

Chapter Four

From Being to Concept: Identity and Difference in Hegel's *Logic*

Contrary to the traditional image of Hegel as a dogmatic metaphysician of identity and subjectivity, the following chapter examines Hegel as a thinker concerned with the problem of identity and difference as it pertains to the critique of metaphysics and, in turn, the critique of modernity. Having touched on the phenomenological role of the categories of identity and difference in the development of the subject-object relation of consciousness and self-consciousness, we can now turn to Hegel's critical exposition of these categories themselves within speculative Logic, and their supersession by the 'trinity' of universal, particular, and individual in the logic of Conceptuality. This approach will allow us to consider how the Logic both presents and criticises the categories it examines, enacting a critique of both substance- and subject-metaphysics that points to fundamental philosophical issues at the core of Hegel's critical confrontation with the metaphysical tradition and with modernity itself. Central to this problem is the task of analysing the objectifying and reifying tendencies of the Logics of being and of essence, both of which are suspended in what Hegel calls "the Concept" [*der Begriff*]. This more complex 'triune' logic of Conceptuality, comprehending universality, particularity, and individuality, has superseded the traditional categories of being as well as the reflection-categories of identity, difference, opposition, and contradiction, which properly belong to the sphere of essence. Hegel's discussion of the logical structure of the Concept will help clarify the intersubjective structure of Spirit and the problem of unequal recognition versus reciprocal recognition that I discussed in the previous chapter. As we shall see, this overcoming of the logic of identity and difference is oriented towards thinking rational freedom in such a way that the received dichotomies between subject and object, freedom and nature, identity and difference, are finally superseded speculative thought. This discussion will also allow us to prepare the ground for a direct engagement with Heidegger's challenge to metaphysics and to Heidegger's confrontation with Hegel as a "metaphysician of subjectivity" *par excellence*.

The Need for Speculative Logic

Hegel's *Science of Logic* is an unprecedented work that claims to reconstruct metaphysics anew by presenting the integrated developmental movement of the fundamental thought-determinations, or categorical systems, that comprise the nature of self-determining thought. Indeed, it presents a *dialectical reconstruction* of philosophical logic that at the same time attempts to be an *Aufhebung* of the

entire metaphysical tradition. Hegel's concern in the *Logic* is to critique the "objectifying" character of traditional substance metaphysics, and the reifying tendencies of the modern metaphysics of reflection. The "objective logic," Hegel tells us, presents the "genuine critique" of substance- and subject-metaphysics by overcoming the uncritical assumption that categories are capable of being, to use Kantian terms, "determinations of the thing-in-itself" (WL I/1 49/69). After the "negative" moment of dialectical critique comes Hegel's positive speculative project, articulated in the logic of the Concept, which demonstrates the systematic development of the *self-determined* totality of interconnected thought-determinations including the previous paradigms of "being" and "essence". In this manner, Hegel's Subjective logic or Logic of Conceptuality attempts to overcome the opposition between immediacy and reflection, and thereby becomes genuinely autonomous thought, "free, self-subsistent and self-determining, or rather it is the subject itself." (WL I/1 49/64).

Hegel's radical innovation in the *Logic* is to pose the question of how logic accounts for the possibility of its own objective validity and self-determining systemic unity. Hegel thus expends considerable effort in explicating the question "With what must Science begin?" The beginning of the *Logic* is itself *logical* in that it is made in the element of self-determining thought, that is, in *pure knowing* (WL I/1 54/68). On the other hand, it is also *mediated* since this pure knowing is "the ultimate, absolute truth of consciousness" (WL I/1 54-55/68). Pure knowing or the *Concept* of Science is the result of the phenomenological exposition of consciousness. Logic presupposes phenomenology, the Science of (appearing) Spirit, which justifies the standpoint of pure knowing. With absolute knowing, the difference of consciousness from its object has been overcome; once this difference is suspended, we leave behind the realm of consciousness and enter the sphere of pure thought. Pure knowing has thereby "sublated all reference to an other and to mediation," with the result that "what is present is only *simple immediacy*" (WL I/1 55/69). Once this difference or mediation is suspended, then absolute knowing, in a sense, abolishes itself. The difference between certainty and truth, which structures conscious knowing, has vanished, hence absolute knowing reverts to simple immediacy or to what Hegel calls *pure being* or being in general.

The important issue here, for Hegel, is the *circular*, rather than linear, character of logical exposition. Progression in philosophical thought is also *retrogression*, a return into the 'ground' though which the beginning is shown to be a result, and the end points back to the beginning. The movement of the *Science of Logic* thus describes a circle "in which the first is also the last and the last is also the first." (WL I/1 57/71). Since pure knowing, at the extreme point of its union with the object, has collapsed back into the unity of pure *being*—the category which underlies sense-certainty at the beginning of the *Phenomenology*—pure *being*, taken in its simple, unfilled immediacy (WL I/1 62/75), is also the beginning of the logical exposition.

I. The Logic of Being

From Being to Becoming

Hegel's exposition begins with the simplest, most abstract category, that of *pure being* defined as the "indeterminate *immediate*". This is immediate being free from any determinateness or difference, "equal only to itself" [*sich selbst gleich*], and lacking in any diversity [*Verschiedenheit*] (WL I/1 68-69/82). Pure being is from the outset interpreted as pure *identity*, or rather, *self-equality*.^[1] This pure indeterminateness, however, is equally what defines pure nothing. Pure nothing is likewise simply "equality with itself" [*Gleichheit mit sich selbst*] or "undifferentiatedness in itself" (WL I/1 69/82). Nonetheless, the category of being still remains *distinct* from that of nothing, something different is 'meant' by each, but this distinction remains entirely *indeterminate*.

Hegel's basic criticism of the category of pure being concerns its discursive unintelligibility and incommunicability: there *is* a difference between pure being and nothing, but this difference immediately cancels itself, since it lacks the determinateness that would render it discursively communicable.^[2] Any attempt to assert the absolute difference of being and nothing remains discursively unarticulable: "Let those who insist that being and nothing are different tackle the problem of stating in what the difference consists." (WL I/1 79/92). Indeed, being and nothing are unstable moments that vanish or collapse into each other. Whenever one tries to fix either of them in thought, one finds that it has already passed over into the other (WL I/1 69/83). At the same time, they are also "absolutely distinct" and do not simply mean the same; rather, they are *unseparated* and *inseparable* moments which each vanish into their opposite (WL I/1 69/83). We therefore have a conflict between two categories which are both the same and different, indistinguishable yet distinct, a conflict resolved by moving to *becoming*, a higher category which encompasses this immediate vanishing of being into nothing and nothing into being.^[3] Becoming encompasses the movement which distinguishes these moments, "but by a difference which has immediately resolved itself." (WL I/1 70/83). This self-suspending difference precisely *is* the meaning of becoming, which only *is*, insofar as being and nothing are distinguished in it as vanishing moments.

We can observe here Hegel's logical method in action. In general, the conflict between the putative meaning and logical use of a category can be overcome only by moving to a more complex category that integrates both aspects into a comprehensive unity. The conflict here concerns the assumption of the 'absolute distinctness' of being and nothing versus the impossibility of distinguishing them whenever they are actually used or thought. The basic contradiction between *Meinen* and *Denken*, between the intended meaning of a category and its actual conceptual meaning as a

thought, drives the dialectical movement of the categories through their logical progression into a systemic dialectical whole. In this case, the conflict between being and nothing as *distinct* moments and as *vanishing* or *disappearing* moments is resolved in the transition to the more complex category of becoming; but the instability of these suspended moments, namely coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be, in turn demands resolution in the transition to the immediate unity of determinate being. In this regard, the logical exposition is both a *critique* of the one-sided elevation of one category over its other, and a *positive account* of the necessary role played by each category in the system of categories as a whole. The conflict between the categories of being and nothing, resolved in becoming and determinate being, demonstrates Hegel's simultaneous critique and presentation of the categories in their immanent development.

Indeed, Hegel explicitly flags the transition from becoming to determinate being as an exemplary case of the movement of *Aufhebung*, of suspension or sublation: a movement of simultaneous *dissolution* and *resolution* of opposing thought-determinations integrated into a more complex unity.^[4] As Hegel remarks, to sublimate or suspend [*Aufheben*] has the dual opposing meanings of “to preserve, to maintain, and equally it also means to cause to cease, to put an end to” (WL I/1 94/107). What is suspended is both cancelled and preserved such that each determination is integrated or reflected as a moment of a more complex whole. In this sense, the moments of being and nothing are suspended in the determinate unity of Dasein. These moments thereby undergo a shift in their significance: from ceasing-to-be and coming-to-be in the category of becoming to the moments of *something* and *other* in *determinate being*.^[5]

Determinate Being: Finitude and Infinitude

It would be impossible to reconstruct Hegel's extremely compressed argumentation and derivation of the categories of determinate being within the context of this chapter. I therefore restrict my discussion to an analysis of some of the main aspects of the logic of Being that are pertinent to the problem of identity and difference. In particular, I shall focus on Hegel's account of the concepts of finitude and infinitude and the relation between the “bad” infinite (belonging to the understanding) and the true or affirmative infinite (which points to the structure of Conceptuality). Very schematically speaking, Hegel's exposition begins with determinate being as *qualitative* and *concrete* being; it moves through the problem of *positive* and *negative* qualities (with the important implication that “reality” is not something purely affirmative, while “negation” is not merely a thought entity). It then concludes with the emergence of *a Dasein* or *plurality of* determinate particular beings grasped through the categories of “something” and “other”. This plurality of “somethings” defined in relation to “others” points to

the category of *finitude*: a finite being is determined in relation to its other, but it is also marked by a constitutive negativity that dissolves its enduring being. Finitude, in the sense of determination by the other, is analysed in connection with the categories of limit, limitation, and the Ought, whose logical interrelation points to the overarching category of *infinitude* which embraces the finite within itself.

