* and this intuiting idea is *nature*. The absolute *freedom* of the *idea* is that it does not merely pass over into *life*, nor that it lets life shine within itself as finite cognition, but that the absolute freedom of the idea resolves to release the moment of its own particularity or of the initial determining and otherness, i.e. the immediate *idea*, as its reflexion (*Widerschein*) or itself as *nature*.<sup>91</sup>

## Section 4

### Dialectic in Kantian and Pre-Kantian Philosophy

In the historical development of *dialectic*, the dialectic which old Eleatics and Plato emphasised, had a feature that two different items can be asserted: e.g. finitude *versus* infinity in space and time; presence versus non-presence in this place, etc. Here the emphasis is on the *contradiction* and *nullity* of the assertions. But this shows two meanings: (1) In the objective sense (as by Eleatics), the subject-matter (*Gegenstand*) contradicts itself and cancels (sublates) itself out and is null and void. Here truth is

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<sup>89</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 826.

<sup>90</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 243, p. 307.

<sup>91</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 244, p. 307.



denied to world, motion, point, etc. (2) In the subjective sense, cognition is defective. This view would lead to a rather Kantian stance, according to which the dialectic imposes on us the trick of illusion; and this view is considered as the so-called 'sound commonsense' (my wording). This is the prejudice by which dialectic is considered to lead only to the negative result.<sup>92</sup>

In *form* the above commonsensical view (i.e. that subject-matter or subjective cognition is null and void) has not had an insight on determinations (*Bestimmungen*). It is Kant's contribution that he showed a critical view of the above *uncritical* view for the first time in modern history of philosophy. His contribution is, briefly, 'the restoration of *logic* and *dialectic* in the sense of the examination of the determinations of *thought* in and for themselves'.<sup>93</sup>

Kant showed the *dialectic* as necessary to *reason* although he himself regarded the dialectic as defective and deceptive.<sup>94</sup>

## Section 5

### Hegel's Dialectic in the Concept

Some points of dialectic described by Hegel himself are to be shown here.

One of the important concepts for the dialectic is *contradiction*. The thinking of *contradiction* is the essential moment of the *concept*. Formal thinking, i.e. the understanding, does not know this; it considers the contradiction to be unthinkable; i.e. although it views contradiction, it passes over to abstract negation.<sup>95</sup>

Dialectic is to be considered as the *truth*, which can be grasped through the threefold negation. The negative, initially the first negative, is the turning point of the movement of the *concept*. The negativity is the source of all activity and spiritual movement; this negativity is the *dialectical* soul which everything true possesses and through which alone the *true* is true. Hence the second negative (the negative of the negative), then, is the *sublating* of the *contradiction*, the sublating of the opposition

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<sup>92</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 831-32.

<sup>93</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 832-33, my italics.

<sup>94</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 831. I discussed this problem of Kant in Chap. 1 Sections 4 and 5.

<sup>95</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 835.



between the *concept* and *reality*. The second negative is thus the objective moment of *life* and *spirit*. (This would suggest the development from the realm of *logic* to those of *nature* and *spirit*.) Then, the *third* comes. The *third* is the *positive* which results from the sublation of the negative; it is the concept which has realised itself by means of its otherness and which, by the sublation of its reality, has become united with itself and has *restored* its *absolute reality*, i.e. its simple relation to itself. Therefore the *third*, the *result*, is *truth*; it is equally *immediacy* and *mediation*. This third is the *self-mediating movement and activity* as this unity of immediacy and mediation. In other words, the *third* is the result, conclusion – at which the *concept*, by its own negativity, mediates itself with itself and hence posits itself as the *universal* and the *identity* of its moments.<sup>96</sup>

Then, the main feature of Hegel's dialectic expressed in the realm of concept is to be discussed.

The *concept*, as has been described, is the ultimate phase of logic. The concept is the being-once-more – in that the *being* which was negated in *essence* is restored as the second negation of the first negation (i.e. essence). The concept is therefore the absolute self-identity as the negation of negation, i.e. the infinite unity of the negativity with itself.<sup>97</sup>

The concept contains within itself the moments of universality, particularity and singularity. But the main point is that those moments are in a *unity*, i.e. in the unity as the *unseparatedness in distinction* expressed by Hegel as 'the clarity of the concept'.<sup>98</sup>

However, having said this, the feature of *distinction* among those moments plays an important role in *judgement* – in that the judgement is the concept as the *distinguishing relation* of those moments. Yet the concept is essentially *one*; those moments are not separate. Only the representational thinking would hold such miscomprehension, i.e. the isolation of those moments.<sup>99</sup> Judgement is the concept in its particularity, or rather, the posited particularity of the concept is judgement – in that the determinacy of the concept (the subject) is particularity, initially as the distinction of moments, then as the identity of moments. Through this, the subject *is* predicate – in that the subject as the singular develops to the point at which the subject acquires the

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<sup>96</sup> *Sci. Logic*, pp. 835-38.

<sup>97</sup> See Preliminaries (d) in this chapter.

<sup>98</sup> See Sec. 1(a) above.

<sup>99</sup> See Sec. 1(a) and (b).

particularity and the singularity; and the predicate as the universal develops to the point at which the predicate acquires the particularity and the singularity. The three moments are thus united, retaining the distinction among themselves. In other words, the *judgement* is the unity of subject and predicate as the concept itself.<sup>100</sup>

Syllogism is the restoration of the concept in judgement. Syllogism is therefore the unity and truth of both the concept and judgement. The *subjectivity* of the concept reaches the *objectivity* through syllogism. Syllogism is the necessary path to proceed *from the subject to the object* in this sense. To elaborate: The result of syllogism is the self-sublation of the distinction of the moments (singularity, particularity and universality) and also the self-sublation of the self-externality of the concept. Syllogistic reasoning entails that the subject concludes itself with *itself*, i.e. the sublated other (the object). The concept realises itself as the passage *from the subject to the object*; i.e. the object is the realisation of the *concept*. In this context the syllogism is the process which embodies within itself the unity (or identity), i.e. the infinite self-sublation of the above moments expressed as the totality, the whole process. This process of syllogism is truly *dialectical* although this point is not known by the abstract understanding. Syllogism is useful only when it is used as the process of reason.<sup>101</sup>

The object is the immediate being as the sublated distinction and is the totality in itself. In other words, the object is its own *unity* itself – in that the identity of its moments is the identity as totality. Objectivity has the forms of mechanism and chemism. The main difference between them is that *chemism* is at the threshold to *teleology* since chemism at least presupposes the presence of its other, and the forms in chemism *sublate* each other.<sup>102</sup>

Purpose is the concept which is *free* and is *for itself*. The main feature of *purpose* is *self-preservation*. Teleological relation develops – from the stage of external purposiveness, through the stage of syllogism, to the stage of the realising of the purpose. At the stage of purpose the opposition between *content* and *form* vanishes – in that the purpose concludes itself with itself by sublating the form-determinations and thereby positing the *form* as identical with itself, i.e. as *content*; here the *concept*, the activity of *form*, is *content*. In the process of purpose, the concept is known to be the

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<sup>100</sup> See Sec. 1(b), esp. (iv).

<sup>101</sup> See Sec. 1(c), esp. (iv).

<sup>102</sup> See Sec. 2(a).



unity in-itself of subjectivity and objectivity, and is therefore the being-for-itself, which is the *idea*.<sup>103</sup>

The *idea*, the highest phase of the *concept*, is what is true in-and-for-itself: it is the absolute unity of the concept and objectivity. The *idea* is thus the truly genuine concept. That is, the *idea* is the *true* as such, the objectively true. More precisely, the *idea* is the unity of subjective concept and objectivity. Or rather, the *idea* is the concept as such. It is the identity of the concept itself and reality. The *idea* shows the ultimate exposition of dialectic. Dialectic is initially shown in the abstract understanding – in that here dialectic *distinguishes*. Dialectic is then shown in *reason* – in that the distinction or diversity set forth by the understanding is known to be merely the *finite*, and the truth consists in the *identity* of the moments which were separated by the understanding. The *idea* is this *dialectic*, which is the unity of the understanding and reason. Or rather, the non-temporal double-movement between them is the *dialectic*, which has now arrived at the highest stage of the concept, the *idea*, i.e. the ultimate stage of the *absolute*, the explication of which is the whole of logic.<sup>104</sup>

Dialectic, in my view, is the movement as the unity of unities – in that the dialectic is the double-movement between the understanding and reason (as stated above), and this unity is the unity of the infinite and the finite, each of which is itself the unity of itself and its own other. The infinite is *thought*, and the finite is *reality*. That is, the infinite, as the unity of such unities, is the *speculative*, the unity of the infinite (as dialectical thought) and the finite (as the understanding); each of the dialectic (in the narrow sense) and the understanding presupposes its other.

Life, an aspect of the process of the *idea*, is the *dialectic*, through which the object *sublates* itself; it is the activity of the living being which is certain of itself, i.e. which knows its own purpose. Dialectic at the highest stage, is thus inseparable from teleology.<sup>105</sup>

The *absolute idea*, i.e. the concept of the *idea*, is not only the unity of subjective idea and objective idea, but also the unity of practical idea and theoretical idea. In the latter sense, the absolute idea is the unity of the idea of *life* (which is *in-itself*) and the idea of *cognition* (which is *for-itself*). In this sense the idea is now *the idea in-and-for-itself*, hence it is *absolute*. At the stage of the absolute idea the difference between form

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<sup>103</sup> See Sec. 2(b).

<sup>104</sup> See Sec. 3.

<sup>105</sup> Loc. cit.

and content had already vanished (as aforementioned in the *purpose*). The absolute idea is the *form* of the concept which intuits *content* as itself; the content of the absolute idea is the absolute *form*. The science of logic concludes itself at the point where it grasps the concept of itself as the concept of the pure idea for which the idea is.<sup>106</sup>

All the above descriptions are the summary of the dialectical movement of the *concept*, which is the highest expression of the *absolute*. That is, the *absolute* has found itself as the *idea* as such, the absolute idea, and it is therefore the turning point into *nature*.

What is to be described, then, is: (1) dialectic as the self-movement of the *absolute*, (2) dialectic as the ultimate expression of the *infinity* (which was at first expressed in the realm of being, then as *contradiction* in the realm of essence), (3) dialectic as the *truth* (which contains within itself both *reason* and the understanding), (4) dialectic as *the unity of unities* (as the infinite *double-movement*), and so forth. All these points are the various aspects of one and the same truth, dialectic. They will be explicated in the next chapter, focusing on the three key-concepts expressed as (1) the absolute, (2) contradiction and sublation, and (3) the identity of thought and being.

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<sup>106</sup> Loc. cit.



## Chapter 8

### The Fundamental Feature of Hegel's Dialectic

#### Section 1

#### Logic as the System of the Truth

Before discussing Hegel's dialectic in general, what *logic* is for him has to be examined. Logic is for Hegel the exposition of God in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and spirit.<sup>1</sup> Here 'God' means the thought which thinks itself.<sup>2</sup> That is, at the final phase of the *concept*, i.e. the absolute *idea*, the *absolute* has found itself as *noesis noeseos* (the self-thinking thought above mentioned).<sup>3</sup>

For Hegel the 'logic' designates a system, a circle which concludes itself as the thought that thinks itself. That is, for him *logic* is a full circle in which the *result* as the *end* is the accomplished, fulfilled *being* (from the stage of *pure being* as the *beginning*), i.e. the *concept* which conceives itself, i.e. the being that has become the *concrete* and is now the thorough *totality*.<sup>4</sup> The end of logic is the *concept*, the ultimate exposition of which is the *idea*. Hence the dialectical system of logic is a circle of circles, a whole of wholes, each one of which is a self-manifestation of the *idea*, the ultimate phase of the *concept*.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Sci. Logic*, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> See Chap. 4 Sec. 3(b).

<sup>3</sup> Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle*, p. 132.

<sup>4</sup> Burbidge, *On Hegel's Logic*, p. 219; cf. *Sci. Logic*, p. 842.

<sup>5</sup> E. E. Harris, *An Interpretation of the Logic of Hegel*, p. 14; cf. *Enc. Logic*, § 15.

This 'idea' is the ultimate self-explication of the *absolute* as it is expressed as *thought* (thinking). The 'absolute' means that it is unbounded and unconditioned by anything other than itself. The *absolute idea as thought* is therefore the thought which has become unbounded by anything else; it has come to make itself the object of its own thinking. That is, at the stage of the *idea*, the absolute has found itself as nothing but *the thought which thinks of itself*, the self-thinking thought. All the previously described categories in *logic* are the moments or phases of the self-movement of *thought*, the *absolute*. The *absolute as thought* (which self-develops and self-explicates) knows itself also as the *being* which is in the mode of *knowing* itself – since knowing is the movement of being. The whole process of the development of the *absolute* in the system of logic, shows this absolute *identity of thought and being*, the truth.<sup>6</sup>

In the context of the self-thinking thought, *mediation* plays an important role. One of the main points of Hegel's dialectic is *self-mediation* – in that 'thinking' means that one meets with oneself in the other. The whole of Hegel's system of logic is the absolute self-mediating *totality*. In this system the *end* is the expressed *self-mediation* of the *beginning* that is *the whole in itself*, the articulation of which is dialectic. The *double* or *two* of the 'dia' of *dialectic* implies the sublation of double into *one* absolute, self-mediating whole. Or, in other words, the *two* or *double* means the two sides of the *one* encompassing process of absolute self-mediation. For Hegel the 'dia' of *dialectic* is the prelude to the return of thought to itself, i.e. to the thought which thinks itself in the other. Here the other is not real other – in that this other finally returns to the thought itself in its otherness.<sup>7</sup>

Thus stated, the *absolute* has finally (but atemporally) found itself as the absolute idea, as absolute thinking, the object of which is itself. In the system of logic, the absolute starts its progression from the stage of *being*, which shows itself initially as simple *being*, and then *nothing*, and their truth, *becoming*. Then it turns into its higher truth, *being-there*. The realm of being-there shows the importance of *infinity*, which is the double-movement of the infinite and the finite. Then, by showing the *reality* as the second *negation* of the first, abstract negation (the *ideal*), this being-there turns into *being-for-itself* which includes the *one*. At the stage of the *one*, *being as quality* turns into *quantity*. Quantity, through the stages of pure quantity and *quantum*, then turns into *measure*. Measure, through the unity with the measureless, shows that the *being as*

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<sup>6</sup> I will elaborate this issue in Sec. 2 below.