The fundamental train of thought that Hegel develops here involves a thoroughgoing critique of the reificatory or objectifying metaphysics, going back to Aristotle, which takes particular existents or beings as finite substances. “Something” and “other” designate determinate beings or finite particulars where each “something” is equally an “other”.^[6] The determinate character of the something is defined by its *limit* [*Grenze*]. Limit is an internal determination (within which the something is what it is or remains the same); but at the same time, limit is also the determinate character of its other (that is, of an other something). This immanent limit—which defines the internal sameness of something and points to its external determination by its other—means that particular somethings are characterised by *finitude*: the something is determined by its other, an other into which the something passes over [*übergeht*] and thereby passes away [*vergeht*]. Indeed, the finite not only alters but also *ceases to be*: “the being as such of finite things is to have the germ of decease as their being-within-self: the hour of their birth is the hour of their death” (WL I/1 116/129).

But this ‘other’ that determines the ‘something’ is at the same time itself *another* ‘something’. Here there emerges the relation of *opposition* between finite things and infinite being that introduces the notion of the “bad” infinity. The later category establishes a recurring and insuperable opposition between the finite and its other, thus making finitude, in the sense of a perishing or passing away, perennial or *eternal*. “The understanding,” Hegel writes, “persists in this sadness of finitude by making non-being the determination of things and at the same time making it *imperishable* and *absolute*” (WL I/1 117/130). Such is the standpoint of the analytic understanding: it remains caught within the opposition between the finite as real but transitory, and the opposing infinite as that which has enduring being but with which the finite can never possibly unite. This conception of the infinite excludes the finite from itself such that the finite stands perennially opposed to it. As such it is what Hegel calls the “bad” infinite in the sense of a self-contradictory “finitised infinite”. It is a conception of the infinite that has its *limitation* [*Schranke*] in the finite that opposes it.

Indeed, it is with the ‘ought’ that the transcendence of finitude through the category of infinity genuinely begins; the ‘ought’ discloses the first figure of the infinite as an endless series or a “progress to infinity” (WL I/1 121/134). In this respect, Hegel criticises two prejudices concerning limitation and the ‘ought’ that particularly apply to the sphere of moral judgment. On the one hand, the Kantian critical philosophy insists on the limitation of thought and reason, a limitation that cannot be

transcended without falling into error or incoherence. But this very determination, Hegel argues, presupposes a context in which the concept of limitation is intelligible; the determination of the limitation of something implies at the same time that this limitation is already transcended. For the limitation of something is defined in opposition to that which is free of limitation and transcends the finite something. The limitation of the understanding, for example, is intelligible only against the background of the transcendence of this limitation through the power of reason. Hence Hegel's criticism of the limitation of reason in the Kantian philosophy: "reason, which is the *universal* explicitly beyond particularity *as such* (that is, *all* particularity), which is nothing but the overcoming of limitation!" (WL I/1 122/135).^[7]

It is the mutual implication of limitation and the 'ought', their circular movement, which points to the supersession of finitude in the higher category of *infinitude*. Within the category of finitude, the moments of limitation and the 'ought' are qualitatively opposed: "limitation is determined as the negative of the ought and the ought likewise as the negative of limitation." (WL I/1 123/136). This self-contradictory character of finitude—which opposes, while also identifying, limitation and the 'ought'—results in its self-suspension. The finite passes over into another finite, and so on to infinity, but in doing so, the finite is in fact uniting only with itself. Every transcending of the limitation towards the 'ought' is also a return to limitation, which in turn points back towards the 'ought'. In going beyond itself, the finite also unites with itself. This identity with itself or "negation of the negation" represents the conversion of the finite into its other: it results in the *infinite* as the ground of the finite (WL I/1 124/137).

This circular movement between limitation and the 'ought' outlines an initial, still inadequate, conception of the infinite. The infinite in general is the "negation of the negation," that is to say affirmative being which has restored itself out of limitedness (WL I/1 125/137). With infinity, Hegel remarks, we arrive at the first category that explicitly evokes mind and *Spirit*: it is the category appropriate to the universality and freedom of self-conscious thinking (WL I/1 125/138). At this point, however, we have only encountered the *abstract* conception of the infinite that merely describes the self-transcendence of the finite's limitation. The finite transcends itself towards the infinite, the encompassing unity that embraces the finite within itself and in which the self-transcendence of the finite becomes at all intelligible. The finite has thereby "vanished" in the infinite; but this abstract infinity has not yet properly suspended the finite. Rather, an "alternating determination" of the finite and infinite is established; the infinite reverts to being defined by the limit between itself and the finite. The result is an opposition between the finite and the infinite in which each is defined as qualitatively distinct from the other. This is what Hegel famously called the *bad* or *spurious infinite* [*schlechte Unendlichkeit*], an abstract conception which opposes the finite and the infinite, but also posited by the

understanding as its “highest, absolute Truth” (WL 127/139). The “bad” or *finitised* infinite, for the understanding, seems to be the reconciliation of the two; but this simply shows, for speculative reason, the understanding’s entanglement within irresolvable contradiction.

From Being to Reflection

The transition from being to essence, to put it briefly, turns on the problem of difference and determination. The final determination of the logic of being is that of *absolute indifference* [*Indifferenz*]. Here Hegel alludes to Spinoza and Schelling as thinkers who arrive at a monism of undifferentiated being that expresses an absolute equivalence [*Gleichgültigkeit*] that dissolves all determination and difference. Absolute indifference expresses the negation of every category of being—from quality and quantity to measure—and through this process of *self-mediation* (in the sense of the negation of the categories of being) produces a simple, undifferentiated unity (WL I/1 373/375).^[8] For all its speculative insight, the Spinozist-Schellingian “absolute indifference” of thought and extension, of Spirit and Nature, is nonetheless still an *external reflection*, one “which stops short at conceiving the differences *in themselves* or in the absolute as *one and the same*” (WL I/1 381-2/383). In other words, determinate differences are regarded as only *indifferently* distinguished rather than as *intrinsically distinct* from one another.

Hegel’s point is that we must grasp how these categorical differences *suspend themselves* within a comprehensive unity. This unity of substance proves to be an “absolute negativity” (a ‘negation of the negation’ or self-related negativity); it encompasses an indifference of being that is as equally indifferent to itself as it is indifferent to otherness (WL I/1 382/384). We have here the first signs of the transformation of inert substance into the self-determining freedom of the subject. At this stage, however, this absolute indifference between thought and being results in the suspension of the entire sphere of being as such. The logic of being began with indeterminate immediacy, passed through determinate being and finitude, but concludes with the dissolution of determinateness within absolute *indifference*. We thus return through self-suspending mediation, and at a higher level, to the emptiness of undifferentiated being. This circular movement from immediacy through mediation back to a “higher” or mediated immediacy enacts the suspension of the sphere of being into a sphere that restores the difference or determinateness that was lost in this undifferentiated unity. We therefore arrive at a new categorical paradigm, which discloses the truth of being to be *essence* [*Wesen*].

II. *The Logic of Essence*

We have now arrived at the centre of Hegelian logic, the logic of reflection in the sphere of essence [*Wesen*]. In general terms, the doctrine of essence presents the first negation of the sphere of being, which foundered on the problem of reconciling immediacy and determinateness; it also presents the second part of what comprises “objective logic” and the centrepiece of Hegel’s critical confrontation the metaphysical tradition. Here again it is possible to discuss only the most general features of the presentation of the categories of identity and difference in order to elucidate why Hegel thinks that these categories, while essential to the metaphysics of the understanding, are nonetheless inadequate to articulate the comprehensive unity of speculative thought. The categories of essence operative in the metaphysics of substance will prove inadequate to account for the freedom of subjectivity, thus prompting the sublation of reflection into the threefold Conceptual unity of universality, particularity, and individuality. In particular, I shall focus on the hierarchical character of the categories of reflection, the subordination of the other, the minor term within each correlation pair, and suggest that this exposition of the logic of reflection as a logic of domination is the critical point at issue in Hegel’s critique of both substance and subject-metaphysics.

Essence as Reflection and Seeming [Schein]

Hegel observes that the movement between thought-determinations in the sphere of being was one of simple *transition* or *passing over*. In the sphere of essence, it is the *relational* character of the categorical pairs—essence and appearance, identity and difference, cause and effect—that is made explicit. The movement of the categories of reflection involves a unity-in-doubling in which categorical pairs are defined through the *reflection* of one term in the other (Enz §112/175). We now have a higher order reflection of the categories of being, which appear in their correlational or reflected form: “Instead of *being* and *nothing*, the forms of the *positive* and *negative* present themselves; initially the positive corresponds, as *identity*, to the being that lacks antithesis, while the *negative* (shining within itself) develops as *distinction*” (Enz §114R/179). Indeed, the logic of reflection, Hegel remarks, is the most difficult, since it contains the categories of metaphysics (as well as the sciences) as products of the understanding (Enz §114R/179). Reflection merely connects but cannot bring these thoughts together into the comprehensive unity of the Concept (Enz 114R/179).