<sup>7</sup> Desmond, 'Thinking on the Double', pp. 224, 230, 232.



immediate explicates itself as *mediation*. Here *being* is no longer being, but *essence*, the sublated, negated being. Essence, the timelessly past being, initially shows itself as *reflection* which embraces *Schein*. Reflection has its determinations as *identity*, *distinction* and *contradiction* (in which the opposition is reflected into itself and withdraws into its *ground*). But essence does not stop to stay as mere reflection as shining and mediation with itself. Essence has to show the self-sublation of distinction and mediation. Essence restores itself as the *immediacy* or *being* again, as *existence*. Existence shows itself as *thing*, which has contradiction of *form* and *matter*. Hence *thing* is, then, *appearance* or shining-forth. Essence is not behind nor beyond *appearance*. Appearance embraces within itself the distinction between the *inner* and the *outer*, between *content* and *form*. But soon afterwards it is known that they are essentially identical. This identity is *actuality*. Actuality as such shows itself as *possibility*, *contingency* and *necessity*. Then actuality shows itself as *substantiality*, *causality* (cause and effect) and *reciprocal action*. In reciprocal action the seemingly *distinct* determinations are known to be *identical*. But the *absolute*, at the stage of actuality, cannot fully explicate itself – in that cause and effect are still the lower moments of a higher whole. The absolute as *essence*, then, has to explicate itself as the *concept*. The concept, the highest phase of the *absolute*, the system of development and explication of which is *logic*, has to show itself initially as *subjective* concept. The concept, still as *subjectivity*, shows itself as *judgement*, and then as *sylogism* (the unity of the concept and judgement). But sylogism (and judgement as well) is not merely subjective; it shows the path from subjectivity to *objectivity*. Objectivity shows itself initially as *mechanism* and *chemism* as the concepts existent *in itself*. The higher stage of the concept *for itself* is *purpose*. Teleology clearly shows the *unity in-itself* of the subjective and the objective as the *being-for-itself* which is the *idea*. The *idea*, the ultimate phase of the *concept*, is the *truth* – in the sense of *the unity of objectivity and the concept*. The *idea*, as *life*, *cognition* and *willing*, finally (but atemporally) and ultimately explicates itself as the *absolute idea*, the *truth* as such, which is logic's whole process itself, totality. The driving force of the development throughout the whole system of logic, is contradiction and its sublation. Each category in logic has within itself its contradiction, and it has to be sublated by being developed to higher (in *being*) or more mature (in *essence*) or more absolute (in the *concept*) category.

The *truth* is to be disclosed only as this whole process of *logic*, which is the self-development and self-explication of the *absolute* as the self-thinking thought. In no

other way can this ultimate, absolute truth be known. If the truth is that which can be *proved* (in ordinary sense) in other ways or by something other than itself, then the ‘ultimate’ or ‘absolute’ truth is in fact not ultimate nor absolute. (This means that the *absolute truth* cannot be grounded nor conditioned by anything other than itself; hence it can be duly called ‘absolute’.) This unconditioned truth, the absolute truth, is *the self-thinking thought*. Being unbounded by anything other than itself, this *absolute truth*, as the self-thinking thought which is the unity of subjectivity and objectivity as the *idea in-and-for-itself*, is *freedom* as such. *Truth* shows itself as the cognition of this truth of *thought* – as the unity of subjectivity and objectivity, or, in other words, as *the identity of thought and being*.

## Section 2

### The Identity of Thought and Being

In the sphere of the *concept*, as stated above, the *thought* recognises its categories as the determinations both of *being* and of *thought*.<sup>8</sup> In other words, the system of Hegel’s logic determines the structure of *being* as well as of *thought*. Therefore his system of logic explicates not simply validity, but *truth*.<sup>9</sup> This shows the identity of thought and being.

The above can be also stated as follows. The *thought* characterises its entire range of the *objects*. Hence there are no remainder, i.e. no things-in-themselves left outside the structure of *thought*. That is, the structure which is manifested by the self-comprehension of *thought*, also embraces within itself the structure of all *objects of thought*. An object which is not an object of thought, is not an object in truth.<sup>10</sup>

When described in general terminology, *being* can be also called *reality* (not in Hegel’s strict sense as the negation of the *ideal*), or the objective world, or objectivity. *Thought* (or thinking), by the same token, can be also called cognition or the subjective (also not in Hegel’s strict sense). The so-called identity of thought and being can be thus called *the identity of reality and thought*, or the unity of objective reality and

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<sup>8</sup> Houlgate, *Freedom, Truth and History*, p. 57.

<sup>9</sup> Houlgate, p. 70.

<sup>10</sup> de Vries, ‘Hegel’s Logic and Philosophy of Mind’, p. 230.



subjective thinking. However, as Hegel explicates throughout the whole development of the spheres of the *concept*, this identity is not a fixed identity – such as the abstract understanding supposes – but the identity as the *progression* from the subjective concept to the truly objective concept, the *idea*, which is the ultimate expression of the *absolute*. This progression is, in other words, the self-movement of the absolute *from subjectivity to objectivity*. Thought is not merely subjective, but truly objective. Only by seeing this whole development of the *concept* can the identity of thought and being be properly grasped. This progression from subjectivity to objectivity is clearly shown in the *sylogism*.<sup>11</sup> And also at the stage of *purpose*, the *concept* is known to be the unity in-itself of subjectivity and objectivity.<sup>12</sup>

The *idea* is not only the unity of subjective concept and objectivity, but also the unity of the understanding and *reason*; the latter consists of the negatively rational (as *dialectical reason* – in the narrow sense) and the positively rational (as *speculative reason*). The understanding supposes the clear-cut distinction between subjectivity and objectivity. But the *thought* at the level of *reason* knows that this clear-cut distinction is not the ultimate truth. It knows that the truth consists in the unity of the seemingly separate opposites, i.e. the unseparatedness in distinction. This unity is not static but in movement; or rather, the unity is the self-movement of the *absolute* itself – in that it departs from itself and returns to itself. In this sense the movement of the absolute is *infinite*, or rather, *infinity* as such.

The *absolute*, to know itself, has to explicate itself for itself initially as *being*, then as *essence*, and finally (but atemporally) as the being-once-more, the *concept*. This non-temporal self-movement (as self-departing and self-returning) is the whole system of the self-development, and thus the self-explication, of the absolute. (Only after the transition into *nature* does the *temporality* emerge, hence in *logic* every movement is non-temporal.) However, this whole movement was implicit or *in itself* in the realms of being and essence. This movement is shown explicitly or *for itself* only in the realm of the *concept*, as the *idea*, which is the ultimate expression the absolute gives to itself. The *thought*, as the absolute *idea*, has come to explicate itself only through this systematic, self-upgrading exposition of itself, by proceeding from *being* and its negation, *essence*, and reaching the *concept*, as the truth of itself.

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<sup>11</sup> See Chap. 7 Sec. 1(c)(iv).

<sup>12</sup> See Chap. 7 Sec. 2(b).

'Truth' can have various meanings – such as (1) the unity (or agreement) of reality (or being) and thought (or thinking, knowing), (2) the unity of subject and object, (3) the unity of subject and predicate (this truth is clearly shown in *judgement*, as the fulfilment of the copula 'is'),<sup>13</sup> (4) the unity of reason and the understanding, (5) the unity of quest and answer (the resolution of the quest), and so forth. Here the meaning of the 'truth' as the unity (agreement) of reality and thought has to be emphasised. For Hegel, God alone is the genuine agreement between the *concept* and reality.<sup>14</sup> God is for him the thought which thinks of itself, as aforementioned. The object of this self-thinking is the *thought* itself. It may appear that Hegel has dropped 'being' from his view. But it is not so – since *thought* is also the self-movement of *being* itself. Knowing or knowledge is that which aims at the *true*, i.e. what *being* is in-and-for-itself.<sup>15</sup> Without *being* (or reality – in general terminology) there would be no *knowing* or *thought*. It is to be remembered that at the stage of the *concept*, *being* acquires the significance of *truth* – in that the *idea* is the unity of the concept and reality.<sup>16</sup> This agreement between the concept and reality, i.e. the *idea*, is the truth, as stated above. It is now known that this truth, the identity of thought and being, has been already presupposed in the concept of God, the self-thinking thought, which is the sole absolute truth.

*Truth* in any sense (as stated above variously) is the double-movement of the absolute – in that it embraces within itself the two moments which are contradictory and are thus to be sublated into a unity. Truth is in this sense not what is static but the movement of the absolute – for Hegel as the self-thinking *thought* which embraces within itself *being*.

However, the next question arises here. That is, *how* and *why* does this movement of the absolute *emerge*? To answer this, the concept of *energeia* is important.

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<sup>13</sup> See Chap. 6 Sec. 1(b); cf. *Enc. Logic*, § 169.

<sup>14</sup> See Chap. 4 Sec. 2; cf. *Enc. Logic*, § 24 Addition 2.

<sup>15</sup> See Chap. 6 Preliminaries (a); cf. *Sci. Logic*, pp. 389-90.

<sup>16</sup> See Chap. 7 Sec. 3; cf. *Sci. Logic*, p. 757.



### Section 3

#### Dialectic as the Truth

Aristotle's *energeia* is variously rendered by Hegel as *actuality* (*Wirklichkeit*) or *activity* (*Tätigkeit*) or *development* (*Entwicklung*). Hegel interprets *energeia* as the self-referential activity, as the actualisation of the potency which is immanent in the subject of the movement as the developing process. This is variously expressed as the processes, from the self-grounding of *essence* to the *concept*, or from teleology to life, or from the finite thinking of man to the absolutely free *thinking* which has itself as its object. For Hegel this last expression is Aristotle's *noesis noeseos* (the thought thinking itself, i.e. the self-thinking thought), which is the prefiguration of *absolute spirit*.<sup>17</sup> (However, it is to be remembered that it is Hegel himself who combined the unmoved mover, God, with the above self-thinking thought.)<sup>18</sup> For Hegel and Aristotle (as rendered by Hegel) *energeia* is the self-determining *concept*, the universal in its concretisation. For them the *end* is the *true*, the *concrete*. For Hegel, in this sense, Aristotle expresses the *speculative idea*, i.e. the absolute as the *thought*.<sup>19</sup> Pure *energeia* is the thought which thinks itself since the *thought* is the essence of the first substance and is the thinking in actuality. For Hegel, Aristotle expresses the *true* as the becoming *identity* of subject and object in the above expression (the self-thinking thought) which is nothing but pure *energeia*. Here the *identity* is *activity* and *movement*, and so is *energeia*.<sup>20</sup>

Thus stated, *energeia* is the *truth* as such – as the activity and movement as such, which is rendered by Hegel variously, but ultimately as the *concept*. Truth is the unity or identity of subject and object, of reality and thought, of the understanding and reason, and so forth.<sup>21</sup> But the main emphasis by Hegel consists in that the *truth* is the activity and movement of *thought*. For him this *thought* is the thought which thinks itself, the *concept* as such, i.e. God.

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<sup>17</sup> Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle*, pp. 7-8; cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1074b.

<sup>18</sup> See Chap. 4 Sec. 3(b).

<sup>19</sup> Ferrarin, p. 108; cf. Hegel, *His. Phil.*, II, p. 134.

<sup>20</sup> Ferrarin, p. 124.

<sup>21</sup> See Sec. 2 in this chapter.

However, Hegel does not deny the importance of *reality* (in ordinary sense) or the real. But his main point is that the *reality* can be grasped properly only in *thought*. To elaborate: Truth is the movement of the *thought* as such. This movement is, as has been clarified, the *double-movement* which embraces within itself the unities of opposites, i.e. the unities of the infinite and the finite, of subject and object, etc. As a whole of these unities, *truth* is itself *the unity of unities*, as the *infinite* as such, i.e. as the affirmative, true infinite. This affirmative infinite alone is the truly *real*, as the negation of the first, abstract negation (the ideal).<sup>22</sup> In this context the *thought* as the infinite is the solely *real*, the true. For Hegel the unity of reality and thought is grasped as the infinite self-movement of the *thought*, as the self-identification of thought with itself.

Logic is for Hegel the system of the description of the determinations of *thought* which, being in their finitude, exposes the *infinite*.<sup>23</sup> In this context the truth of *logic* is the thought's returning unto itself. Through the whole process of logic, *thought* becomes truly itself; the thought comes to think itself; the thought becomes *infinite*.

Thus stated, *logic* is a full circle of the descriptions of *thought*, which culminates in the *idea*. Logic is the whole process through which alone the *absolute* (as the self-thinking thought) knows itself – until it finally (but atemporally) comes to know itself as the *concept* as such, the *idea*. In this sense the whole content of logic is the self-exposition of God which is the self-thinking thought. Dialectic is the *activity* of thought which immanently dwells in thought-determinations.<sup>24</sup> In this sense, dialectic is that which penetrates, or runs through, the whole process of logic. Since logic is the infinite self-development, and thus the self-explication, of the self-thinking thought, the *dialectic* is the infinite movement of the *thought* as such, of this self-thinking thought. As long as the 'truth' means the absolute unity of reality and thought, as the thought's self-identification to itself, the *truth* consists in its being the self-explication of the *thought*. Dialectic is in this sense the self-explication, self-activity, of the *thought* as this *truth*, as the movement of the *absolute*, the knowing of God.

Unlike the understanding which has the feature of restrictedness or one-sidedness, *reason* is the faculty of the unconditioned, i.e. the faculty to know the

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<sup>22</sup> See Chap. 5 Sec. 2(e); cf. *Sci. Logic*, p. 149.

<sup>23</sup> See Chap. 4 Sec. 1(c); cf. *Enc. Logic*, § 82 Remark.

<sup>24</sup> See Chap. 4 Sec. 3; cf. *Enc. Logic*, § 41 Addition 1.



*absolute*.<sup>25</sup> As long as the 'dialectic' means the explication of the *truth*, dialectic is also the *self-movement* of the thought itself to attain the absolute truth, as the thought's self-knowing. Dialectic is therefore the faculty of *reason* to know what the *absolute* is – in both senses of the negatively rational (dialectical reason – in narrow sense) and the positively rational (speculative reason). In this context, dialectic is infinite, i.e. the immanent transcending, sublation, which penetrates the whole range of the thought's self-development, *logic*. Dialectic is in this sense the moving soul of scientific progression.<sup>26</sup>

However, this *thought*, the *truth* as such, does not dwell solely within itself, i.e. in the system of logic. If *logic* is the science of determinations grasped in *thought*, and if its ultimate *truth* is expressed as the *concept*, then how *energeia* is at work in nature and in spirit, has to be shown.<sup>27</sup> That is, the *idea* must fall into *nature*. The *concept*, as the absolute *idea*, as the spirit conscious of itself, as complete in itself, must go out of itself to capture itself through *nature* and *spirit*. That is, *spirit* must realise the dialectic of the *idea* and explicate itself by going through the process – from the absolute *idea*, then the particularisation in *nature*, to the individuality in *spirit*. Or rather, nature and spirit are the moments of the self-actualisation of the *idea* as self-determining spirit. Hence, with the culmination as the *idea*, *logic* must conclude itself when spirit grasps itself as the totality of its moments. The release of the *idea* into nature expresses its *freedom* by which the *idea* (as the infinite) assumes a finite form, nature. This release is in truth the work of the self-knowing activity of the *idea* itself.<sup>28</sup>

Thus stated, the *absolute* as the *idea* as such finally knows itself as nature. As side by side with the *idea*'s self-release into nature, dialectic has to be released into its freedom. That is, *dialectic* is to be grasped not only with the emphasis on the self-movement of *thought*, but with the emphasis on the self-development of *reality*. This will be explicated in the following chapters.

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<sup>25</sup> See Chap. 4 Sec. 2; cf. *Enc. Logic*, § 45.

<sup>26</sup> See Chap. 4 Sec. 1(b); cf. *Enc. Logic*, § 81 Remark.

<sup>27</sup> Ferrarin, p. 140.

<sup>28</sup> Ferrarin, pp. 196-97.

## **Part III**

### **Dialectic as the Truth of Reality and Thought**



## Chapter 9

### Transition to the Materialist Dialectic

#### Section 1

#### Who Thinks?

I have now clarified that for Hegel the *absolute* is the *thought* which thinks of itself. The thought, the expression of *spirit* in the realm of *logic*, has within itself the development of the categories which contain *contradiction* and its *sublation*. At the end of the whole process of *logic*, the *thought* as the *absolute idea* comes to know itself as *being* – not as the abstract being which was described as the first sphere of logic, but as *nature*. Thought has turned into nature. From Hegel's point of view this shows *the identity of thought and being* as the thought's self-identification, self-returning to itself. Being is not simply self-sufficient being, but the explication of *thought – for Hegel*. The *truth* as the *absolute*, i.e. the identity of thought and being, is for him the self-circulation of *thought* or *spirit*.

However, the next serious question or doubt arises: *what thinks?* or *who thinks?* or, in other words, *what is?* or *who is?* From Hegel's viewpoint the *thought* would be defined as the self-thinking thought (*noesis noeseos*), i.e. God, the *absolute* itself. For Hegel, therefore, that which thinks is the self-thinking thought. The activity and result of *thinking* (thought) is described as *nature*, but it is another expression of *thought*. Therefore this expression (self-thinking thought) cannot but be an empty tautology, however richly he has clarified the concreteness of *thought* with the detailed descriptions of categories in *Logic*. If *thought*, the absolute, *self-thinks*, then *nature* and

finite spirit (i.e. man and his society) are merely the empty replica, abstract skeletons of rich, concrete *thought*. Something must be odd or wrong with his descriptions.

The answer is clear: it is *man*, as *thinking body*, that actually thinks. But thinking man does not think in an empty, abstract realm. He exists in nature and in society which he created and developed through the interaction with nature over a long period. Thinking is the conscious *activity* of this actually *living human being*. Man *thinks* as this *living-thinking body* within nature and human society.

To elaborate: Man is a part of *nature*. As Ilyenkov argues, in *man*, nature acts as *thinking*. In other words, nature itself thinks, in this sense. Thought (thinking) is the activity of this one and the same *nature*. Therefore, if thought thinks of itself in Hegel's terminology, then this expression can be transformed to another one that nature, in the shape of man, thinks of itself in this rather Spinozistic sense. Thinking is the performance, action of the materially existing body. (Thinking is therefore materially existing action in this sense.) Hence there is no cause-and-effect relation between thinking (mind) and body which Cartesian dualism has been seeking in vain. Thinking and body are not two different things, but are the two aspects of the activity of one and the same *thinking body*, i.e. man who is *living* within nature. Thought is the *being* of this living body as *thinking*. Thought is not the product of an action, but the action itself of thinking body, man.<sup>1</sup>

## Section 2

### The Identity of Thought and Being – from the Materialist Viewpoint

Although Hegel himself clearly states that *thoughts* are not merely subjective but 'objective thoughts', and that therefore *logic*, the science of the objective thoughts, coincides with the science of *things* grasped in *thoughts*, i.e. *metaphysics* (in his sense),<sup>2</sup> yet it cannot be denied that he in fact does not succeed in clarifying how and why *thought* is objective. This is simply because he thinks that *thought* itself is the

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<sup>1</sup> Ilyenkov, *Dialectical Logic* (hereafter abbreviated as *Dia. Logic*), pp. 34-35. Hereafter I will often refer to this work of Ilyenkov. However, my arguments in this chapter (and in the next) are not the mere paraphrasing of his theory. They are rethought and presented through my interpretation of dialectic.

<sup>2</sup> Hegel, *Enc. Logic* § 24, p. 56; cf. Ilyenkov, *Dia. Logic*, p. 195.



generator of all things, beings, reality, the world, etc., – not vice versa. The question where and how thought originates must be answered.

To reply to the above question, how Hegel endeavours to clarify the objectivity of thought (although he is not successful), has to be explained at first. He intends to make *logic* coincide with its real subject-matter, i.e. with *real thought*, the universal forms of *reality*. That is, he tries to make the *subjective* consciousness of the thought about itself be *identical* with its *object*, i.e. identical with the universal and objective forms of *universal* (not individual) *thought*. For him the principle or concept of *the identity of subject and object, of thought and being*, is the most crucial principle of philosophy. But this means that for him this principle requires the self-identification of thought: one and the same *thought* is both subject and object. When he refers to the term ‘thought’, this identity, coincidence, is always presupposed; and this *thought* is the primary and ultimate, all the truth, as this self-identity.<sup>3</sup> He is clear and right about the importance of this identity of subject and object, of thought and being. His error, however, consists in his misconception of the *origin* of the *thought* expressed as *categories*.

For Hegel *categories*, the forms of thought, are eternal, stemming from themselves, as the expressions of the self-activity of *thought* itself (the expression of spirit in the realm of logic). On the contrary, as Ilyenkov argues, the truth is that these *categories* of thought stem only from the historical process of the interaction, co-operation of the enormous sum of individuals who really lived and acted through *labour* (the core factor of human society), creating, using and developing *language* (also the core factor for man to be man), i.e. the instrument of thinking and communication.<sup>4</sup> Through the historical process of the development of human society, mankind has realised and developed both sides of *thought*, as its subjective and objective sides, and accordingly deepened the distinction between thought as such and the thought about being. But they are to be, and actually had been, intermingled. In ancient Greece, before Socrates and Plato, thought about itself (philosophy) and thought about being (science) were not separate. But in the modern era, especially since Descartes, the distinction between thought and being had been taken for granted, except for Spinoza. Philosophers had endeavoured to connect thought and being, subject and object – they intended the conquest of dualism: but their conclusions were not

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<sup>3</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 198-99.

<sup>4</sup> *Dia. Logic*, p. 206.

satisfactory as Hegel clearly demonstrated.<sup>5</sup> However, his own solution of the problem of the relationship between thought and being was to expound the thought's self-identity, self-returning to itself.<sup>6</sup> He did not succeed in explicating the relationship of thought and being.

The truth is that *categories* are the universal forms of all the objects grasped in *thought*; categories were formed by mankind through his historical and conscious endeavours. In other words, categories are the universal determinations of *objects* in the eyes of human cognition (science, in a broad sense), in the eyes of universal thought. Hegel regards these *categories* (of thought) as the self-sufficient units, not as the forms of objectively existing *materials, reality* grasped in human cognition. He falsely considers these forms (categories) as stemming from themselves in *thought*. Although he correctly recognises categories as universal, yet his recognition is based on the presupposition of the *neglect* of the origin of the very categories, which are in truth the expressed forms of objective beings. Categories are the universal forms of the reconstruction, reflection of those objects in the *consciousness* of all the individuals of mankind in all the history of human society, which means all the collective efforts of the past generations of living-thinking human beings with their power of their collective, impersonal *thought*. This is the true meaning of *universal* and *objective* thought. Categories have been developed as the universal schemas of scientific cognition – at first as a particular individual's cognition, and then as incorporated into collective cognition of mankind as a whole; and in later generations an individual receives and utilises this scientific cognition as *given*, as *granted*, and further develops this cognition. Thought, as the collective mass of categories, in this sense, presupposes this historical process which is usually hidden behind its seemingly non-historical universality. However acutely and correctly Hegel apprehends the historicity of thought (as the history of philosophy), he is not free from the false presupposition, i.e. eternal, non-historical apprehension of the universality of thought. (However, it is also to be reminded that it is his very conception of *historicity* (another important aspect of *dialectical* thinking) that gave to later generations, Marx and Engels, a key to the solution of this problem of the *historicity of thought*.) Categories function as the active forms of thought-activity, i.e. as the forms of processing the materials of sense impression into the forms of concepts. Thought, in the forms of categories, thought-

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<sup>5</sup> See Chapters 1-3 on Hegel's critique of Kant, Fichte and Schelling.

<sup>6</sup> See Chap. 8.



forms, thus stems from the objective materials grasped in man's thought-activity. Thought-forms, categories, are not external, existing outside man, but are the realised forms of man's own *activity* which is both the living and the thinking. Thought is this form of the activity of living-thinking man. Thought can never be separated from materials although they are not the same.<sup>7</sup> This unseparatedness in distinction, as in Hegel's terminology, is the 'clarity of the concept'.<sup>8</sup>

However, Hegel's contribution, i.e. the clarification of the concreteness of thought, is to be remembered. That is, for him *thought* embraces the objectification (or externalisation) of *thought* as the practical realisation of thought in the material world through man's action, *practice*. The human action, practice, transforms materials according to man's subjective concepts (forms of thought). Language is a good example. The recognition of the role of *practice* is Hegel's great contribution to philosophy. Thought is thus outwardly expressed in the forms of human language (or speech) and action (or practice). Thought is the realisation of living-thinking man's *being*, in this sense.<sup>9</sup>

Having said this, though, Hegel falsely tries to solve the contradiction between thought and being by the abolition of this very contradiction: being comes to be embraced within thought, as Feuerbach criticises.<sup>10</sup> For Hegel the identity of thought and being is the thought's self-identification with itself, as aforementioned.<sup>11</sup> That is, the being expressed in the forms of thought (categories), is posited everywhere in the place of real being. Hegel's conception of the identity of thought and being is therefore a tautology: man thinks the world as and how he thinks it. That is, for Hegel the principle of the identity of thought and being is not truly established: being as such, i.e. the free, independent, self-sufficient *being* existing outside and independently of thought, is not taken into account. (We have only to remember a simple fact: when mankind emerged, the world had already gone through its history for billions of years.) For Hegel being comes to be immaterial and undetermined; this *being* is in fact the *noumenon* which Kant envisaged as outside of man's cognition. Kantian dualism is still hidden and retained in Hegel's philosophy. For Hegel (and for other philosophers as

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Dia. Logic*, pp. 206-08.

<sup>8</sup> *Enc. Logic*, § 164 Remark, p. 242; see Chap. 7 Sec. 1(a).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Dia. Logic*, pp. 209-10.

<sup>10</sup> Ludwig Feuerbach, 'Vorläufige Thesen zur Reform der Philosophie', in *Kleinere Schriften* II [1839-46] (Berlin, 1970), p. 257; cf. *Dia. Logic*, pp. 212-13.

<sup>11</sup> See Chap. 8.

well) thinking mind, as something immaterial, is opposed to everything material. For him the thinking mind is an immaterial being which is organised self-sufficiently by its own logical forms. Thus his *Logic* cannot but be the representation of *thought* as the activity of such supernatural, immaterial *subject*, which inevitably forces itself to have the relation of *mediation*, from *outside*, with *nature* and finite *spirit* (man) in order to shape them according to its own image.<sup>12</sup> This is a hidden revival of Fichte's *Anstoß*. For Hegel *thought constitutes being*, in fact.

### Section 3

#### Feuerbach's Contribution to Materialism

However, as Feuerbach rightly suggests, the *thought* as such which Hegel describes as the self-sufficient, self-thinking thought is in fact *human thought*, abstracted and alienated from man and counterposed to man as the activity of a special being existing beyond man. The question *how* thought as such is related to being as such, is in truth *impossible* – since this question is based on the presupposition that *thought*, as the alienated form of man's thinking, is taken as something independent in contrast to *being*. This *being*, taken properly, is not *being in thought*, but is the real, sensuous, objective world of nature and man, including thought. That is, *being* includes not only *nature* but also the *thinking body of man*. When being is considered merely as the ordinary being in nature (such as stones, trees, stars, etc.), this view of being is narrow. This means that considering *being*, excluding man (as living-thinking body) from view, is insufficient, misleading. This insightful, correct suggestion by Feuerbach is the revival of Spinoza's view in a more advanced, refined manner.<sup>13</sup>

When described in a materialist way, *thought* is the real activity of the living brain of man. That is, it is not necessary to ask how thought is connected with brain since there is only one and the same thing: a *brain* whose activity is thinking. Or, more philosophically put, the real *being* of living brain is *thought*, and real *thought* is the *being* of the living brain which is an indispensable part of the living-thinking body of man. In other words, this is the immediate unity of soul and body, the separation of

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<sup>12</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 212-13.