A few words should be said here concerning the meaning of the difficult concepts of reflection and *Schein* (variously translated as “illusory being”, “seeming,” and “showing”). The doctrine of essence, Hegel tells us, moves beyond immediate being and strives for the background that constitutes the *truth* of being (WL I 241/389). We have arrived at the familiar “two-world” model of metaphysics,

which establishes the sensible world of appearance as distinct from the supersensible world of essence. Hegel's opening discussion of the categories of the essential and the unessential (section A in chapter one) in fact provides a critique of such "Platonising" two-world" theories. Being and essence represent two kinds of being: on the one hand, being and essence are *indifferently* related to each other as equivalent; on the other, being is taken to be the *unessential* as compared with essence as the *essential*. Hegel thus rejects here the reification or "ontologisation" of essence in "two-world" metaphysics, which turns being and determinate being into an independent, even if inessential, subsistence over against essential being.^[9] Hegel's own exposition will attempt to show that essence is not opposed to inessential being, but rather contains what is now called *seeming/showing* or *illusory being* [*Schein*] within itself. The question will be whether essence *exhausts* 'seeming' in this manner, which is the question of *contingency*, of whether accidentality is truly suspended within essence.

What remains to be shown is how this seeming belongs to essence itself; how seeming is the immanent movement of simultaneous division and unification that Hegel calls "reflection". The category of reflection describes the shining or seeming of essence within itself, marked, for example, in the metaphysical distinction between Appearance and Essence. In the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel comments further on related senses of the term "reflection" that are incorporated into its categorical meaning (Enz §112Add. 176-7). Ordinarily, it is used to describe the bending back of light rays off a mirroring surface, a movement that involves something immediate which is then posited as mediated. Reflection in this sense is metaphorically applied to the ordinary process of "thinking through" something, and knowing this something as mediated. The philosophical sense of reflection consists in the "cognition of the essence of things," that is, in exhibiting things as mediated or grounded by something else (Enz §112R). The category of reflection in the *Logic* is related to this third sense. Reflection, in this *critical* sense, refers to the eternal, circular movement of essence from seeming to seeming—in Hegel's obscure formulation "of nothing to nothing, and so back to itself" (WL I 250/400)—a movement that constitutes the meaning of essence [*Wesen*] itself. As opposed to its meaning in *Reflexionsphilosophie* from Locke to Kant, Hegel points to the *non-subjective* character of reflection, its independence of the cognitive subject, its logical character as a *mediated immediacy*. Hegel's critical presentation thus unites exposition and critique: it describes a recognisable categorical structure operative in the history of philosophy, but also exposes the deficiencies in its logical use versus its (assumed) conceptual meaning.

The Determinations of Reflection

Hegel notes that the categories of reflection are more familiar to us in the form of basic propositions, the universal "laws of thought" such as the principle of identity and the principle of non-contradiction.

The category of identity is formulated in the proposition: “everything is identical with itself, $A = A$. Or negatively: A cannot at the same time be A and not A .” (WL I 258/409). The problem with such formulations, Hegel argues, concerns their propositional form. The categories of reflection should be considered on their own account and in their immanent interconnection rather than uncritically assumed as basic laws of thought. Such propositions are defective insofar as they take *being*, in the sense of *everything in general*, as their subject; the categories of reflection are conceived as particular qualities that pertain, through an ungroundable necessity, to a pre-given, existing substrate. They are taken to be absolute and unconditionally valid, namely *axioms of thought* about “everything in general” that nonetheless contradict one another, and thus mutually suspend themselves, when taken together in their logical interconnection. Thus, for example, if everything is supposed to be *identical* with itself, then everything is neither *different*, nor *opposed* to itself or anything else, and as such has no *ground* (WL I 260/411). On the other hand, if *no two things are the same*, if everything is *different* from everything else, then A does not equal A , nor is A opposed to A , hence there is no way of establishing the determinate identity of anything. There is no explicit account of the immanent interconnection between these laws, which Hegel will attempt to prove in detail in the exposition that follows. These axioms of thought are structured by the use of determinations of reflection—identity, difference, opposition, and contradiction—which must be exhibited in their logical interconnection.[\[10\]](#)

1. Identity

We can begin interpreting the determination of identity by drawing parallels with the logic of being. The immediacy of pure being has been suspended in the self-related immediacy of essence, which consists in its being negatively related to itself. All otherness has been suspended in pure self-relation or equality-with-self: “Essence is therefore simple identity-with-self [*Sichselbstgleichheit*]” (WL I 260/411). Although this seems superficially the same as the self-equality of immediate being, we are now dealing with a *reflected* categorical determination. As previously mentioned, in the sphere of being, immediacy is the opposite of mediation; it means the ultimate “givenness” or positivity of that which is, and whose self-equality is based upon the exclusion of, or separation from, the other as that which is different (simple or relative negation). All of these determinations of being, including being itself, have now sunk or settled into the categorical state of seeming or *Schein*. The immediacy of essence is the result of absolute mediation, of the immanent movement of reflection, which posits the other (namely seeming) only to negate it immediately and return to the self-equality of essence (what Hegel calls self-related negation or absolute negativity). The self-identity of essence is therefore not an affirmatively pre-given unity, but rather a unity that has been “brought about,” a “pure origination” (“*reines Herstellen*”): it is a

self-identity produced by the immanent movement which constitutes essence itself, hence Hegel's description of this category as "essential identity" (WL I 260/411). Essential identity is not the pre-given *abstract* identity arising through a relative negating of an 'other' separated or excluded from it. Rather, it is the "constructed" identity produced by the absolute negation of being that both posits its other (as *Schein*) but then immediately suspends it in order to return to itself. In this sense, essential identity, at this stage, is the same as essence itself.

Hegel sharply distinguishes here between essential identity and the more familiar *abstract* identity, an identity *without difference* that is kept separate from abstract difference or difference *without identity*. This dualism between a contentless identity alongside an equally contentless difference typifies the operations of the abstractive understanding. The latter reduces reason to an oscillation or alternation between identity and difference without ever showing how they are immanently interconnected. For ordinary representation, Hegel observes,

reason is nothing more than a loom on which it externally combines and interweaves the warp, of say, identity, and then the woof of difference; or ... it now extracts especially identity and *then also again* obtains difference alongside it, is now a positing of likeness and *then also again* a positing of unlikeness—likeness when *abstraction* is made from difference, and unlikeness when abstraction is made from the positing of likeness. (WL I 261/412).

Far from being a subjective concept of reflection (as for Kant), Hegel's "essential identity" has an ontological significance. Everything is in its self-sameness "different from itself and self-contradictory," and in its difference, or contradiction, it is self-identical (WL I 261/412). The determination of anything within the sphere of essence is based upon the reflective movement between identity and difference in which each category is determined as the opposite of itself, identity as reflected difference and difference as reflected identity. Essential identity as "simple self-related negativity"—as a negation of the determinations of being—is not the product of external reflection, but of the suspension and reflection of being itself.

In contrast with the "independent" or separate character of abstract identity and difference, Hegel emphasises the mutual conversion between essential identity and difference. Identity, as a self-related negativity, immediately negates itself, producing difference, which immediately collapses within itself, thus returning to identity. In this movement of reflection, identity is identical with itself once it is reflected into difference, while difference is only identical with itself insofar as it is absolute non-identity, or different from itself, which converts it back into identity. Thus, Hegel concludes, identity "is *in its own self* absolute non-identity" (WL I 262/413): essential identity is intrinsically related to, converts itself into, essential difference as its other. This movement between identity and difference is the

becoming of reflection: the conversion of identity into difference, through which it returns to identity, and the conversion of difference into identity, through which it maintains its identity as difference.

Hegel gives this reflective movement of identity and difference more detailed consideration by analysing the so-called laws of identity and of non-contradiction. Hegel states that the law of identity, $A = A$, as the first law of thought, is merely an empty tautology. It expresses a contentless and formal truth, a one-sided and abstract “axiom”; this implies that this one-sidedness can be overcome only in the *unity of identity with difference* (WL I 262-3/414). The nature of this unity, however, is left entirely unclear in ordinary representation. On the one hand, abstract identity as merely formal truth is regarded as incomplete; complete truth would only be present in its unity with difference. On the other, this abstract identity is nonetheless supposed to be essential, valid, and unconditionally true—it is supposed to be a universal law of thought. Hegel points here to the failure of ordinary representation to bring these thoughts together: namely that abstract identity, as separate from difference, is *essential* but at the same time *inadequate*. What this apparent conflict suggests is that identity, in its separation from difference, is rather a moment of *separation* itself (WL I 263/414). Identity can only be thought as separated from, as well as united with, difference; identity is both separated, and inseparable, from difference.

This inseparability of identity and difference is shown in the form of tautologous identity statements. Tautologous statements, Hegel observes, remain analytically uninformative even though we expect from a proposition a synthetic furthering of cognition through the addition of a different determination. The statement “The plant is—” seems to promise a furthering of cognition but results only in an empty repetition: “The plant is—a plant” (WL I 263/415). Hegel makes two significant points in this regard. First, he claims that statements of identity are self-contradictory in the sense that their concrete content (namely their lack of content) contradicts the propositional form itself. For a proposition (in its classical definition) is that which states something *about* something, but such empty identity statements actually state nothing. Secondly, such identity statements nonetheless state more (“contain more”) than they are supposed to state (or which they intend in the sense of *meinen*). For through the “hidden necessity” of the propositional form itself, such statements can state identity only through the *vanishing* of the difference between A in the subject position and A in the predicate position. The subject-predicate propositional form adds this “propositional” difference (“the more of that movement”) to abstract identity (WL I 264/416), a difference that vanishes, but still remains, in the very articulation of the identity statement.