<sup>13</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 214-15.



which Cartesian dualism had falsely presupposed. There is no distinction between material and immaterial being. With this unity 'matter thinks and the body is mind, and conversely the mind is body and thought is matter'.<sup>14</sup>

*The identity of thought and being*, grasped in such a materialist way, is the expression of true philosophy. This does not need a scholastic proof or mediation. Without this identity there is no truth; or rather, *truth* is this identity which requires no presupposition. This seems to be what Feuerbach suggests. That of which he accuses Hegel is not the latter's recognition of this identity of thought and being in the *thinking man*, but his false attempts to comprehend this unity of opposites (thought and being) from the unsatisfactory view of the division between thinking spirit and unthinking flesh, resulting in the product of joining them together. Dualism is not yet overcome by Hegel, who tries to comprehend the real fact from two equally false abstractions: proceeding from illusion to fact and from abstraction to reality. Materialism, as Feuerbach rightly suggests, starts from an opposite point: it starts from the directly given facts in order to clarify the origin of those false *abstractions* which idealism uncritically accepts as given. To say it again, Hegel starts from the viewpoint of the opposition of incorporeal thought and flesh without thought in order to reach the unity of opposites. Materialism, on the contrary, starts from the factual, direct, indivisible *unity* of the *human individual*, and thus can comprehend how and why the illusion held by idealism (i.e. the imaginary opposition of thought and corporeal being) emerges in the mind of this human individual, this living-thinking body of man.<sup>15</sup>

In other words, Kantian dualism, or even Cartesian dualism, is still hidden in Hegel's philosophy. To prevent this implicitly remaining dualism from appearing, Hegel has to retreat to the last resort of the concept of the self-thinking thought, a monistic and also tautological expression in which dualism remains hidden, untouched – although he is not a mere monist nor a dualist. This is the limit of Hegel's dialectic.

The living, thinking brain, as Feuerbach also correctly suggests, is an *object* in which there is an identical opposition expressed as that between thought and sensuously objective being, between thinking and what is thought, between the ideal and the real, between the spiritual (or ideal) and the material, between the subjective and the objective. That is, this living-thinking brain (the essential part of the living-thinking

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<sup>14</sup> Feuerbach, 'Über Spiritualismus und Materialismus', in *Kleinere Schriften IV* (Berlin, 1972), pp. 152-53; cf. *Dia. Logic*, p. 216.

<sup>15</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 216-17.

body of man) is a very special, particular object which can be comprehended only in such a way that mutually exclusive determinations are mutually determined as embracing or entailing the direct *unity, identity* of such mutually opposing categories mentioned above.<sup>16</sup>

As explained above, thinking is a material process, in the sense of the material *activity* of a material organ (brain of living-thinking man) whose product is correlated with things-in-themselves (when expressed in Kantian terminology), i.e. with the things outside of thought. Thinking does not need any merciful aid of God or the power of the absolute spirit or whatever. *Concepts* – philosophical, religious, scientific, social or whatever – do exist in one and the same space-time as *real things*. One and the same subject, this living-thinking man, perceives and thinks of this *world*, of which he himself is a part, within which he finds himself surrounded, with these *concepts*. This living-thinking man exists only as this sensuously objective creature. Therefore *logic*, the system of the logical determinations of the world comprehended in thought (i.e. concepts or categories), is nothing but the system of the descriptions of this one and the same material world. What differentiates *logic* from sensuous cognition is that there is the contemplation of this world through logical thought-determinations in the former. Therefore it is clear that there is no distinction between *logic* (the system of the universal determinateness of this material world comprehended in logical thought-determinations, categories) and *metaphysics* (the expression of the abstract, universal determinateness of the things given in *intuition*) since *logic* (related to thought) and metaphysics (related to intuition) deal with one and the same real material world which man (living-thinking being) lives. *Logic*, properly grasped, is thus the science of the laws of the development of *real thinking* (thinking of this material world), the science which expresses itself as the system of the *universal forms* of the *real content of thought*, i.e. this real material world sensuously given to man.<sup>17</sup>

Hegel's *Logic* is the description of this real world in this sense, as Feuerbach rightly points out. The *logical* forms of judgement presupposes the *metaphysical* concepts such as – universality, singularity and particularity – the whole and the parts – necessity, ground and concepts, etc. Logical forms are possible only through these

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<sup>16</sup> Feuerbach, 'Wider den Dualismus von Leib und Seele, Fleisch und Geist', in *Kleinere Schriften* III (Berlin, 1971), p. 125; cf. *Dia. Logic*, p. 219.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Dia. Logic*, pp. 220-21.



metaphysical concepts. Without metaphysics there is no logic: 'only metaphysics as the science of categories is the true *esoteric* logic – that was Hegel's profound thought'.<sup>18</sup>

That is, *logical forms* are nothing but the *realised universal forms of being*, of the real material world sensuously given to man. This is the core of *materialism*, and is the core of the meaning of the identity of thought and being in the materialist sense. The comprehension of the truth as the identity of thought and being, in this materialist view of Feuerbach, is absolutely indispensable to any materialist view if one intends to be a consistent materialist – even though his view had some logical weak points as Marx acutely criticised later.<sup>19</sup>

The weak points of Feuerbach's view are (1) the lack of the concept of the *practice* of man, and (2) the lack of *dialectic*. As for the former, Marx points out: 'The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism (that of Feuerbach included) is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object or of contemplation, but not as *sensuous human activity, practice*, not subjectively. Hence, in contradistinction to materialism, the active side was developed abstractly by idealism – which, of course, does not know real, sensuous activity as such.'<sup>20</sup> Feuerbach's lack of the grasp of *practice* is shown when he fails to see that the actually existing nature given to us is itself in fact the *product* of human *labour*. Nature is not simply nature; it is given to us as the realised labour of man.<sup>21</sup>

On the other hand, the latter weak point held by Feuerbach, i.e. the lack of *dialectic*, is, too, not only his weak point, but also that of 'all hitherto existing materialism'. The above quotation in fact indirectly indicates also the lack of dialectic in all the previously existed systems of materialism (i.e. before that of Marx). That is, the sensuous human activity, as *practice*, is nothing but the activity of the living-thinking man who acts in this real material world. Feuerbach cannot apprehend this real world as self-developing according to the laws inherent within itself; i.e. he fails to see the self-movement of this real world. He cannot see the dialectical moments inherent within nature and human society. This dialectical point of view was, in fact, developed and made mature only by so-called idealists, namely Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. That is, *dialectic*, in the modern history of European philosophy, could not but be developed

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<sup>18</sup> Feuerbach, *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie* (Berlin, 1955), p. 35; cf. *Dia. Logic*, pp. 221-22.

<sup>19</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 222-23.

<sup>20</sup> Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach* I. p. 171, my italics.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Dia. Logic*, pp. 224-25.

in the idealist manners and systems which culminated in Hegel's philosophical system, the core exposition of which is his *Logic*. His *Logic* is therefore the *culmination* of the exposition of *dialectic* in all the hitherto existing philosophical systems of any kind – although in a one-sided manner in which the identity of thought and being is comprehended as the thought's self-identity to itself – a tautology. Our task to develop the theory of dialectic should be based on the sure grasp of Hegel's dialectic with critical eyes. Hegel, even at the beginning of the twenty-first century, is never a 'dead dog', as Marx says: 'The mystification which dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands, by no means prevents him from being the first to present its [the dialectic's] general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With him it [dialectic] is standing on its head.'<sup>22</sup> It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell.'<sup>23</sup> Our task, and also my task in which I have been engaged through all the previous chapters, is to find this 'rational kernel' within Hegel's gigantic system of *Logic*, as the system of the *truth* comprehended in his one-sided but great manner. This is the only possible method for the further development of the theory of *dialectic*.

So much for Feuerbach. We shall turn to the core of materialist dialectic, i.e. the dialectic initiated by Marx. Truly comprehensible materialism starts from the critique of *objective idealism*.

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<sup>22</sup> Interestingly a similar expression had already been used by Hegel himself when he criticised Empiricists on their misconception between the concrete universal and abstraction, saying that 'this stands things on their heads' (*Enc. Logic*, § 227 Addition, p. 297). Marx obviously knew the details of Hegel's *Logic*, including *Zusätze*. It is therefore thinkable that Marx made an allusion to Hegel, employing the latter's critical comment, to criticise Hegel himself. Engels later used similar critical expressions on Hegel, saying that 'the Hegelian dialectic was placed upon its head', or '[the] head, on which it was standing' (Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, p. 383). Engels, of course, knew both Hegel's and Marx's above expressions.

<sup>23</sup> Marx, 'Afterword to the Second German Edition', in *Capital I*, p. 19.



## Section 4

### Critique of Objective Idealism

Hegel's philosophy as a whole can be described as *objective idealism* of such kind as which does not neglect the existence of real being, the real world, and nevertheless finds the origin of *thought* in thought itself. Or rather, it does not even allow such a question of where thought originates to arise.

To elaborate: Hegel considers all the forms of human culture (including all the theoretical human activities, namely philosophy) as the manifestation of the faculty of *thinking*. He does not feel the need of an inquiry into the origin of thinking, i.e. *where* and *how* thought (or thinking) emerges in man. Thought, thinking, is considered by him as a kind of divine power which does not need any presupposition – since the thought which thinks of itself, *noesis noeseos*, is the meaning of God, for him. Hegel does not need a view of the *real* human being – in the sense that he consequently does not see the sensuously objective activity of all the human beings who, by their own *labour*, create human culture (including political institutions, legal systems, ideology). The external objective world exists for him only as a manifold of *materials* to realise and concretise *thought* itself. Therefore for him *thought* is the only active and creative force, and consequently the external objective world is merely the application of this divine power, *thinking, thought*. That is, the sensuously objective practice of the actually existing living-thinking man is considered by him as the *consequence*, external objectification, of the thought-determinations (such as ideas, concepts, categories). For him *thought* is the creator of material world, *being*. He does not need to ask where and how thought originates. Thought comes from itself; or more simply, thought *is*. Thought comes to know itself, as expressed in the details of his *Logic*.<sup>24</sup> To know itself, *thought* (the explication and expression of the *absolute* as the *absolute idea*) turns into *nature*, the real *being*. Thought is the actor, creator of the real world.<sup>25</sup> This Hegelian expression is absolutely upside down. This is the most crucial feature of Hegel's version of objective idealism.

However, despite the weakness explained above, Hegel's objective idealism has a decisive merit. That is, what he describes as the forms of the manifestation and

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<sup>24</sup> See esp. Chap. 8.

<sup>25</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 236-37.

realisation of thought, i.e. logical categories and their expressions in *Logic*, are in fact the *real* forms of really existing material world – since he acquires such conception of categories through the study of the really existing material world which he himself sees as the mere manifestation of thought. His upside-down thinking does not prevent him from reaching the appropriate, real conception of the real world.<sup>26</sup> Hence the following words of Lenin: ‘The sum-total, the last word and essence of Hegel’s logic is the *dialectical method* – this is extremely noteworthy. And one thing more: in this *most idealistic* of Hegel’s works [*Logic*] there is the *least* idealism and the *most materialism*. “Contradictory”, but a fact!’<sup>27</sup> Hegel’s version of objective idealism can be even considered as idealistically described materialism, i.e. materialism which is upside-down. This is the merit of Hegel’s philosophy.

Having said this, however, the weak point of Hegel’s view cannot be denied. That is, he *idolises* the categories (i.e. the logical forms of human thought about the real world), and considers them as *absolute*, excluding the need of any explanation of their real *origin*.<sup>28</sup> Therefore his objective idealism results in the tautology of his *logic*, as the system of the development of the *thought* which thinks of itself.

Then, the quest of the possibility of the further development of the theory of *dialectic* in the materialist manner has to be asked.

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<sup>26</sup> *Dia. Logic*, p. 237.

<sup>27</sup> Lenin, ‘Conspectus of Hegel’s Book *The Science of Logic*’ (1914), in *Philosophical Notebooks* (hereafter abbreviated as *Phil. Note.*), p. 234.

<sup>28</sup> *Dia. Logic*, p. 238.



## Chapter 10

### Towards the Materialist Reconceptualisation of Dialectic

#### Section 1

##### The Real and the Ideal in Materialism and Idealism

From what has been explicated, it can be clearly said that Hegel's *categories*, the description of which is genuinely dialectical, are in truth the *universal forms* of the objective world *reflected* in the collective consciousness of *man*; the development of the external real world existing independently of *thought* (thinking) is reflected into our consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

However, the crucial point is that the reflection of objective *reality* into collective human consciousness is not *immediate*, i.e. not the immediate reflection of *nature*. This is what Marx points out. Man thinks only when he is in unity with human society, i.e. with the collective socio-historical materials, which produce his mental or spiritual life. That is, man does not directly reflect nature into his consciousness, but through 'the ideal'.<sup>2</sup> The *ideal* is the subjective reflection or image of objective *reality*. The ideal is the reflection of the external world in the forms of man's activity, in the forms of his consciousness and will. The ideal is not individual but socio-historical; the ideal is the product and form of man's mental production.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ilyenkov, *Dia. Logic*, p. 251. As described in the previous chapter, my references to Ilyenkov's work do not mean the mere paraphrasing, but are the reworked presentation of my interpretation of dialectic.

<sup>2</sup> I use the term 'the ideal' in contradistinction to 'the real' and 'the material'. As the later arguments will show, although the *ideal* does not exist in a physical sense, its existence is not illusory but *actual* in human thought and activities.

<sup>3</sup> *Dia. Logic*, p. 252.

Therefore, as Marx says, 'the ideal' is nothing but 'the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought'. Furthermore, as Marx also describes, *if* the inquiry into the subject-matter of the object which man is investigating, is correctly and accurately done on the basis of the above recognition of *reflection*, i.e. 'if the life of the subject-matter [of inquiry] is ideally reflected as in a mirror, then it may appear as if we had before us a mere a priori construction'.<sup>4</sup> This seems to show how and why Hegel's vivid descriptions of the categories in *Logic* are the accurate, but distorted or upside-down, descriptions of the objective world. Or, in other words, the material world is *correctly* translated into Hegel's system of philosophy, but correctly in a reverse way: he considers the *ideal* as the *real*, and the *real* as the *ideal* – not vice versa. This divides Hegel's *objective idealism* from *materialism*.

However, as Ilyenkov argues, various forms of materialism which existed before Marx, including that of Feuerbach, had a serious weak point in common: they directly identified the *ideal* with the neuro-physiological structure of man's brain and its functions. Although they were certainly right in pointing out the fact that man is a part of *nature*, yet they were insufficient in failing to recognise man as a socio-historical being. They could not understand the crucial factor of man's society – *labour*, i.e. the sensuously objective activity of *social man*, this living-thinking man in real society. Thus they could not properly understand the real society which is being formed by human labour. The truth of the matter is that the *ideal* is this result and active function of human *labour* in nature and society. The true meaning of the *ideal* was correctly grasped by, at first, *idealists*, namely Fichte and Hegel – in that the active aspect of the relation between thinking man and nature was seriously thought about by them. The appropriate materialism had to start from the debt to the great achievements of those idealists even though their descriptions of the ideal were in a distorted, abstract, one-sided or upside-down way.<sup>5</sup>

Categories in man's thought arise and function only as the forms of the determination of the purposive will of individuals in the course of the practical, objective transformation of nature by man in his society. Categories never arise in an empty space by the work of thought or contemplation. The *ideal* exists immediately only as the form of the *activity* of *social man*, i.e. man's *being* in the true sense, which is directed to the external world, the *real*. The material system of society, i.e. the whole

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<sup>4</sup> Marx, 'Afterword to the Second German Edition', in *Capital I*, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 253-54.



mass of social institutions, is in truth nothing but the social man who is in unity with real, objective world through which he acts as human life activity. The *ideal* therefore cannot be reduced to the *brain*. The ideal is the special function of this living-thinking man as the subject of social labour activity. Man inherits the forms of this activity from all the previous generations and develops them. *Practice*, or *labour*, or *production*, is the crucial link between man's thinking and nature. Through production, labour, man transforms the object of nature into the object of thought. Feuerbach did not understand this important link, i.e. labour, practice: he stopped only to think of nature directly counterposed to thought; he did not understand that the object of his contemplation or thinking is in fact the product of collective human labour.<sup>6</sup>

Contemplation is concerned not directly with the object, but with man's objective transforming activity on objects, and with the results of this practical, subjective activity. To elaborate: The so-called contemplation or intuition of *nature as such* is in fact concerned with the forms which had already been decisively stamped on the very contemplation by man's transforming activity of the object. Even the genuinely objective features of nature (as natural material) are given to man's contemplation only in the forms which man has given to natural materials through the process of the subjective activity on the materials. Therefore the so-called purely objective picture of nature is given to man not in pure contemplation but only as the result of social man's activity. Man produces his own life. Appropriate materialism is that which takes all the above points into account.<sup>7</sup> Therefore the following words of Marx: 'The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a *practical* question. Man must prove the truth, i.e. the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking in *practice*. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from *practice* is a purely scholastic question.'<sup>8</sup>

In the form of an active, real faculty of man as the agent of social *production* (the core factor for man's society to be society), the objects exist *ideally* as the result of this production as reflected into man's consciousness which is directed toward the aim of his own activity. Therefore the *ideal* is the *form* of things, which, however, exists outside of the very things, in the form of man's active *practice*. The ideal is the socially

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<sup>6</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 256-58.

<sup>7</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 258-59.

<sup>8</sup> Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach* II, p. 171, my italics.

determined form of human being's activity. Of course, the ideal does not exist in *nature itself* which includes man as a biological being. The *ideal*, i.e. *the active form of social man's activity*, is embodied in the *form* of the structure of human brain. But the *material being* of the *ideal*, in this sense, is merely the form of its expression in the organic body of individual man. Appropriate materialism does not identify the ideal with the material process which occurs in the human brain. It considers the *ideal* (i.e. the socially determined form of man's creating activity on objects) as not existing in man's biological head (brain), but as existing, through the work of the brain, in man's real objective activity on objects, i.e. in the social production (in the broadest sense).<sup>9</sup>

All forms of the *ideal* are the products, forms of man's historically developed society. The most appropriate example is *language*, which has vocabulary, syntax and its culmination in logical categories. Man, by the work of *language*, converts his words to actual deeds, and, through this, acts on *things*. The *objective*, the *real*, is thus properly transformed into the *ideal* only in the forms of the properties of social man, in this sense.<sup>10</sup>

The *ideal* is therefore that which does not exist in the form of sensuously perceivable things, but exists in the form of *active faculty of man*, the faculty of production as the realisation of his will on things. The *ideal being* of things has to be differentiated from the *real being* of things. That is, the *ideal* is the subjective being of the object, or the *otherness* of the object, i.e. the being of an object in-and-through another.<sup>11</sup>

Human *labour* – which is the *real* transformation of the world and of man himself, being performed in social forms – is the process within which the *ideal* is realised as the transformation of the *reality*, nature, human social relations. Language is the externality (objectification, realisation) of the *ideality* of the objective world. The *ideal* is thus realised through and by labour and language.<sup>12</sup>

Without an *ideal* image man cannot commit to nature; i.e. man cannot directly act on things in the process of social production. The ideal image, for its realisation, requires *real* materials, including *language*. That is, human *labour* needs *language*.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 260-61.

<sup>10</sup> *Dia. Logic*, p. 262.

<sup>11</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 264-65.

<sup>12</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 266-67.

<sup>13</sup> *Dia. Logic*, p. 274.



However, there is a problem of language. Language needs, as its constituents, linguistic symbols, i.e. vocabulary (words), some of which are of abstract concepts. When engaged in linguistic activity, man operates not on the *ideal* ground (in the aforementioned sense) but on the *verbal* ground. That is, it is not rare that a man comes to see the real things only through the already historically conceptualised terms: he comes to see only the terms themselves in a traditional context, not seeing the real things by means of those terms, yet believing that he is seeing the things. In such a way a linguistic symbol becomes a tool of *fetishisation* of the verbal existence of the *ideal* of objectively existing things; the symbol ceases to be a tool for the real activity (seeing the things themselves).<sup>14</sup>

In spite of such a risk, however, without the *ideal* images and symbols of language, man cannot act in the real world. Man needs the *ideal* images of real things to operate his mental life, an aspect of his living-thinking life. Only by transforming the real objects of human life activity into the ideal images can man be the active subject of social production (in the broadest sense aforementioned).<sup>15</sup>

The *ideal* is the form of man's activity. All forms of his activity – e.g. skills, technology, institutions, language – are passed on from the previous generations to later generations only in the *forms* created by man for man. They are not innate in man in a biological sense. An individual's form of activity, i.e. the ideal image of the object and product of his activity, does not coincide with the objective structure of nature as his object. But the *ideal* is possible only there: the form itself of his object, which corresponds to the form of the external real object, is transformed into a special object with which he operates without touching and changing the real object – to some extent. There man ceases to be merged with the form of his life activity: he separates the form from himself, and transforms it into an *idea*. This is inevitable and even necessary. For, since man grasps the external real objects only insofar as he is engaged in his activity of social production through the *ideas*, the ideal image of the objective real thing has inevitably to be merged with *the image of his activity* in which the thing operates by his hands. This is the *epistemological root of idealism* – through the identification of the *thing* with the *idea*, of the *real* with the *ideal*. But this is only a *root* of idealism: the objectification of the form, as taking the form of man's subjective activity as the real

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Dia. Logic*, pp. 274-75.

<sup>15</sup> *Dia. Logic*, p. 276.

object, is not itself *idealism*, but is even necessary for man to act.<sup>16</sup> Such objectification or identification of the ideal with the real – this necessary process – becomes *idealism* only under certain historically constituted social conditions, by the division of *labour* into mental one and physical one in history, i.e. in the class-divided society – in that those who only do the mental labour have a risk of thinking of the ideal as the real.

Idealism is not a person's personal tendency. A man who is engaged only in mental labour, often – not always, though – falls in the fetishisation of his activity itself. Religious fetishisation by priests of what is in fact man's faculty and activity (love, mercy, benevolence, contemplation, etc.) as God's faculty and activity, is a good example.

The *ideal* exists as the form of man's activity, as aforementioned. Its good example is the technique or skills of a craftsman. A man can observe the activity of the craftsman who is engaged in the material productive labour. But the observer cannot pass on the craftsman's technique directly into his physical body; the technique which is the *ideal* image, the active faculty possessed by the craftsman, can never be copied. One can acquire the equivalent technique only by being engaged in the equivalent active operation with the object and product of his labour. Only in such a way can the *ideal* be transformed from a man to another. This shows that the ideal exists only as the *form* of man's activity (namely, labour), related to the form of his object of such activity. The ideal is not what exists as a material thing although its root is material.<sup>17</sup>

The confusion of the ideal with the real is a main symptom of *idealism*. The *ideal* can be also described as the succession of the general forms of human activity realised by individuals with their wills, aims. The realisation of the ideal image is done under certain specific socio-historical conditions with certain needs and certain materials given to individuals under those conditions. In such general cases, the *ideal* functions normally as an object on which he can act; i.e. with the ideal image man can alter the object purposively according to the needs of his activity. However, when, and only when, man comes to be in terms with the *ideal* image *formally*, i.e. only as a pattern, sequence of such operative actions, and therefore does not understand its origin and nevertheless operates with the *real* actuality of the object and its product by man's action (labour), then he begins to be confused about the relationship between the *real* and the *ideal*; he is entrapped in the mud of ideal images. In this case. it is not the man

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<sup>16</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 277-79.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Dia. Logic*, p. 281.



that acts with the ideal image, but it is the dogmatised image that acts in-and-through the man. Now he has become the function of that distorted ideal image; he is no longer the master of the ideal image. What he has now is a manifold of estranged, fetishised falsely *ideal* images; he himself cannot understand from whence they come. Idealism has, as its symptom, such distorted picture of real objects.<sup>18</sup>

However, the root of idealism is not in an empty space or ground. Idealism has, as aforementioned, material roots. What differentiates *idealism* from *materialism* is that the former finds the roots of the ideal images (of language, religion, social institutions, ideology, social morality, etc.) in the ideal images themselves; they do not and cannot see that those ideal images come from the material objects with which men operate under historically given conditions. However, although idealism is a distorted image of the objectively real, as Hegel has been criticised, yet if one carefully sees its roots and contents without labelling idealism as simply false, then he can acquire a rich content which he can utilise and transform into the certain materials to constitute the appropriate, not dogmatic, materialism which becomes necessarily dialectical. This is what Marx has done; its best example is his *Capital*. Therefore the following words of Lenin: ‘philosophical idealism ... has epistemological roots, it is not groundless; it is a sterile flower undoubtedly, but a sterile flower that grows on the living tree of living, fertile, genuine, powerful, omnipotent, objective, absolute human knowledge [i.e. the materialism that is genuinely dialectical]’,<sup>19</sup> and: ‘If Marx did not leave behind him a ‘*Logic*’ (with a capital letter), he did leave the *logic* of *Capital*, and this ought to be utilised to the full in this question [i.e. inquiry into the construction of the materialist dialectic through the anatomy of the capitalist society]. In *Capital*, Marx applied to a single science [1] logic, [2] dialectics and [3] the theory of knowledge of materialism (three words are not needed: it is one and the same thing) which has taken everything valuable in Hegel and developed it further.’<sup>20</sup>

Materialism which is dialectical, considers the forms of thought, i.e. categories, not as simple abstractions from unhistorically understood sensuousness (as by Feuerbach), but as universal, *ideal* forms of social man’s sensuously objective activity reflected into his consciousness. That is, categories, the logical forms, are the ones

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<sup>18</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 281-82.

<sup>19</sup> Lenin, *Phil. Note.*, p. 363.

<sup>20</sup> *Phil. Note.*, p. 319. Lenin’s identification of logic, dialectic and epistemology, will be discussed in the next section.

which have to be grasped as the ideal forms of man's real activity (labour) transforming nature according to his aims. It is *human labour as the alternation of nature by man himself* that is the basis of human *thought*.<sup>21</sup> Through this human activity as labour, man becomes man: a simple, natural man, through such labour (alternation of nature), comes to constitute human culture, society, and thus himself; he becomes a social man.

All the above points (in this section) are the descriptions of the relationship between the ideal and the real, and between idealism and materialism. Materialism which is dialectical, does not deny the being of the *ideal*; rather, it seeks the real roots of the ideal. Materialism is that which *truly* grasps that logical forms, categories, are 'the reflections of the objective [i.e. the real] in the subjective consciousness of man'.<sup>22</sup> Hegel's *Logic* consists of the most accurate descriptions of the real world transformed into the *ideal* within Hegel's *head* (not in the physical sense but in the *ideal* sense mentioned everywhere in this section): he only misunderstood the *ideal* (the thought, and man's consciousness in society, etc.) as the *real*. If one succeeds in overturning his distorted, reverse description of logical categories on the genuine, material base, then his system will surely be the rich resource of the materialist dialectic which is to be further developed.

## Section 2

### The Identity of Logic, Dialectic and the Theory of Knowledge

For the development of the theory of dialectic, then, the position of *dialectic*, in its relation to *logic* and the *theory of knowledge*, has to be examined first.

The subject-matter of *logic* is the objective forms and laws of subjective activities on both the material and the mental, both of which are objective. On the other hand, when a theoretician of any kind (natural scientist, or social scientist, or whoever) is successful in solving the pending theoretical problems, he has been surely forced to *think dialectically* even if he had been unaware of it, or been an opponent to dialectic. Dialectic, and only dialectic, is the *real logic*, and they are (or rather, *it is*) one and the

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, pp. 456-59; cf. *Dia. Logic*, pp. 283-84.

<sup>22</sup> *Phil. Note.*, p. 183.



same as the *theory of knowledge*. This is what Lenin indicates.<sup>23</sup> But what does this mean – the identity or coincidence of *logic, dialectic* and the *theory of knowledge* (of materialism)?

As Ilyenkov says, when Lenin wrote on this identity in 1915, the term ‘epistemology’ had already been established, by the neo-Kantians since the late nineteenth century, as a special ‘science’ which investigates the form of knowledge about the *subject of knowledge*, counterposed to ‘ontology’ (or metaphysics) which was supposed to investigate the form of knowledge about the *object of knowledge*, i.e. about the real external world. According to the views of these neo-Kantians, the so-called ‘scientific world-view’, represented by both natural and social sciences, which intends to know the truth or structure of the real world, is nonsense – since, for them, man’s knowledge about the external world, expressed as ‘ontology’ (or metaphysics in the above sense), is only through his subjective comprehension. According to them, we cannot have the knowledge of the objective world; we can only have the knowledge about man’s thinking, i.e. knowledge about the knowledge itself alone. Kant’s original theme that things-in-themselves (*noumena*) are unknowable and beyond our cognition, remained strongly in their view.<sup>24</sup>

*Logic* as such – for them, as the science of man’s knowledge in the form of logical concepts and formulas – was therefore supposed to be a *part of epistemology* (theory of knowledge) which was supposed to cover *all* the knowledge (in the above mentioned sense). For them the main task of *epistemology* is to establish the *limits of knowledge* and clarify the inner limitedness of the possibilities of thought in the course of constructing a world-view (the task of *ontology*). On the other hand, *logic*, as only a part of epistemology, has nothing to do with the attempts to know the real world, things-in-themselves. The task of *logic* is therefore, for them, to analyse the already given *images* or *concepts* (‘transcendental objects’ in their terminology) and synthesise or organise them into a rigidly constructed order by the work of rigorous forms (accordingly, *sylogism* is an important area of logic) in order to construct a total science of *epistemology*. Logic, as a *part of epistemology*, was therefore supposed to help to show the *impossibility* of objective knowledge – in the sense that our knowledge cannot cross the boundaries between *phenomena* and *noumena*.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Phil. Note.*, p. 319; cf. *Dia. Logic*, pp. 289-91.