Implicit in this movement of reflection, Hegel contends, is *simple negativity*, the $\sim A$ that is articulated in the so-called law of contradiction, $A \neq \sim A$. With the enunciation of A, as something determinate, the pure other of A, the $\sim A$, is also implied (WL I 265/416). The identity of A is

expressed in the negation of $\sim A$; the distinction between A and $\sim A$ is such that these terms related to *one and the same* A . Identity, Hegel concludes, “is here represented as *this distinguishedness in one relation* or as *simple difference in the terms themselves*” (WL I 265/416). The laws of identity and contradiction are not opposed but rather mutually imply one another. Moreover, they are not merely analytic but *synthetic*, since they both imply a difference or negativity that ‘connects’ subject and predicate within the very structure of such propositions. Although both the laws of identity and non-contradiction purport to express “merely abstract identity in contrast to difference,” they both point, in their very articulation, to the movement from abstract identity to its opposite, to absolute difference (WL I 265/416).

In this critical exposition we can observe Hegel’s method of simultaneous presentation and critique in action.^[11] The analysis of the category of identity in its structure and meaning simultaneously discloses the inadequacy of the traditional understanding of identity as *abstract identity* belonging to the sphere of reflection. In this regard, Hegel strives to distinguish the complex category of essential identity from the abstract identity that belongs to the external or empirical reflection (WL I 261/412). At the same time, Hegel’s exposition is meant to reveal how the inadequacy of the traditional concept of identity is intimately bound to the complex meaning of the category of essential identity, whose own purported meaning in turn will prove to be deficient or contradictory in the context of more complex categorical relations. This dual mode of presentation, which both articulates a category (such as essential identity) and discloses the deficiencies in its traditional interpretation (such as abstract identity), is the source of much of the confusion and ambiguity in Hegelian Logic.

2. Difference

a) Essential Difference

Hegel’s critical exposition of absolute or essential difference follows a similar pattern to that in the exposition of essential identity. In opposition to the abstract identity of the something (in the sphere of being), essential identity is not based upon the exclusion of its other,^[12] but rather difference based upon the positing of its other *as negated*, as immediately disappearing or vanishing. Essential identity is therefore possible only through “absolute difference”: a *self-related* difference which as the negation of identity immediately negates itself. Essential difference is not abstract difference devoid of identity, not “difference resulting from anything external,” but rather *self-related* difference or difference *in and for itself* (WL I 266/417). The point to note is that “absolute difference” is implied in the very notion of “essential identity”. Essential difference, as “the *simple not*,” is the categorical negativity that distinguishes A from not- A (WL I 266/417). This *difference* articulates the negativity inherent within the movement of reflection; it is “the nothing which is said in enunciating identity” (WL I 265/417). Hegel

means to distinguish ordinary difference as diversity from essential or reflected difference that incorporates identity as well. Difference is the essential moment of identity, since identity, as self-related negativity, distinguishes itself from difference in order to establish itself precisely as identity (WL I 266/417).

We should further note here that Hegel's conception of absolute or self-related difference is opposed both to Schelling's conception of "absolute identity" and to the "abstract identity" of the positive sciences governed by the analytic understanding. Hegel even underscores the significance of essential difference in articulating the identity-in-difference of Conceptuality: "Difference itself is the simple Concept" (WL I 266/417). Indeed, we shall observe that *difference* is the proper determination of reflection, whose entire movement henceforth unfolds through the development of difference into opposition and contradiction. In the logic of reflection, we find that *difference* is the medium and source of the entire logical development, which challenges the received view that Hegelian speculative logic subordinates difference.

Hegel then proceeds to exhibit the mutual reflection of identity and difference, and the logic of reflection in which difference develops itself into opposition and contradiction. Essential difference is no longer the mere *otherness of determinate being*; rather, it is now the *difference of reflection*, a difference that is posited in its interconnection with identity, categories which both point to a common ground of determination (WL I 266/417). This reflected difference is a self-related difference; it is negatively related to itself, rather than to an 'other,' or is the difference of itself from itself (WL I 266/417). Hegel outlines here the mutual conversion of difference into identity and identity into difference: difference, in differing from itself, in being non-self-identical, converts itself into identity. The category of difference therefore encompasses *both* itself and identity; difference is the *whole* of reflection as well as a *moment* of it, just as identity was the whole as well as a moment of reflection. This feature of identity and difference—to be both the whole and a moment of the whole—illustrates the essential nature of reflection as a *negative self-relation*. *Determinate* difference contains its other, identity, within itself, just as identity preserves itself within this determination of difference (WL I 266/418). As we shall see, this structure of reflection between identity and difference, the self-relating negativity that is both universal and particular, anticipates the logical structure of *subjectivity*.

Essential difference consists in the two determinate, but also self-related, moments of identity and difference. Two related categories follow in the development of essential difference: *external difference* or *diversity* [*Verschiedenheit*], in which the moments of identity and difference are simply "self-related" in the sense that they are without a determinate relation to each other; and *determinate difference* or *opposition* [*Gegensatz*], in which the moments of identity and difference are opposed but also unified as *positive* and *negative*. The category of *diversity* presents a merely *external reflection* of identity and difference,

while the category of *opposition* presents their *determinate reflection*. *Determinate difference* or opposition develops into radical opposition or contradiction. Throughout the logic of reflection, the aim is to reconcile the categories of identity and difference such that they are not merely externally related (as with the understanding), but dialectically related, through the suspension of contradiction, within the conceptual context of *ground* [*Grund*].

b) *External Difference or Diversity*

The category of diversity is that of *indifferent* or *external* difference: it is the *immediate* conception of difference, one in which each of its distinct moments *is* what it is on its own account “and each is indifferent vis-a-vis its relation to the other” (Enz §117/182). Diversity emerges out of the collapse of self-related or absolute difference that *falls apart* into identity and difference as its two self-related moments. These moments are taken together in diversity but only according to the aspect of identity; identity and difference do not have any determinate relation with each other—each remains indifferent and unrelated to the other (WL I 267/418). The result is that the difference between these moments is no longer *intrinsic* but rather an *external* difference. Identity and difference lose their *distinctiveness* and become merely *diverse* moments (WL I 267/419). Because the diverse terms are indifferently related to each other, their difference falls outside of them in a “third” element, namely “that which makes the comparison” (Enz §117/182).

With this act of comparison, which Hegel calls “external reflection,” the moments of identity and difference undergo a shift in meaning: external identity is now *likeness* [*Gleichheit*] and external difference is *unlikeness* [*Ungleichheit*]. Likeness is a merely posited or constructed identity; it is independent of the particular determinations of the things that are alike. Whether or not two things are alike, Hegel remarks, “does not concern either the one or the other”; likeness or unlikeness is rather “the verdict of a third party distinct from the two things” (WL I 268/420). In this sense, external reflection is the *comparison* [*Vergleichung*] that “passes to and fro between likeness [*Gleichheit*] and unlikeness [*Ungleichheit*]”; they are compared with reference to a “third party” that provides the *respect* in which things are deemed like or unlike (WL I 268/420).^[13] This “third” provides the viewpoints whose fixation allows the relation between likeness and unlikeness to be kept separate and free from contradiction: diverse things are alike in some respects, but unlike in other respects.

Within this “self-alienated reflection,” likeness and unlikeness appear as mutually unrelated; by introducing the ‘*in so far as*’, or *sides* or *respects*, likeness and unlikeness are connected to one and the same thing (WL I 268/420). This very separation of likeness and unlikeness that was supposed to avoid contradiction in fact proves to be their destruction. For both have their own significance only in their

determinate relation with each other. Once these determinations are reduced to a comparison with reference to a third party, likeness and unlikeness lose all their intrinsic determination. The mutual determination of likeness and unlikeness means that they cannot simply be separated from each other, nor “subjectivised” by recourse to the use of ‘respects’ to compare and contrast things relative to a “third” term. Rather than being a product of external reflection or subjective judgment, likeness and unlikeness mutually imply one another at a higher categorical level. The external difference between equality and inequality collapses into a *negative unity* in which identity and difference are both distinct and intrinsically interconnected. This negative unity of identity and difference that is their *determinate difference* is enunciated in the higher category of *opposition* [*Gegensatz*].

c) *Determinate Difference or Opposition*

The category of opposition [*Gegensatz*] presents the completion of the determination of difference as such: it is the unity of identity and diversity, *determinate* difference in which its opposing moments are “different in one identity” and thus are genuine opposites (WL I 272/424). One of the difficulties in understanding Hegel’s exposition is that the Kantian background to the category of opposition, and Hegel’s concept of contradiction, is left unacknowledged. To explain what Hegel means by “opposition” as “determinate difference” therefore requires some brief discussion of this Kantian background as well as mention of the mathematical accounts of the concept of “negative magnitudes” to which Hegel alludes. This can be attempted here only in the most general terms in order to help illuminate Hegel’s extremely difficult account of opposition and contradiction.