<sup>24</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 295-97.

<sup>25</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 299-301.

Hegel's conception of *logic* and *theory of knowledge* was, of course, completely different from the above neo-Kantian contention, as Lenin points out. For Hegel (and Lenin, too) there is nothing beyond the possibility of our knowledge. The subject-matter of *logic* is the whole of knowledge, which is in truth the knowledge of the whole world. This knowledge not only includes our subjective knowledge but also, or more, the objective knowledge of real objective world. Although in Hegel's sense *logic* is the system of the self-development and self-explication of *thought* itself, yet in truth it is the system of the descriptions of the real objective world.<sup>26</sup> Logic therefore includes the external objective materials which are, for Hegel, the externalised, realised *thought* and the real force or origin of *thought*. Logic is for him merged with the theory of knowledge – in the sense that for him the true knowledge (as absolute knowing) is that expressed as *logic*; other modes of knowledge (including epistemology) are subordinate to it. This can be verified in that the *thought* – as the self-thinking thought, the system of which is nothing but *logic* – at the end of the process of logic, comes to *know itself* as *nature*, the real material world (the thought as the *absolute idea* turns into nature, in Hegel's terminology).<sup>27</sup> Although Lenin, as a materialist, is completely different from Hegel in the comprehension of the relation between *thought* and *being* (as the real world) in that he does not agree with Hegel's conception of the whole real world (being) as the estranged thought, yet he completely sides with Hegel in that 'logic coincides with the theory of knowledge'.<sup>28</sup>

Why and how can Lenin side with Hegel on this point? Hegel thinks that logic embraces not only man's thought but also the real world outside man's consciousness. This is linked with his panlogicism in which the form of the real world is the alienated form of thought. At this point Lenin's view is the opposite to Hegel's. But the crucial factor why Lenin sides with Hegel is on another point: it is the decisive fact that Hegel introduced the concept of *practice* (or activity of social man) into the realm of *logic*. *Practice*, and only practice, is the criterion both of *truth* and of the correctness of man's operation in his mental activities (including language activity). For Hegel *logic* is identified with the theory of knowledge precisely because man's *practice* (the realisation of man's aims in the real material world) is directly and necessarily associated with man's logical reasoning (although for Hegel it is the faculty of the

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<sup>26</sup> See Chap. 9 Sec. 4.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Dia. Logic*, p. 302.

<sup>28</sup> *Phil. Note.*, p. 175.



*thought* itself; he himself does not say that *thought* is the power, faculty of *man*) – in that man's practice is for Hegel the *thought* in its external revelation, with which logic deals. Therefore Lenin notes: '... undoubtedly, in Hegel *practice* serves as a link in the analysis of the process of cognition, and indeed as the transition to *objective* ("absolute", according to Hegel) *truth*. Marx, consequently, clearly sides with Hegel in introducing the criterion of *practice* into the theory of knowledge: see the Theses on Feuerbach.'<sup>29</sup>

For Hegel, *thought*, as a *practical* act, includes *things outside consciousness* (things-in-themselves, in Kantian terminology), which are subordinated to man's *thinking* (or *thought*) expressed as logical *forms*. This means for Hegel that logical forms dictate the movement not only of *spirit* but also of the external material world. Consequently *logic* becomes not only a theory of *self-knowledge* of *spirit* but also a theory of knowledge of *things*. Lenin therefore also notes: 'Logic is the science not of external forms of thought, but of the laws of development "of all material, natural and spiritual things",<sup>30</sup> i.e. of the development of the entire concrete content of the world and of its cognition, i.e. the sum-total, the conclusion of the *history* of knowledge of the world.'<sup>31</sup> However, as Ilyenkov says, there is no such formulation or conception of the subject-matter of logic in Hegel's *Logic*.<sup>32</sup> The fact is that Lenin does not simply paraphrase Hegel's conception into his own terminology, but *reworks* what he believes is the 'rational kernel' of Hegel's *Logic*, *materialistically*. The above conception is Lenin's own.<sup>33</sup>

However, Lenin's suggestion is acute. It is true that Hegel's *logic* is also his *theory of knowledge* since Hegel constructs his system of logic according to his investigation into the history of the spirit's self-knowledge, and therefore also into the history of the world of natural things, which are for him the moments of logical process

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<sup>29</sup> *Phil. Note.*, p. 212, my italics; cf. *Dia. Logic*, pp. 307-08. In this passage Lenin designates Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach* II which I quoted in Sec. 1 above.

<sup>30</sup> This inverted quotation by Lenin can be found in *Larger Logic* I (trans. Johnston and Struthers) p. 45. In this passage, Hegel describes only that the *concept* itself is the core of objects.

<sup>31</sup> *Phil. Note.*, pp. 92-93; cf. *Dia. Logic*, pp. 225; cf. Bakhurst, *Consciousness and Revolution in Soviet Philosophy*, p. 171.

<sup>32</sup> See Footnote 30 above.

<sup>33</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 309-10.

or forms of thought, alienated in natural materials in the real, objective and material world.<sup>34</sup>

Logic is also the theory of knowledge for the materialist theory of dialectic, known as 'Marxism', too. But its reason is just the opposite to Hegel's. The theory of materialist dialectic investigates the history of mankind's *knowledge* and *practice*, and accordingly constructs the categories and forms of *logic* (they are for Hegel the activity of *spirit*). That is, it conceptualises the system of logic according to the investigation into the historical process in which man grasps and transforms the material world. In this sense *logic* cannot but be a theory which explains the universal form of the development of knowledge and of the transformation of the material world by social man (man as social being). In this sense *logic* is also the *theory of knowledge*.<sup>35</sup>

Logic is not a *part* of the theory of knowledge; it is the *whole* of the latter. For *logical* determinations of thought include all universal categories and forms of the dialectical development of the objective material world which were found through the mankind's whole history of *practice* on both natural and social-historical matters. Those logical forms, being reflected in man's social consciousness (or in mankind's spiritual culture), function as active logical forms of *thinking*, which is nothing but the dialectical. Hence *logic* is the theoretical systematisation of the universal forms of the dialectical development of *nature* (material world), of man's *society*, and of *thought* as such.<sup>36</sup>

According to the above conception of *logic* as *theory of knowledge* (and vice versa), logic is fully merged with *dialectic*. Or rather, they are not merged, but logic *is* dialectic. Logic *is* the theory of knowledge only insofar as it is itself dialectic.<sup>37</sup> Now it is clear that Lenin's materialist conception of the identity of logic, dialectic and theory of knowledge, is based on the two distinguishable but inseparable investigations into Hegel's structure of the descriptions on this issue, as follows: (1) the inter-relation or identity between *logic* and *epistemology* (theory of knowledge), and (2) the conception of *dialectic* as the science which embraces all the scientific, theoretical solution of the

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<sup>34</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 310-11.

<sup>35</sup> *Dia. Logic*, p. 311.

<sup>36</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 311-12.

<sup>37</sup> *Dia. Logic*, p. 312.



problems that have been traditionally treated in logic and epistemology, not in dialectic.<sup>38</sup>

Thus stated, it is obvious that for Lenin *logic, theory of knowledge and dialectic*, are completely *identical*, one and the same; *dialectic* has no subject-matter apart from that of *theory of knowledge* (as *logic*) inasmuch as *logic* (as *theory of knowledge*) has no object of its inquiry apart from that of *dialectic*. They are, or more correctly, *it is*, the *science of universal forms of development as such* reflected in *consciousness* in the shape of logical forms of *thought* (i.e. reflected in the shape of the determination of *categories*). Furthermore, categories, as the forms of the synthesis of experimental data in concepts, have the objective significance attached to the scientific picture of the real material world in which man lives. This is how scientific world-view is attained.<sup>39</sup>

The above genuinely dialectical conception of dialectic = logic = epistemology (theory of knowledge), however, had never been considered by Marxists before Lenin, who writes: 'Dialectics is the theory of knowledge of (Hegel and) Marxism. This is the "aspect" of the matter (it is not "an aspect" but the *essence* of the matter) to which Plekhanov, not to speak of other Marxists, paid no attention.'<sup>40</sup>

However, in the Marxist theory of dialectic, the above brilliant insight by Lenin has been seriously misunderstood. The most of Marxists treated *dialectic* as a special science which treats *pure* (or *general*) *forms of being* whereas they treated *logic* and *theory of knowledge* as also special sciences which treat exclusively the *specific forms* of the reflection of this *ontology* (dialectic!).<sup>41</sup> (But *logic* does not deal with *specific* features of thinking. It deals with the *universality* (or *universal forms*) of *thought* (man's thinking) and also the *universality* of the dialectical development of the objective material world. If logic is that which deals with specific features or modes of thinking, then there would be no difference between logic and psychology. Even from this one aspect alone, those Marxists' contentions are proved to be misleading.)<sup>42</sup> The three *sciences* were at least considered by them as necessarily connected with one another; but those Marxists never took Lenin's words seriously or literally. It is therefore not surprising at all that the theory of *dialectic* which is to be genuinely

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<sup>38</sup> *Dia. Logic*, p. 291.

<sup>39</sup> *Dia. Logic*, pp. 312-13.

<sup>40</sup> Lenin, 'On the Question of Dialectics', in *Phil. Note.*, p. 362.

<sup>41</sup> *Dia. Logic*, p. 313.

<sup>42</sup> *Dia. Logic*, p. 314.

*materialistic*, was, regrettably, *not* fully developed at all by the hands of Marxists even after Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks* (which contains all the above insights on dialectic) was published posthumously (in the years from the late 1920s to the late 1940s), except for a few philosophers: e.g. Ilyenkov, Huh.<sup>43</sup> Our task is to develop the theory of *dialectic*, with the *help* of the insightful suggestions by Marx and Lenin (i.e. not obediently, but discussing *with them*), in a non-dogmatic way. This is the only possible way to fulfil the task of the inquiry into the truth of dialectic.

### Section 3

#### The Problem of the 'Three Principles', and Lenin's Attempt to Formulate the Dialectic

For the further explication and development of the theory of dialectic, then, the problem of the dogmatic understanding of dialectic as the *three principles*, has to be examined.

The so-called 'three principles' of dialectic – which has been described in the text-books of Marxist philosophy, and have been *officially* asserted by many Marxists or materialists – are (1) transition from quantity to quality, and vice versa, (2) negation of the negation, and (3) interpenetration of opposites, or unity of opposites. They have their origin in Engels' formulation in *Anti-Dühring*,<sup>44</sup> and were developed or formulated by the next generation, Kautsky and Plekhanov. Another major work of Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*,<sup>45</sup> was taken as supplementary to his above work.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Huh Man-Won is a Korean philosopher who writes in Japanese. He holds a very similar view to Ilyenkov's; i.e. he asserts that we should take the 'identity' of the three sciences *literally*. Cf. Huh, *Dialectic as Epistemology (Theory of Dialectic II)*, pp. 54-62.

<sup>44</sup> Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (1878), pp. 110-32.

<sup>45</sup> Engels, *Dialectics of Nature* (manuscripts which were not completed; published posthumously in 1925), pp. 492-521.

<sup>46</sup> In fact, as is well known, Engels had already been engaged in the latter work for several years when he was forced to embark on the critique of Dühring's boastful conceptions on *all sciences*, which had some significant influence on many members of Social Democratic Party of Germany. Engels and Marx considered his conceptions as false, and his influence as dangerous and harmful.



As has been clarified up to this point, *dialectic* is the *total naming* of the *truth* as the system and development of the objective material world and of man's thinking, thought, and is in truth completely identical with *logic* and *theory of knowledge*.<sup>47</sup> Therefore it is clear that the conception of *dialectic* can never be reduced to mere three 'principles'. Or rather, ascribing the word 'principles' (plural) to dialectic is, from the beginning, inappropriate. *Dialectic*, as the truth of reality and of thought, is that which should be considered as the self-movement (as self-development and self-explication) of reality (the real, objective material world) and thus of thought (the thinking by man who dwells within this real material world, and what is thought by man, including philosophy). Therefore if one tries to grasp the meaning of dialectic only from a limited viewpoint of each of the above 'three principles', which has been, and even now is, done by many Marxists,<sup>48</sup> then he inevitably misses the crucial aspect (or rather, essence) of dialectic, *totality*. Dialectic is that which cannot but be *total* and thus has to be grasped *totally*. Dialectic is meaningful only when it is grasped as the *whole* of the descriptions of the *self-movement* of the material world and of man's thinking.

Then, we have to ask a simple but serious question: is this the falsity of the conception by Engels? I myself judge that it is *not* the fault of Engels himself. We have to think of the situation in which he was forced to write up, rather hastily, *Anti-Dühring*. First of all, he had to criticise Dühring's conception of all sciences (indeed Dühring talked of so many subjects of human knowledge, very falsely, though), and therefore Engels' main aim was to clarify and emphasise the difference of the conceptions between him and Dühring. Secondly, therefore, Engels had to present his views rather *axiomatically* in order to be understood by general readers of *Vorwärts*.<sup>49</sup> It was never intended to be an academic work; it was rather a polemical work, the theory itself expressed in which was, however, not arbitrary. It is to be clearly noticed that *each* explanation by Engels on the aspects of dialectic, as each of the 'three principles',<sup>50</sup> is *not wrong* – even *appropriate* – if one endeavours to grasp the total meaning of dialectic, using those examples of 'principles' as the *starting point* and clue to the mature grasp of materialist dialectic. That is, if one totally grasps the structure of

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<sup>47</sup> See Sec. 2 above.

<sup>48</sup> Gollobin, *Dialectical Materialism*, which is heavily dependent on the official conception of dialectic expressed in Soviet textbooks, is a typical example.

<sup>49</sup> An organ of Social Democratic Party of Germany in Engels' time.

<sup>50</sup> In *Anti-Dühring* Engels emphasises, and gives separate sections to, the former two 'principles', i.e. 'transition of quantity into quality, and vice versa' and 'negation of the negation'.

*Hegel's dialectic* through the accurate and total reading of Hegel and then embarks on the reconceptualisation of dialectic from the *materialist* view, then Engels' 'principles' are *useful*. This is also why Engels (and Marx, too) often persuaded younger generations to read Hegel's philosophical works, especially *Logic*.

However, later generations did not follow their precious, crucial instructions. 'Marxism' was thus formulated as the *total science* which includes the theory of *dialectic*. Therefore the falsity of axiomatising of dialectic lies in the later generations of Marxism although its root is in Engels' works. According to the *official* Marxism, dialectic was explained as the unity of those principles. However, this way of explanation of dialectic was, of course, inappropriate. Indeed most of the Marxists *learned* and memorised the theory of 'dialectic' in the Soviet-style textbooks (named 'dialectical materialism', 'historical materialism', or even 'dialectical-historical materialism', etc.) in which 'right' answers were kindly given to 'students'. In that way, it is evident, a student could never reach the grasp of the unity of the above principles, which he had expected to be given in the very textbook. For students of the *official* theory of dialectic, this 'dialectic' appeared as the mixture of *axioms*, such as 'thesis-antithesis-synthesis'. Although this concept is useful and important to know *an aspect* of dialectic, yet axiomatic grasp of dialectic can never be its genuine conception. (It is also to be pointed out that the conception of dialectic as the axiom of 'thesis-antithesis-synthesis' is not even Hegelian, but rather Kantian or Fichtean.) Dialectic was reduced and degraded to the amalgamation of axioms and principles. The theory of dialectic became a *dogma*, an authoritarian teaching. Marxist teachers taught dialectic, but not knowing the genuine meaning of dialectic; so were the students. Therefore it is not surprising, and even inevitable, that the anti-dialectical thinkers had serious contempt for the word 'dialectic'. There is some truth in what they say, in this context. However, the theory of dialectic should be reborn, rejuvenated and upgraded, through the mature and critical digestion of Hegel's dialectic, to the appropriate, non-dogmatic, freely thought, *dialectic*.

Interestingly there was already a Marxist thinker who really accepted the guidance of Marx and Engels (to study Hegel's *Logic* seriously) and tried to materialistically re-formulate the theory of dialectic. This thinker is the founder of the Soviet state himself, Lenin.

When Lenin embarked on a serious and laborious study of Hegel's *Logic* in 1914, the axiomatic and dogmatic grasp and teaching of Marxism, including the theory



of dialectic, had already been dominant. Such grasp and teaching of ‘Marxist’ philosophy had the status of *authority* among the socialists and trade unionists throughout the world, including Russia. Lenin’s major concern was, of course, with revolutionary activities. But his study of Hegel’s *Logic* was not a hasty study to write up political pamphlets. Although Lenin’s far-reaching concern was to criticise ‘revisionists’ in the Russian Bolshevik movement, whom he believed had falsified the true grasp of dialectic (his study of all sciences, including philosophy, was closely and necessarily connected and merged with his political activities), yet his study of *Logic* was intense, scrupulous and total. (He not only studied Hegel’s *Logic*, but also took many notes on other major philosophical works – from those of Kant and other modern philosophers, to those of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* and other ancient works.) Lenin did not write up or publish a book of ‘dialectic’, yet his notes and remarks on dialectic are worth attention. Let us have a glimpse into his words on this issue.

Lenin’s most significant attempt of the critique of Hegel’s dialectic can be found in ‘Conspectus of Hegel’s Book *The Science of Logic*’ (1914)<sup>51</sup> and ‘On the Question of Dialectics’ (1915).<sup>52</sup>

In ‘Conspectus’ Lenin expresses his way of reading Hegel’s *Logic* as follows: ‘I am in general trying to read Hegel materialistically: Hegel is materialism which has been stood on its head (according to Engels)<sup>53</sup> – that is to say, I cast aside for the most part God, the *absolute*, the *pure idea*, etc.’<sup>54</sup> In contradistinction to his former major work, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1908) in which he militantly attacked idealist philosophers like Mach, Lenin here tries to grasp the core of Hegel’s dialectic since he honestly admits that the culmination of the theory of dialectic, up to Lenin’s days (in fact, even today), is Hegel’s. He does not fall on the dogmatic rejection of ‘idealist Hegel’. Lenin truly apprehends that Hegel’s *Logic* is nothing but the idealistically described materialism, the core and force of which is dialectic.<sup>55</sup> He also acknowledges that Marx’s *Capital* is the greatest ever work which applies the positive

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<sup>51</sup> *Phil. Note.*, pp. 85-238.

<sup>52</sup> *Phil. Note.*, pp. 355-63. Hereafter in this section, as for Lenin’s works, I discuss the same issue as covered in my MA dissertation ‘Dialectical Thinking and the Understanding’ (1997, unpublished). It is, however, rethought and presented in a hopefully more refined manner.

<sup>53</sup> Lenin refers to Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*. I referred to this point (Hegelian dialectic’s standing upside-down) in Chap. 9 Sec. 4.

<sup>54</sup> *Phil. Note.*, p. 104.

<sup>55</sup> See Chap. 9 Sec. 4; cf. *Phil. Note.*, p. 234.

aspect of Hegel's dialectic into practice.<sup>56</sup> Lenin is completely aware that, without the accurate and total grasp of Hegel's dialectic expressed in *Logic*, there would be no further development of the theory of dialectic. He reads Hegel's idealistically described *dialectic* 'materialistically'.

Lenin, then, describes that the *identity (or unity) of opposites* is crucial to understand the dialectic, and that appropriate human thinking should grapple with the movement of the opposites which transform into another, saying: '*Dialectics* is the teaching which shows how *opposites* can be and how they happen to be (how they become) *identical*, – under what conditions they are identical, becoming transformed into another, – why the human mind should grasp these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, becoming transformed into one another. En lisant Hegel [in reading Hegel].'<sup>57</sup>

Lenin also stresses that man's practical activity (subjectively purposive activity) is based on the *objectivity of nature*.<sup>58</sup> For Lenin *objectivity* is prime and fundamental; subjectivity emerges as man's consciousness which acts (practices) with its own purpose in accordance with the law of nature (objectivity).

Although Lenin criticises the idealistic limit of Hegel's thought, yet he properly evaluates Hegel's contribution to philosophy, i.e. the conception of the necessary relation between *subject* and *object* which are not mechanically opposed but dialectically united in human activity, *practice*.

Man is *free*, but free in the sense that *freedom*, being expressed as man's purposive action, is based on the *necessity (law) of nature (material world)*. This is the core or essence of the Marxist (materialistically dialectical) grasp of *freedom*. But Lenin never neglects the plausibility of Hegel's thought on this issue – in that Hegel, in describing idealistically (i.e. in an upside-down manner), yet correctly grasps the relation between freedom and necessity. This can be postulated by Lenin's quotation of Hegel: "... if freedom is regarded as the abstract opposite of necessity, this is merely the *concept* of understanding of freedom, whereas the true and rational *concept* of freedom contains necessity as transcended within it".<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> See Chap. 10 Sec. 1; cf. *Phil. Note.*, p. 319.

<sup>57</sup> *Phil. Note.*, p. 109.

<sup>58</sup> *Phil. Note.*, pp. 187-88.

<sup>59</sup> *Phil. Note.*, p. 181. This passage is quoted from Hegel, *Larger Logic II, Werke VI* (1840), pp. 347-48, trans. emended.



Lenin's most remarkable effort in formulating the *dialectic* in general is worth serious attention.<sup>60</sup> Although this is a preliminary formulation of dialectic as he himself admits ('a determination which is not a clear one!!'), he points out the fundamental 'elements' of dialectic as follows:

- (1) The determination of the concept out of itself (the thing *itself* must be considered in its relations and in its development);
- (2) the contradictory nature of the thing itself (*das Andere seiner* [the other of itself]), the contradictory forces and tendencies in each phenomenon;
- (3) the union of analysis and synthesis.<sup>61</sup>

Lenin then describes the *details* of these elements of dialectic. He thinks, of course, that these details are not the final ones since he is aware that 'one could *perhaps* present these elements in greater detail as follows'.<sup>62</sup> The 'details' of the elements of dialectic are explained by him in sixteen items.<sup>63</sup> The first seven items are more general than the latter nine ones. Their order is not systematic, and one can never say that he has explicated the full details of dialectic. Saying this would be to over-value and thus misunderstand his efforts. It is important for us to see his seriousness in his attempt to clarify the internal relationships of elements or aspects of dialectic *from within* themselves. Or rather, he tries to apprehend the dialectic as the *whole* which has countless aspects integrated internally and necessarily (i.e. dialectically) into one *dialectic*, which is the truth of reality and thus the truth of thought.

Lenin even tries to relate the so-called 'three principles' within the internal, necessary unity. He describes items 15 and 16 as the examples of item 9; and this item 9 is the detail of item 5. They are:

- (5) the thing (phenomenon, etc.) as the sum *and – unity of opposites*;
- (9) not only the unity of opposites, but the *transition* of every determination, quality, feature, side, property into *every* other (into its opposite?);
- (15) the struggle of content with form and conversely. The throwing off of the form, the transformation of the content;
- (16) the transition of quantity into quality and *vice versa* (15 and 16 are

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<sup>60</sup> For the consideration of Lenin's formulation of dialectic, the work of Huh is quite suggestive. Cf. Huh, *Dialectic as Epistemology (Theory of Dialectic II)*, pp. 130-43.

<sup>61</sup> *Phil. Note.*, p. 221.

<sup>62</sup> *Phil. Note.*, p. 221, my italics.

<sup>63</sup> *Phil. Note.*, pp. 221-22.

examples of 9).<sup>64</sup>

The 'principle' of 'negation of the negation' is expressed as follows:

(14) the apparent return to the old (negation of the negation).<sup>65</sup>

For Lenin the 'principles', i.e. 'transition of quantity into quality, and vice versa', 'negation of the negation', and 'transition into the other (or interpenetration of opposites)', are to be considered as the *aspects* of one and the same *dialectic*, which can be expressed as the 'unity of opposites', which can be best understood as the self-contradictory unity of opposites, having mutually conflicting opposites. The clue to grasp this point is his own words in item 2 of fundamental 'elements' ('the *contradictory* nature of the thing itself (the other of itself), the *contradictory* forces and tendencies in each phenomenon'), and its description in the 'details' which appears as item 4:

(4) the internally contradictory *tendencies* (*and sides*) in this thing.<sup>66</sup>

The concept of *contradiction* is important in Lenin's grasp of dialectic. He does not neglect that the above elements are dialectically (i.e. *necessarily, internally and contradictorily*) united into one *law*, the *truth*. The dialectic, when grasped as the truth or law of *thought*, shows itself as the self-determination which is described in Lenin's own words, 'the determination of the concept out of itself' (the fundamental 'element' 1); and then, when grasped as the truth or law of *reality*, dialectic is to be grasped as in the phase of the same item, 'the thing *itself* must be considered in its relation and in its development'. Its detail is described in item 3:

(3) the *development* of this thing (phenomenon, respectively), its own movement, its own life.<sup>67</sup>

Lenin does not grasp the law of reality and the law of thought separately; he treats them as the two aspects of one and the same *dialectic*.

Lenin emphasises the *essence* or core of dialectic as the *unity of opposites*: 'In brief, dialectics can be defined as the doctrine of the *unity of opposites*. This embodies the *essence of dialectics*, but it requires explanations and development.'<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *Phil. Note.*, pp. 221-22.

<sup>65</sup> *Phil. Note.*, p. 222.

<sup>66</sup> *Phil. Note.*, p. 221.

<sup>67</sup> *Phil. Note.*, p. 221.

<sup>68</sup> *Phil. Note.*, p. 223, my italics.



As Lenin suggests, more detailed and systematic research on the nature and essence of dialectic should be done by contemporary philosophers, not from a dogmatic view. His insightful grasp of dialectic stems from his flexible (non-biased) and accurate view which is based on close, careful and critical reading of Hegel's *Logic*. As Lenin says, Marx 'did leave the *logic of Capital*'.<sup>69</sup> Lenin himself, too, left a good example and guideline for the further research of dialectic; and it is *we* who should explain and develop the theory of dialectic.

Lenin, then, tries to summarise his research on dialectic in 'On the Question of Dialectics'. In it, he stresses the importance of the concept of 'struggle' (conflict). The 'unity' of opposites appears not only as the harmonious unity (which many philosophers tend to apprehend as rather *static*), but also as the *struggle* (or conflict) between opposites. The unity becomes *struggle* in the phase of *development*. Or rather, development is the struggle of opposites. He is aware of the importance of an aspect of the unity of opposites as *the struggle of the mutually exclusive*.<sup>70</sup> He does not stay at Hegel's grasp of dialectic which is after all *speculative*. For Hegel 'speculation' (as the positively rational) is the synthesis of both the first moment of the understanding and the second, 'dialectical' moment (as the negatively rational). Lenin proceeds to Marx's grasp of dialectic, which stresses the importance of the *struggle* of opposites. Marx, of course, did not neglect the 'unity' in Hegel's sense: he was a great reader of Hegel. An aspect of the dialectical self-development of a *thesis* (in thinking) or a *thing* (in nature), which can be best described with the word 'struggle', is more vividly grasped by Marx, Engels and Lenin than by Hegel. But they are not arrogant, nor rude to Hegel: they acknowledge that they are the 'disciples' of Hegel. They were well aware of their debt to Hegel.

We shall, then, probe into the possibility of the further development of the theory of dialectic.

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<sup>69</sup> *Phil. Note.*, p. 319.

<sup>70</sup> *Phil. Note.*, p. 359-60.