As Michael Wolff^[14] has argued, Hegel’s doctrine of contradiction finds a predecessor in Kant’s theory of *dialectical opposition*, which undermines the basis of the traditional manner of distinguishing between “contrary” and “contradictory concepts” (1999, 8). Furthermore, Kant’s conception of *real* opposition, according to Wolff, anticipates the concept of *negativity* that is crucial for Hegel’s doctrine of contradiction. To begin with the former, Kant’s notion of “dialectical opposition” refers to oppositions *without* contradiction, that is, to *apparent* contradiction. According to Kant, Zeno’s paradoxes, for example, are apparent contradictions, which in turn provided the model for Hegel’s conception of “extant contradiction” (Wolff 1999, 9). Kant argues that the contradiction between the judgments ‘an object x moves’ and ‘an object x does not move’ is resolved into apparent contradiction once one presupposes that the object x neither moves nor does not move (KRV A502-3/B530-1). Kant offers the trivial example that ‘x smells good’ and ‘x does not smell good’ need not be a violation of the law of excluded middle (Wolff, 1999 10). This formal contradiction can be resolved into an apparent contradiction “if both claims are negated *and if* the subject term denotes an object that does not and

cannot even have an odour, and *therefore* smells neither good, nor not good” (1999, 10). The predicates in this instance are contraries rather than contradictories, provided that the presupposed subject term is such that it admits of neither predicate (for example, where x is the colour red). Conversely, if there is a change in the presupposed meaning content of the subject term (or what Kant called the presupposed “determinateness” of the object), these two formally contrary predications can become genuine contradictory predications (for example, where x is now a rose). Dialectical opposition thus refers to the *relativity* of the formal logical distinction between contrary and contradictory predicates, the dependence of this distinction on the presupposed determinateness of the subject of predication.

With this notion of dialectical opposition, Kant articulates a basic law pertaining to what Hegel called the logic of reflection: namely, that “whether there is a genuine (and not merely a formal logical) contradiction between two predications depends on the presupposed logical determinateness of the object” (Wolff 1999, 11). Wolff calls this presupposed determinateness of the object—the presupposed basic characteristics of the subject term in the subject-predicate judgment—the “substrate of logical reflection” (1999, 11). It is the latter that determines whether a genuine contradiction results from two predications with opposed content and logical form. When this substrate of logical reflection is of a non-empirical, transcendental character, we have a *dialectical opposition* but not a genuine contradiction. Kant’s antinomies, for example, arise once these dialectically opposed judgments are taken to refer to “things in themselves,” which makes them contradictory with regard to logical form; once this presupposition of things in themselves is cancelled, the content shifts from contradictory to contrary or subcontrary judgments (Wolff 1999, 11).

Kant’s discovery that the “contradictoriness” of antinomical judgment pairs depends upon the presupposed content of the subject terms of these judgments was highly influential for Hegel. Another Key Kantian idea was that of *real opposition* and Kant’s important related account of *negativity*. In this case, as Wolff explains, we are not dealing with apparent contradiction or with formal negations but rather “with pairs of exclusively affirmative subject-predicate judgments that have opposition as their content, despite their affirmative character” (1999, 11). In this context, Wolff notes, it is important to recall that the concept of negativity for Kant is “first of all a mathematical concept”; the concept of positive and negative quantities that Kant outlines and Hegel develops is indebted to developments within mathematics as well as to the distinction between “negative” and “positive quantities” that became possible because of the Newtonian revolution in physics (Wolff 1999, 12). Moreover, Kant’s concept of negativity “shares with both logical negation and contradiction the fact that it results in a determinate sublation (*Aufheben*)” (Wolff 1999, 13). The “consequences” of the opposed determinations attributed to a thing sublimate themselves in the sense of being reduced to null. For example, two equivalent and opposite forces moving an object at the same time result in rest (motion =

0), while the net result of having capital of \$100 and a passive debt of \$100 is not nothing but rather capital equal to \$0. As Wolff explains, Kant provides a kind of “dynamic” interpretation of mathematical negativity as a relation of ‘capacities,’ ‘forces’ or ‘causes’ that mutually cancel each other’s ‘effects’ or ‘consequences’ (1999, 13). This is not a logical negation but rather a *non-logical* form of negation that is dynamically understood in terms of mutual ‘privation’.

The decisive point is that Hegel rejects this Kantian ‘dynamic,’ ‘privative’ conception of negativity: Kant had argued that negativity (in both mathematical and non-mathematical senses) was based on the “mutual privation” of opposing “capacities, forces, or grounds” (Wolff 1999, 14). Hegel rejects this dynamic interpretation, arguing that it depends upon the character of this relation between the concrete determinations and the underlying substrate of logical reflection as to whether these determinations are ‘opposed’ or not. For Hegel, negativity is not to be understood in terms of a mutual privation; rather, it is the fact “that two determinations that differ in content stand in relation to a substrate of logical reflection” which enables them, by virtue of this relation, to become ‘opposed’ determinations (Wolff: 1999, 14).

Hegel explicitly develops this critical account of negativity in the exposition of “opposition” within the *Science of Logic*. In the latter, Hegel describes opposition as a *determinate difference* in which opposing determinations, as *positive* and *negative*, oppose each other with regard to one and the same logical substrate. One determination is *negative* in relation to another insofar as it is based on the same substrate of logical reflection. Each determination relates to the other as its *own* opposite with reference to this shared substrate of reflection. In the case of mathematics, according to Wolff, Hegel anticipates the important concept of *absolute value*, which allows the “negativity of a number or a vector” to be defined consistently: where two opposite numbers or vectors, $+a$ and $-a$, are based on the same absolute value $|a|$, the latter serves as the substrate of logical reflection. The $|a|$ is the bearer of two quantitative determinations, $+a$ and $-a$, that must be presupposed “in order to regard both determinations as opposite, that is, as positive and negative” (Wolff 1999, 15). The neutral term $|a|$ designates a presupposed substrate of logical reflection that can take on the value of $+a$ or $-a$, but is itself neither of these.

Hegel applies this insight to the concept of opposition, which must be explained with reference to the concept of negativity; each opposition “is a relation of something positive and something negative” (Wolff 1999, 15), where this relation encompasses different “forms of the positive and negative” (WL 428). But what is Hegel’s concept of “negativity”? Like Kant, Hegel does not regard negativity as simply a mathematical concept. Unlike Kant, however, negativity for Hegel has a definite *logical* (rather than simply ‘dynamic’) structure. In brief, we can say that the logical structure of negativity involves a twofold relation: there is “simple” logical negation, as in a limit, limitation, or lack,

and also a “second negation” in which the negation of this otherness amounts to a self-relation in which opposing relata are identical with each other. To explain, the structure of negativity can be described as a particular relation of *identity*: x and y are negatively related if and only if each is identical with the *negation* of its opposing counterpart, if x is identical with $\sim y$ and if y is identical with $\sim x$. To say that x and y are opposed and related negatively in this sense holds only under the presupposition that they are determinations of a *determinate* object, that is, x and y are related negatively “only in relation to a substrate of reflection” (Wolff 1999, 16).

Such is the case, for example, with two vectors such as six miles east and six miles west of two definite points, which are negatively related as opposing determinations in relation to the absolute value of *six miles* in a determinate location. Another example would be the supposition that blue and yellow are related negatively, which presupposes that blue and yellow are “opposing determinations” (as per Goethe’s theory of colours): blue, *as* a colour of a certain type, is identical to not-yellow (Wolff 1999, 16). Hegel draws from this a conclusion relevant to the formal logical law of excluded middle, which ordinarily means that “of all predicates, either this particular predicate or its non-being belong to a thing”. It should mean, according to Hegel, “that every thing is an *opposite*, is *determined* as either positive or as negative,” where “opposite” does not mean merely lack or *indeterminateness*, but rather opposing *determinations* that specifically belong to a determinate thing (WL I 285/438). Where x and y are two positive determinations that are related negatively (as $+A$ and $-A$), then *one* always belongs to something determinate (to a thing); this determinate something serves as the substrate of logical reflection (symbolised by the unmarked letter “A”) upon which the relation of negativity between $+A$ and $-A$ depends (Wolff 1999, 16-17).

Furthermore, Wolff observes, Hegel distinguishes in his exposition three different types or levels of the category of opposition: 1) the relation between positive and negative as a relation between *negatively* opposed relata (“opposites in general”); 2) the relation between positive and negative as a relation between mutually *exchangeable* (“amphibolic”) relata (the positive and negative as “indifferent”); 3) the relation between the positive in itself and the negative in itself (the positive and negative as “independent determinations of reflection”) (1981, 101). What has been described above comprises the first type or level of opposition between positive and negative, the opposition of *determinations* in which both relata are the *negative* of each other in relation to a determinate object or substrate of logical reflection. The second form is what Wolff terms the “amphibolic opposition”: it results from the *external reflection* upon opposing relata, each of which can be taken either as positive or as negative, relata which thereby remain indifferent to each other and hence interchangeable. We can take one and the same object and one and the same determinateness either as positive or as negative; both possibilities are equally justified so long as we relate the determinations “positive” and “negative” to an

identical something determined as A (Wolff 1981, 117). It remains “amphibolic” because of this comparison relation or external reflection in which the positive and negative are only relatively opposed or mutually exchangeable in value.[15]

In the third case, Hegel outlines a “higher” form of opposition in which the opposite determinations are opposed not only to each other but also to the substrate of logical reflection that makes possible their opposition. The relata belonging to the “higher relation” of opposition, the *intrinsic* positive and negative or what Hegel calls the “*self-subsistent determinations of reflection*” (WL I 279/431). Wolff explicates this relation by noting that Hegel calls the logical substrate of reflection (the /A/) the “positive in itself” as opposed to the “negative in itself” or opposed determinations (the +A and –A) (1999, 18). The /A/ is the *non-opposed* aspect of the opposition relation while the +A and –A are the *opposed* aspects. As we have seen, the question of whether two determinations or concrete predicates (+A and –A) are genuinely opposite or merely diverse depends upon their common substrate of logical reflection, the /A/. Now, with “higher” opposition, any determination—any determinate predicate or predicate implicitly related to its opposite—equally also determines the character of its logical substrate. For example, +A has determinate sense only in relation to –A; this +A is *opposed* to /A/ (indeed both +A and –A are conjointly opposed to /A/), but at the same time the +A is *identical* with /A/. This implies that the relata of higher-level opposition (the intrinsic positive or /A/ and the intrinsic negative or +A and –A) are related both negatively and not-negatively in *precisely one and the same respect* (Wolff 1999, 17). The opposing determinations (+A and –A) are not only *opposed to each other* but simultaneously *opposite* to, and *identical* with, the substrate of logical reflection /A/. With this higher form of opposition, in which positive and negative are both identical and opposed in one and the same respect, we arrive at Hegel’s conception of *contradiction*.