## Chapter 11

### For the Development of Materialist Dialectic: Conclusion

The theory of *dialectic*, which was started by Kant in the modern history of philosophy, was developed, at first, by the hands of Fichte and Schelling, and finds its culmination in Hegel's *Science of Logic*. The fact that *dialectic* was most systematically described in his *Logic*, is not a coincidence. For, as Lenin pointed out later, logic is dialectic (and theory of knowledge, too). In *Logic*, which has three spheres of *being* (*Sein*), *essence* (*Wesen*) and the *concept* (*Begriff*), Hegel precisely describes the development of *categories* as the self-development and self-explication of the *absolute*. The absolute is for him, after all, the thought which thinks of itself, i.e. God. For him, only the self-movement of this self-thinking thought (*noesis noeseos*) is the *truth*, which is the identity of thought and being. The absolute, as this identity, can be known only by going through the whole process of the self-development of the self-thinking thought. For him *logic* is nothing but this system or process which explicates the development of the *absolute*. The absolute *spirit*, expressed as the absolute *idea* in the final sphere of the *concept*, has to know itself as, or turns into, *nature*, which is grasped by materialism as being, the real material world. However, although Hegel explicates, through the systematic exposition of the self-development of the absolute, that the identity of thought and being, and this alone, is the *truth*, yet this identity is not proved in fact: he concludes this identity by the abolition of the contradiction between thought and being, i.e. by introducing the concept of the self-thinking thought, the identification of *thought* with itself. 'Being' is for him another term for 'thought'. Therefore his *logic* is in fact a *tautology* of *thought*. For him it is the *thought* that constitutes *being*, as a result. This is a completely one-sided description of the truth in the idealist manner. Therefore the initial task of *materialist dialectic* was to make this upside-down system turned around



and set on the real, material ground. This major task was done by Marx, Engels and Lenin.

However, as I said, the materialist theory of dialectic was not adequately developed by later generations. Although there have been significant efforts by some philosophers, it is not wrong to say that the theory of materialist dialectic is still in its adolescence – since many materialist thinkers have considered dialectic as the unity of ‘principles’. Although each ‘principle’ is surely *an aspect* of dialectic, yet dialectic has to be grasped in its *totality*; it can never be reduced to ‘principles’. This axiomatic dogmatism, together with the authoritarianism under certain political situations, was the major factor that hindered the normal development of this theory.

However, *freedom* of thought has to be initiated by the younger generations. This freedom means the purposive will to construct an appropriate theory of dialectic from a non-dogmatic view. This cannot be done by a single person: it needs collective endeavours by philosophers over generations. However, it has to be started by each individual to make collaborative work.

We need to start from the accurate view – that the objective material world self-develops, and this movement can be correctly known by man, by reflecting the life of the subject-matter of this movement into his mind. This is the alpha and omega of materialism which has to be necessarily dialectical. But we also have to recognise the achievement by Hegel on the clarification of the truth of the movement of this real material world, which was by him, however, described upside-down as the movement of the self-thinking thought. That is, materialist dialectic has to be re-developed through the accurate but critical grasp of the essence (rational kernel) of Hegel’s *Logic* (and other works, too), and through digesting the insightful suggestions by the original thinkers of materialism, Marx, Engels and Lenin. This was, of course, very often talked about. But talking of this did not mean that it had actually been done.

Non-dogmatic view of *dialectic* would explicate that the ‘truth’ expressed by Hegel as the movement of self-thinking thought (as the identity of thought and being) is, in truth, nothing but the life, activity, movement, of the objective material world (nature), and man grasps this movement as his own. The identity of thought and being as the truth can be known in this materialist sense. Hegel’s *Logic* was the most accurate, but described upside-down, explication of this truth. Here we already have a good example, the most precious instrument for further development of the theory of

dialectic. As long as, or rather, only because, *logic* is dialectic (and theory of knowledge), the *truth* of reality and thought can be known by us, man.

What, then, is the core or essence of *dialectic* in the materialist sense? It is the self-movement of the material world and thus that of man's thinking. Or, more precisely, the real material world self-develops and man grasps this movement, i.e. reflects this movement into his own consciousness which is being constructed restlessly in the interaction with this material world. If this material world is correctly reflected into man's thought, then the *life* of the reality becomes also that of *thought*. That is, the life-activity of materials can be correctly taken and digested into man's thinking. If this is done correctly, then man grasps his *thought* as nothing but the *reflection* of the *life* of the *seemingly external* world, i.e. material world, *reality*; he finds his own *thought* and *himself* dwelling *within*, and being a part of, the real, material world. Man therefore knows that the law of the self-development of material world is nothing but the law of the self-explication (self-knowing) of his own thought. Man grasps that the *truth*, life-activity, *energeia*, of the real, material world is also his own truth. Dialectic is this truth of the self-movement of both reality and thought. Dialectic is not only the truth of reality and of thought, but also the *theoretical cognition*, *knowing* of this truth, as has been explicated. That is, *dialectic*, as a *science*, is also both *logic* and *theory of knowledge*.<sup>1</sup> In other words, *ontology*, *metaphysics* and *epistemology* are essentially united, or more correctly, necessarily integrated, into one and the same science, dialectic = logic = theory of knowledge. For *logic* is, in the materialist sense, the description of the self-development of the real, material world, which is explicated in man's thought in the forms of categories; and *dialectic* is not only this truth, self-development of reality, but also the cognition of this truth, as in *logic*; and *theory of knowledge* is the self-explication of both logic and dialectic. As Lenin correctly points out, 'three words are not needed: it is one and the same thing'.<sup>2</sup>

The core of the meaning of *materialist dialectic* has thus been explicated. However, the relation between materialist dialectic and Hegel's *Logic* has to be clarified here: what kind of significance does Hegel's *Logic* hold for materialist dialectic? From the materialist point of view, *logic*, as a science, is the science of the law of the development of *thinking* (i.e. the real thinking of the living-thinking body of man) which is rooted in the really existing material world. Or, in other words, logic is

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<sup>1</sup> See Chap. 10 Sec. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Loc. cit.; cf. Lenin, *Phil. Note.*, p. 319.



the science which investigates the internal structure of the material world (or reality) which can be grasped in man's thinking, reflected in living-thinking man's consciousness. Hegel constructs his *Logic* through the scrupulous and accurate investigations into the internal structure of the material world. On this point, Hegel's position is truly realist, and has something in common with materialism. But what differentiates between Hegel's position and materialism is that for Hegel the self-movement of the material world is the self-development of the *concept* or the *idea* which explicates itself in this material world. On this point, materialism has a completely different view from his: materialism thinks that the material world self-develops by its own necessity (or law), and this movement can be grasped by man, i.e. can be reflected in man's consciousness. Although Hegel accurately grasps the movement of the material world in his own way, yet, as long as he thinks that the movement of the material world is the self-explication of the *idea* (or the *concept*, or *spirit*), his grasp of the relation between reality and thought cannot but be called upside-down. However, Hegel's great contribution which can be taken up by materialist dialectic, consists in that he found out and firmly established that *the logical structure of thinking (thought) is identical with the real structure of the self-movement of the material world (reality)*. Materialism which is truly dialectical, understands that the critical digestion of Hegel's *Logic* is indispensable to materialist dialectic. To put the above points briefly: *logic*, as a science, has its real roots in the real, material world. Hegel constructed his *Logic* as the rigorous science of the categories of thinking. Although he grasped the relation between thought and reality in his upside-down or one-sided manner, his contribution to the theory of dialectic is undeniable.

However, then, can Hegel's *Logic* be re-written from the materialist viewpoint? If one admits the indispensability of Hegel's contribution, as stated above, this may seem possible. But when one thinks of the meaning of his *Logic* in the following points, it will be clear enough that his *Logic* is self-coherent and unrevisable. First, historically speaking, Hegel's *Logic* was the culmination of all the sciences of Western society in his time: his philosophical system integrated the highest and the best results of the sciences in his days. His *Logic* therefore had, at the same time, the *limit* of his time: the categories he described in *Logic* were appropriate only in *his* system which was the imprint of his time. Materialism has to construct the theory of dialectic according to the newest results of the scientific research of the material world (and accordingly of man's thinking and of human society): it can no longer directly use Hegel's categories

themselves as he described them in *Logic*. Second, Hegel's *Logic* is a *self-consistent system* in its own way, and if it is re-written, it means the death of his *Logic*. His *Logic* is a *perfect system* which is like a living organism that has its own realm of habitation and the means of life. This can be said in a parallel sense as in the relation between Newtonian physics and quantum physics, for example. Each has its own world (realm) of descriptions, and is consistent and perfect in its own way. Materialism which is dialectical, acutely recognises this point: Hegel's *Logic* is a self-consistent, perfect system which cannot be re-written in any other way than it was actually written. Hegel's *Logic* is the self-explication of the self-identity of thought with itself,<sup>3</sup> and therefore his *Logic* cannot be taken up by materialism in the same way. Hegel's *Logic* is unrevisable, in this context. Materialism has to find its own way to establish the theory of dialectic.

Then, in what way can Hegel's *Logic* contribute to the development of materialist dialectic? It is the *dialectical method* (or *speculative method*, in Hegel's sense) of Hegel's *Logic* that can contribute most to the materialist theory of dialectic. In his *Logic*, Hegel systematically described the upgrading movement of categories (from the simple *being* to the absolute *idea*). The self-upgrading development of categories shows most vividly the dialectical movement of *thought* which is, from the materialist viewpoint, the reflection of the material world (reality) into man's consciousness. What materialism learns from his *Logic* is this very point of the detailed and accurate descriptions of the *self-upgrading development* of categories (especially, becoming, infinity, contradiction). From the materialist point of view, the grasp of the law of the self-movement of the subject-matter of scientific investigation is possible only when one tries to grasp the internal, necessary structure of the very subject-matter. On this point, Hegel's *Logic* shows the best example of the rigorous and systematic investigation into the subject-matter – by his *dialectical method*, as stated above. Marx made the most use of Hegel's method in the investigation into his subject-matter, the structure of capitalist economy. Therefore Marx's *Capital* became the best example of how to *critically digest* Hegel's dialectical method. Materialism, which already has a good example in Marx, has to pursue further the critical digestion of Hegel's *Logic* in this sense.

However, the next question which may arise is this: having admitted the importance of *Logic*, among many works of Hegel, for materialist dialectic, can his

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<sup>3</sup> See Chap. 8.



*Philosophy of Nature* be another major source of materialism? The answer is as follows. Hegel's knowledge of many sciences (natural, social) was astonishingly vast and deep. But what he described in *Philosophy of Nature* was at the level of the first half of the nineteenth century, of course, and therefore its detailed, *specific* descriptions of nature are, from the contemporary viewpoint, out of date and no longer appropriate to be directly taken up by contemporary materialism. However, the more *universal* points, i.e. his descriptions of the *universal* categories (e.g. space, time) are suggestive and thought-provoking even now, and this is the more long-lasting aspect of *Philosophy of Nature*. However, the dialectical process of the upgrading self-movement of categories was described most rigorously and *universally* (in the most universal forms) in his *Logic*. The explication of this dialectical process is the most long-lasting merit of his whole philosophical system, and this is exactly what materialism most values in Hegel: it is, to say again, the *dialectical method* of Hegel, and he most explicitly and universally developed it in his *Logic*. Although this dialectical method runs through all the works of Hegel (including *Philosophy of Nature*), it is most explicitly expressed in *Logic*. Briefly, only the *universal* aspect of *Philosophy of Nature* can be another resource of contemporary materialism, having admitted the priority of his *Logic* for the purpose of the employment of the dialectical method. And Hegel's dialectical method can be utilised only when one employs and develops it in the scientific investigations into the *concrete* subject-matters (economics, political science, history, cultural sciences, and so forth) from the materialist viewpoint.

Finally, an important question has to be answered: why did I use the term 'the absolute' to describe the upgrading movement of categories in Hegel's *Logic* whilst he himself described this movement of categories as that of 'being' or 'the concept' or 'the idea'? This is closely connected to the above materialist viewpoint on how to critically digest Hegel's *Logic*. The core of his *Logic* consists in the fact that it is the total system of the self-movement of the material world (reality) which is also the system of the self-movement of man's thinking (thought). Only because man's *thought* is rooted in the material world can the thought be *identical* with reality. Hegel, of course, thought this issue the other way round. As long as materialism thinks that the material world self-develops *of its own necessity alone*, and as long as materialism thinks that *thought*, i.e. man's thinking, can correctly reflect the law of this self-moving material world into his consciousness, the so-called identity of thought and being is that which expresses the self-movement of both reality and thought which are identical in this sense; the

living-thinking body of man embodies this identity. 'Self-developing by its own necessity' means that it is *free, unbounded by anything other than itself*. The most appropriate term to express this freedom is 'the absolute'. And materialist dialectic needs the most universal and the most logically coherent term to express the self-movement of both reality and thought. Hegel's *Logic* is the description of this self-movement (self-development and self-explication) of the *absolute*, in this sense. If one uses the term 'being', 'the concept' or 'the idea', to express this self-movement, it would show that he is still confined to Hegel's own terminology, although Hegel himself certainly expressed *Logic* as the self-movement of the *idea* or the *concept*. Materialism has to be free from Hegel's terminology, in this sense, to develop its own theory of dialectic whilst it recognises his contribution and critically digests the core of his *Logic*, i.e. the dialectical method.

However, for the further development of theory of dialectic, more *detailed discussions* of dialectic are needed – since mere generalisation of subject-matter is not enough: a complete mature tree needs not only a trunk but also leaves and root – a trunk is the generalisation or formulation of the crucial essence of *dialectic*; leaves are the detailed discussions of countless aspects of dialectic which can be expressed as categories; and the root is the inquiry into the historical development of theory of dialectic since ancient Greece (Heraclitus, Zeno, Plato, Aristotle, etc.), through Classical German Philosophy (Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and above all, Hegel), up to contemporary (in a wide sense) Marxists or materialists (Marx himself, Engels, Lenin, Croce, Kojève, Hyppolite, Ilyenkov and others), and even non-materialists (Heidegger, Sartre, Mure, etc.). Without *details* there would be no truth. Truth, as a *whole*, needs not only form (generalisation) but also content (discussions of categories). The theory of *dialectic*, as the *whole* of *truth* in all the senses described above, can be developed only with further detailed discussions, which are beyond the scope of this thesis.

## Epilogue

We have now ended the first odyssey – the search for the *truth*, which is now known to be *materialist dialectic*. The theory of materialist dialectic has a long way to go for its maturity. But as long as we navigate with a reliable equipment, i.e. the accurate recognition of the essence of dialectic as the materialistically grasped identity of



thought and being, the *truth*, then we will never be lost in the ocean of various views. One who wills to know dialectic as the science of the *truth* itself, will also know that he will encounter many difficulties in dealing with not only a cosmological sum of documents to read, but also serious disputes with opponents, and even with other dialecticians who have different views. However, as long as one wills to grasp the truth of this real world as his own truth, there is no other way than to probe into the details of those difficulties. He now has to embark on the next odyssey, the *re-search* for the truth, i.e. *dialectic*.

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