Contradiction [Widerspruch]

With contradiction we have arrived at the most radical version of difference: namely *radical opposition* in which the moments of the positive and negative are identical and non-identical in one and the same respect. According to Wolff, Hegelian contradiction can be defined as “a relation between one of the two opposed determinations and the substrate of logical reflection with regard to which the determinations are mutually opposed” (1999, 18). The contradiction consists in the fact that these self-sufficient determinations of reflection are related both as negative and as not-negative in one and the same respect. This radical opposition defines the category of contradiction; moments both *contain* and *exclude* their own opposite *in one and the same respect* with regard to the same substrate of logical reflection.

The structure of contradiction can also be described as that of a *negation of the negation*: the negatively related opposites, the positive and the negative, are negated in themselves in that they are opposed but also identical with the logical substrate of reflection. As such, each opposite contradicts and thus excludes itself. The intrinsically positive posits its identity with itself by excluding the negative which it itself contains, but thereby makes itself into its own opposite, namely the negative. Similarly, the negative is identical with itself precisely in being determined as *non-identical*, as excluding identity (WL I 280/433). In short, the negative is determined as “*identical with itself in opposition to identity*” (WL I 280/433). This self-contradictoriness of the positive and the negative produces the *first unity* resulting from contradiction—where the standpoint of reflection usually remains stuck—the ceaseless vanishing of opposites into themselves which results in the empty unity of “the null” (WL I 208/433).

Contradiction does not simply dissolve into an empty it also *resolves itself*: for in this process of self-exclusion each moment, positive and negative, sublates itself and is simply the “self-transposition of itself into its opposite” (WL I 281/433). This resolution of contradiction, in which the opposites cancel out themselves and each other, produces a higher unity in which the intrinsically positive and intrinsically negative are grounded. The resolution of contradiction in the unity of ground points to the fundamentally *constructive* character of Hegel’s Logic: contradiction results not only in the cancellation of all determinations (the empty “null”), but also produces something positive, the *essential unity* of positive and negative as independent determinations. We encounter here Hegel’s speculative logical principle that “the negative is just as much positive, or that what is self-contradictory does not resolve itself into a nullity, into abstract nothingness” (WL I/1 38/54). Rather, it is a specific or determinate negation of a particular content that results in another content that “essentially contains that from which it results” (WL I/1 38/54). This is the constructive, that is to say *speculative* aspect of a ‘destructive’ dialectic: “The *speculative* or *positively rational* apprehends the unity of the determinations in their opposition, the *affirmative* that is contained in their dissolution and their transition” (Enz §82/131). Comprehended contradiction is thus essential for understanding speculative logic and philosophy.

Furthermore, Hegel’s account of contradiction is significant for being an “objectively logical” relation, a relation between objective determinations and objectively determinate objects (Wolff 1999, 18). Hegelian contradiction is a relation between determinations that are already presupposed by the logical predicates used in judgment: the identifying, distinguishing, and opposing of logical predicates presupposes the identity, difference, and opposition of determinations (Wolff 1999, 18). Unlike Kant’s version of identity, difference, and opposition as subjective “concepts of reflection,” Hegel takes these to be determinations of relations among determinations; they are “determinations of reflection” in an objective rather than subjective sense (Wolff 1999, 18). As we have seen, Hegel draws on Kant’s insight in the “Dialectic of Pure Reason” that logical relations such as contrariety and contradiction

presuppose that predicates are related to a presupposed logical substrate of reflection. Hegel then critically transfers these determinations of reflection to the “real level of objective determinations of objects [*Gegenstandbestimmungen*]” (Wolff 1999, 18). The upshot of Hegel’s “objective” interpretation is that categories of reflection such as diversity and opposition depend upon the “internal relations of determinations to specifically determined objects”: the determinations of reflection ‘reflect’ the real opposition of determinations or internal contradiction of individual things (Wolff 199, 19). Hegel can thus say that “*everything is inherently contradictory*” in this “objective” sense, in the sense that individual things are contradistinguished through relations of internally opposing determinations both within themselves and in opposition with other things.

This objective sense of contradiction means that it need not be the case that genuinely contradictory judgments are simply false. Rather, such speculative judgments attribute objective contradiction or internally opposing determinations to objects themselves. Hegel thus rejects the separation of contradiction from things themselves, the shifting of it into subjective judgment; on the contrary, the negativity of opposing determinations is what comprises the self-identity in otherness of individual things. There is in this sense a speculative connection to be found between the (empty) law of identity and the law of contradiction. As Hegel writes: “The contradiction that appears in opposition is only the developed nothing that is contained in identity and that appears in the expression that the law of identity says *nothing*” (WL I 286/439). The vacuity in the law of identity consisted in the empty assertion that everything is what it is; the law of contradiction develops this ‘nothing’ into the negativity that defines things in their negative self-relation. The ‘nothing’ of contradiction, as Wolff remarks, “consists in the fact that all individual things, due to their determinateness *against each other*, relate negatively *to themselves*. Negativity as self-relation both constitutes and dissolves contradiction.” (Wolff 1999, 19). In this sense, finite beings, marked by negativity as self-relation, cannot simply be what they are but must pass over into otherness and thereby pass away or “perish,” as Hegel says, in returning to (the) ground [*zurückgehen*].

The abstractive understanding grasps and fixes the role of contradiction only in this *negative* moment of dissolution, but thereby fails to grasp the *positive* moment of its resolution into ground. Instead, the understanding formulates the law of opposition (the excluded middle) by enshrining exclusive disjunction as a basic law of thought: *something is either A or not A; there is no third* (WL I 285/438). This is, according to Hegel, certainly an “important proposition” if correctly understood according to speculative reason rather than the abstractive understanding. In its purely formal (*verständnismaßiges*) sense, however, it is subject to two major difficulties: First, it is rendered trivial in the sense that $\sim A$ is not the exclusive opposite of $+A$ (through which both acquire determinateness) but merely a *lack* of determination of $+A$. Secondly, it is rendered self-contradictory because it asserts that

there can be no third term, but can state this only by asserting this third, the unmarked A as the substrate of logical reflection, the intrinsic positive of the developed form of opposition.

Thus, for Hegel, the category of contradiction is more profound and essential than identity. For abstract identity is merely the determination of inert immediate being, whereas “contradiction is the root of all movement and vitality,” the self-relating and spontaneous activity of thought (WL I 286/439). Contradiction already appeared in the sphere of being as the *infinite*; now contradiction is the *negative* as developed in the sphere of essence (WL I 287/440). Indeed, the analytic understanding [*Verstand*], in its attempt to exclude contradiction as the false and “unthinkable,” constantly falls into contradiction with itself, into unresolved and irresolvable aporias. The understanding remains dominated by contradiction; only reason is capable of mastering contradiction itself. For (speculative) reason recognises the necessity of contradiction *and* its resolution as a mediation between contradictory determinations in their ground. Thinking reason thus intensifies the “blunt difference of diverse terms,” the mere manifoldness of representational thinking, sharpening it into opposition and thence into the self-movement of contradiction (WL I 289/442).

The conceptual insight that determinate concepts and things are both contradictory and grounded brings us to the plane of speculative reason proper, the speculative insight that “every determination, every concrete thing, every Concept, is essentially a unity of distinguished and distinguishable moments, which, by virtue of the *determinate, essential difference*, pass over into contradictory moments” (WL I 289/442). Hegel’s point is that we must grasp both the negative and positive moments of contradiction, the movement of *determinate negation* or *sublation* of opposing determinations. The *negative unity* in which these opposing determinations withdraw is precisely the *ground* of the intelligibility of the thing, subject, or Concept. The ground is the *resolution*—rather than mere *dissolution*—of the contradiction, that which “contains and supports” its opposing determinations. (WL I 289/442).[\[16\]](#)

Ground as the Suspension of Identity and Difference

With the category of ground, we arrive at the resolution of contradiction and sublation of the opposition between identity and difference. Ground is “the unity of identity and difference [*Unterschied*]” (Enz §121/188). In one of Hegel’s more succinct formulations: *Essence determines itself as ground* (WL I 291/444). This self-determination of essence discloses the *truth* of identity and difference to be contradiction, or rather the latter’s simultaneous dissolution and resolution in the category of ground. Ground designates the *whole* of the determinations of reflection (identity, difference, opposition, contradiction) whose independence has now been suspended. It is therefore the *result* of

their immanent movement of *Selbstauflösung* or self-dissolution: “it is something that has become” (WL I 282/434). At the same time, ground [*Grund*] is that which “grounds” this entire immanent movement, that which makes it possible and comprehensible. This is an important point to note since it challenges the received view of Hegel’s logic as obliterating, neglecting, or subordinating difference. It is only as a result of the development of *difference* that we arrive at the category of *ground*: the first meaningful, contentful, concept of identity as the *negative unity* of positive and negative, identity and difference.

The category of ground is only the third moment of the first movement of the logic of essence, namely the movement that reveals essence as *reflection within itself*, moreover, which discloses essence as the *ground of existence*. Here I shall emphasise only those aspects relevant to Hegel’s critique of substance-metaphysics in the transition from the logic of essence to that of the Concept. The main point is to show how Hegel discloses the conceptual domination-relations implicit within the logic of essence, thus presenting the dissolution of determinate difference within the “absolute indifference” of Spinozist (and Schellingian) substance-metaphysics.^[17] Having attained this point of conversion, the suspension of substance metaphysics, Hegel can confront subject-metaphysics in his positive account of “subjective Logic” as the paradigm of self-developing Conceptual thought.

The transition from essence to Concept occurs through the exposition of the category of *absolute relation*. The latter describes the self-positing of the Absolute in the process of its own exposition, its immanent self-disclosure in which appearance and essence, inner and outer, necessity and contingency, are unified within the one substantial unity (WL I 393/554). Initially, the absolute relation takes the form of the *substantial relation*, the relation of substance and accidents; once substance determines itself as *being-for-self* over against an *other*, this develops into the *relation of causality*; finally when this causal relation becomes self-relating, absolute relation becomes *reciprocity* [*Wechselwirkung*], which overcomes the mechanism of finite causality in favour of the mutual determination between cause and effect (WL I 393/554).

At stake in each of the preceding relations is the problem of the subsumption, subordination, or domination of the *other*. Of interest here is Hegel’s critical discussion of the implicit domination-relations within the substance/accident and causal substance models prevailing in philosophy from Aristotle to Spinoza and Kant. For Hegel, the relation of causality (since cause is itself conditioned) is transformed into that of *action* and *reaction*: active substance as cause (or negatively self-related substance) stands over against passive substance (being as abstract self-identity or immediacy). Active and passive aspects of substance are implicitly united yet also opposed through the causal relation, since causal substance determines the character of its own accidentalities. Substance, as the totality of accidents, thus reveals itself as an absolute power and richness of content; in Spinoza’s metaphysics of

substance, for example, substantiality is “the absolute activity of form and might of necessity” (Enz §151/226). In acting upon passive substance (*natura naturata*), active substance (*natura naturans*) in fact acts upon *itself* as a passive substrate (the causal web of finite entities): the active causal power and necessity of substance as *causa sui* dominates over the passive subsistence and accidentality of finite modes. Active substance suspends the otherness of passive substance by acting upon it and in doing so it returns to itself. In this sense, Hegel remarks, active substance exercises *violence* [*Gewalt*] over passive substance, where this violence is the explicit or external manifestation of the power [*Macht*] of substance itself (WL I 405/567).

On the other hand, passive substance is the self-subsistent substrate that requires violence to be exercised upon it: “not only is it possible to do violence to that which suffers it, but also violence *must* be done to it” (WL I 406/567). Passive substance receives its due only through being (violently) acted upon by another power, where this power is in fact active substance acting violently upon itself. Passive substance thereby loses its immediacy, its alien substantiality, and receives its determination from substance in its active aspect. Hence passive substance is not destroyed but rather unites with its own self as substance: in being actively determined (as effect) it is also passively *originative* (is converted into its own cause). In short, there is a unity of activity and passivity in the *reciprocal action* of substance upon itself. We recognise here the Spinozist metaphysics of substance as infinite power and *causa sui*. This circular process of action and reaction reaches stability and unity only once action becomes “*bent round* and becomes an action that returns into itself” (WL I 407/569). The domination-relation between causal substance and passive substance is transformed into a reciprocal action in which neither side dominates over the other.

In this sense, the Concept of *reciprocal action* is the first explicit manifestation of the threefold unity of universality, particularity, and individuality that encompasses being and reflection, an adumbration of the self-determining totality that Hegel will call “the Concept”. Absolute substance as self-differentiating absolute form—the standpoint reached by Spinoza—now *differentiates* itself into three interrelated and reciprocally defining aspects. First, absolute substance is the originating power of totality as a *simple and self-identical whole* (what was formerly passive substance); this becomes the Conceptual dimension of the *universal* [*Allgemeine*] (WL I 409/571). Secondly, absolute substance also differentiates itself into the totality that comprises independent actualities, a whole that is posited as *self-identical negativity* (what was formerly causal substance); this becomes the *individual* [*das Einzelne*] (WL I 409/571). This simple identity of universality and individuality is *particularity* [*Besonderheit*], where the latter contains the moment of *determinateness* belonging to the individual as well as the moment of *reflection-into-self* belonging to the universal (WL I 409/571). This suspension of the domination-relation of causality within the self-differentiating unity of absolute substance, a suspension in which substance

has begun to integrate reflection into itself or to become subject, marks the transition to the dialectical totality of thought-determinations that Hegel calls the *Begriff*. This speculative relation of self-identity in otherness through which the domination over the other is overcome opens up the Concept as “the realm of *subjectivity* or of *freedom*” (WL I 409/571).

III. The Logic of the Concept

The third part of Hegel’s Logic integrates and at the same time transforms the totality of the basic categorical relationships that we have analysed thus far: the relation between self-equality and otherness in the categories of being, and the thematisation of the determinations of reflection (identity, difference, contradiction, and ground) in the sphere of essence. *Subjective Logic* is Hegel’s *positive* contribution to the *Aufhebung* of the metaphysical tradition. “Subjectivity” here is not to be confused with ordinary representation belonging to the finitude of consciousness. Indeed, Hegel distinguishes the finite immediate subjectivity in this sense—belonging to the person “with the contingent and arbitrary content” of his/her private desires and interests—from “subjectivity” in the emphatic sense of being immanent in the matter itself [*Sache selbst*]. The latter signifies an infinite Subjectivity that is the truth of social objectivity and which contains the moment of particularity within itself (Enz §147A1/223). The category of *subjectivity* designates a logical structure of relations in which thought both posits and sublates its own determinations, a universality that also concretely individuates itself. The (‘subjective’) Logic of the Concept is Hegel’s account of the radical or absolute self-referentiality and self-determination of thought, of the systematically interconnected categories that ultimately (but not all in the same way) structure both extra-mental, objective reality and ‘subjective’ thinking.

The Concept in General

At this point, we must try to clarify what Hegel means by the “Concept” and how the three Conceptual-determinations of universality, particularity and the individual are related to the Concept in general. Although this can be discussed here only very broadly, there are nonetheless three main issues to be considered: 1) the meaning of “the Concept” in general as a dialectical totality of thought-determinations comprising the three interconnected aspects of universality, particularity, individuality; 2) how the speculative account of the Concept is relevant to the “everyday” problem of identity and difference (the collection of individual items—tokens of the same type—under a general term, the relation between subject and predicate in judgments). And 3) to discuss the relation between Hegel’s threefold structure of the Concept and the corresponding three moments of self-consciousness as the determinately existent *Concept* [*daseiender Begriff*]. In this respect, it is important to consider the issue of

where the notion of *recognition* can be integrated within Hegel's characterisation of the Concept of self-consciousness. I propose that recognition corresponds to the third moment of *the individual* in Hegel's account of the Concept, the moment lacking in "formalist" accounts of self-consciousness. As we shall see, the connection Hegel draws here between the Concept and the notion of freedom, as being-with-itself-in-the-Other is essential to understanding intersubjective recognition.

What does Hegel mean by "the Concept"? What Hegel does *not* mean is fairly clear: it does not refer to the ordinary sense of "concept" found in the (formal) logic of the understanding, where it is regarded "merely as a form of our subjective thinking, without any content of its own" (Enz §160A/237). This *representational* sense of "concept" designates an *abstract* universality: the concepts of colour, of an animal, and so on, are supposed to arise by omitting the particularities through which various colours, animals, and so on, are distinguished, and by grasping instead what they have in common. This sense of 'concept,' Hegel remarks, is rightly regarded as "hollow and empty" (Enz §163A1/240). What is *universal* in the Concept in Hegel's sense is what *particularises* or *specifies itself*, "remaining at home with itself in its other, in unclouded clarity" (Enz §163A1/240). Moreover, Hegel rejects the empiricist view that concepts are formed by abstraction of what is common between pre-given items or objects. Rather, the Concept can be understood as the dialectical system of thought-determinations that articulates the conditions of intelligibility of the whole. Such thought-determinations or conditions of intelligibility are equally "objective" and "subjective," since the totality of what non-accidentally *is* includes, as its highest manifestation, speculative *thought*. Such self-reflexive, self-comprehending thought, moreover, is able to account for its own principal accomplishment: the comprehension of the truth of the totality of Being. In very general terms, the Concept names the self-developing system or reflexive totality of thought that provides the "objective" and "subjective" conditions of intelligibility of the Whole.^[18] Indeed, the latter comprehends the object, product and content of *thinking*, the *logos* or reason of what is, the intelligibility or "truth of what we call things." (WL I/1 17/39). What we usually call determinate "concepts" are simply abstract representations "that take only the moment of universality from the Concept, leaving out particularity and singularity [*Einzelheit*]" (Enz §164R/242). This is a crucial point for understanding Hegel's conception of the Concept or *Begriff*, which precisely does incorporate particularity and singularity along with universality in a 'triune' unity of aspects or moments.

At the same time, the significance of the aspects of "universal," "particular," and "individual" is not simply theoretical but also practical-moral in nature. The distinction between the truly universal and the merely communal, for example, has important practical significance in conceptualising and comprehending our moral and social experience. The Concept of the "human being," for instance, is not simply an abstract representation of what is communally shared, but designates rather the human

being as a being that is intrinsically *infinite* and *universal* in his/her very finitude and individuality. This thought of the true universality of the human being, Hegel observes, emerges historically only with Christianity, which in this sense can be defined as “the religion of absolute freedom” (Enz §163A1/240). The Greeks, by contrast, did not recognise other communities in their universal humanity; consequently, they perceived there to be an “absolute gulf” between themselves and the ‘barbarians’, and did not perceive the individual human being as such “in his infinite worth and his infinite justification” (Enz §163A1/240). Hegel also points to the historical example of slavery: the slave is denied recognition of the *universality* of his personality. The slave is treated by the master as a thing devoid of self; the slave does not count as an ‘I,’ since the master is supposed to be his ‘I’ instead (Enz §163A1/241). The slave lacks recognition of *his personality*, but the principle of personality is *universality* (Enz §163A1/241). Slavery begins to disappear, Hegel claims, only once the Christian principle of recognising the intrinsic universality and infinity of the finite and individual human being is fully recognised.^[19] In this respect, the inadequate conceptualisation of our universal humanity that embraces particularity and concrete individuality has profound moral, social, and historical consequences.

Universality, Particularity, Individuality

Let us turn in more detail to the critical significance of the three moments of the Concept: universality, particularity, and individuality. All three are aspects of the Concept as a whole: the Concept differentiates itself into these three dimensions or aspects that are distinct but also unified within the Concept. At the same time, each of these aspects is itself the *whole* Concept, while also being a *determinate* concept as well as a *determination* of the Concept (WL II 32/600). This confusing situation calls for further clarification. In the simplest of terms, the Concept names a self-differentiating unity that, as Kolb notes, “explicitly posits the totality lacking in the categories of essence”^[20] (1986, 60). But these terms cannot necessarily be taken in their ordinary or contemporary philosophical senses. The *universal*, Kolb remarks, does not refer to an abstract entity distinguished from concrete individuals (1986, 61), for such general representations remain at the level of consciousness and self-consciousness.^[21] The *particular*, as Kolb observes, does not refer to “a definite individual entity, the bearer of properties,” but rather to a determinate content or quality defined in contrast against other such qualities, such as a particular shade of red (1986, 61). Finally, the Hegelian sense of the individual, like that of Aristotle, refers to “something individuated, in-dividual, un-divided, single and independent” (Kolb 1986, 61). Schematically speaking, the Concept encompasses the aspect of universality, implying unity and commonality, the aspect of particularity, implying definiteness and

distinction, and the aspects of the individual, implying self-subsistence, singleness, self-related independence and self-sufficiency (Kolb 1986, 61). These three dimensions of the Concept are articulated and unified with each other within a self-differentiating totality.

We should note also that Hegel presents universality, particularity, and individuality as comprehensive versions of the categories of identity, difference, opposition and ground. As Hegel states, “in the Concept, identity has been developed into universality, difference into particularity, opposition, which withdraws into the ground, into individuality” (WL II 46/615-616). The difficulty with the categories of reflection lay in the problem of unifying the categorical pairs, united within foundation/founded relationships, without one pole dominating over the other. The Conceptual interpretation of identity, difference, and ground as universality, particularity, and individuality, is no longer a ‘binary’ system of logical-categorical pairs but rather a ‘triune’ system of self-referential, self-developing unities that preserve their distinction within the overarching unity of the Conceptual totality. Taken abstractly, Hegel writes,

universality, particularity, and singularity [*Einzelheit*] are the same as identity, distinction [*Unterschied*], and ground. But the universal is what is identical with itself *explicitly in the sense* that it contains the particular and the singular at the same time. Furthermore, the particular is what is distinct or the determinacy, but in the sense that it is inwardly universal and is [actual] as something-singular (Enz §164R/242).

The reflection-categories of identity, difference, and ground have been reflected and suspended in the triune logic of Conceptuality such that each term is essentially defined by the other two: universality incorporates both particularity and individuality, particularity is implicitly universal and actualised as individuality, while individuality unites universality and particularity within the concrete individual. Each aspect or logical dimension of the totality refers to and articulates the other two in a constellation of dynamic relations of relationships.

Hegel’s highly complicated discussion the Concept might be further elucidated by way of an example drawn from the *Philosophy of Right*. This will enable us to underline the *critical* function of Hegelian Logic, in particular Hegel’s criticisms of the predominance of formal universality within the metaphysics of the understanding, and the related problem of implicit domination-relations within this paradigm of reflection. As we shall see, Hegel’s speculative theory of Conceptuality has significant practical implications for understanding and enacting the relation between universal and particular (or identity and difference) within intersubjective Spirit.

Immediate universality, for example, corresponds to Hegel’s account of the structure of ancient

ethical life within the Greek polis; each individual is defined by his or her social role where that role is immediately perceived as defined by the social good (Kolb 1986, 99). Differences within society are recognised but also incorporated within this ‘organic’ unity. Each individual simply *is* his or her social role, has full trust in the unity of these roles with the good of the community, and does not experience him- or herself as separated or isolated from the social whole. This is an immediate unity of the universal, where particularity and individuality merge with each other without separation or mediation. This immediacy of identification with given social roles provides the ground for the experience of conflicting inexorable duties in tragedy, as evinced, for example, in Hegel’s famous analysis of Antigone. The logical configuration here, as Kolb observes, “is the immediate unity of universal (the social whole), particular (this or that definite role), and individual (Antigone as a concrete person)” (1986, 66). The three moments of the Concept are distinguished from each other but also merge within an immediate unity; the polis and its citizens form an immediate unity without mediating institutions such as those that will characterise civil society within modernity. In the immediate universality of Greek ethical life, we have universality that subsumes particularity and individuality, such that the (modern) principle of subjectivity cannot yet be articulated within the social whole.

We can briefly compare this (very simplified) account of the immediate universality of the ancient polis with the predominance of formal universality in modernity. For Hegel, modernity is distinguished from antiquity largely through the emergence of the “principle of subjectivity”. As Kolb describes, modernity emerged out of “the positing in institutions and individual selves the difference between particular individuals (with their particular desires and needs) and the universal, social body of customs and laws” (1986, 67). Modern historical and social experience is defined by the separation and individuation of autonomous subjectivity, both in relation to the natural world and the formal universality of social institutions. The difference between the particularity of individual needs, desires, and interests is posited and articulated through the mediating social institutions of civil society (primarily the market economy and bureaucratic organisations) which have a formal (contentless, functional, rule-governed) universality. The dominance of universality over particularity that prevailed in ancient society is transformed into the modern emphasis on the difference between universal and particular. In emphasising the difference between universal and particular, modernity generates a new distinction between form and content, the formal unity of the community versus the content that is placed on the side of the determinate particular members participating within civil society (Kolb 1986, 68). It is in this manner that modernity comes to be characterised by an emphasis on both individual rights and formal unifying institutions; instead of the harmonious universality of ancient ethical life we find a dynamic process wherein the unity of the whole itself has become something particular, “an empty and perforce formal process of interrelation and unity” between individuals, civil society and the

state (Kolb 1986, 86).

Let us consider in this context Hegel's opening discussion of abstract right, which points to the moments of universality, particularity, and individuality as comprising the Concept of the will. The first moment of the will is the *pure indeterminacy* of the 'I'; the power to dissolve all given determinate content, be it presented by nature (as needs or desire) or else in some other way, through an act of abstract self-reflection. This limitless power of abstraction is "*universality*, the pure thinking of oneself" (PR §5/37). Human beings have this power of pure thinking, the power of (abstract) universality that can extinguish all particularity, all determinacy (PR §5A/38). To be sure, this is a *one-sided* conception of freedom belonging to the understanding, which takes this abstract universality as primary and elevates it "to supreme status" (PR §5A/39). This abstract freedom recurs frequently in history, most disturbingly in forms of religious and political "fanaticism" (PR §5R/38). Hegel's example is the reign of 'Terror in the French Revolution, a time of "trembling and quaking and of intolerance towards everything particular" in which the people both created and then destroyed their own political institutions because these were incompatible with "the abstract self-consciousness of equality" (PR §5A/39). Hegel's critical account of the political dangers of abstract universality is vividly examined in the "Absolute Freedom and Terror" section of the *Phenomenology*. In the latter, Hegel discusses the movement from the instrumental utility of the Enlightenment to the post-revolutionary consciousness of absolute freedom "as *pure* self-identity of the universal will" (PhG 321/¶593) Because the alienated individual self-consciousness cannot find itself in the *universal work* of absolute freedom, in the extremes of universal and individual will within post-revolutionary society, universal freedom "can produce neither a positive work nor a deed," and hence resorts to political violence and terror or the *fury* of destruction (PhG 319/¶589).

To return to the Concept of willing, we move from the undifferentiated indeterminacy of the 'I' to the positing of itself as something determinate and *particular*. Universality, taken abstractly on its own, appears as an abstraction from particularity. The moment of particularity, for its part, refers to the free will in the condition of immediacy, "the *inherently individual* [*in sich einzelner*] will of a *subject*" (PR §34/67). The particularity of the will has as its content the various desires, needs and contingent ends of the willing subject: "I do not merely will — I will something," namely a *definite* object or content which particularises and determines the will as finite (PR §6A/40). This particularity of the will, which gives it definite content, nonetheless refers back to the universality of the will, to the I as the power of abstraction. The will itself is the unity of both these moments: particularity reflected into itself and thereby restored to universality. This unity is the third moment, namely *individuality* [*Einzelheit*] as "the *self-determination* of the 'I' which both posits itself as determinate and limited (as particularity) and at the same time remains "with itself [*bei sich*]" or finds its self-identity in the unity of particularity and

universality (PR §7/41). Hegel points out that every self-consciousness “knows itself as universal, as the possibility of abstracting from everything determinate, and as particular, with a determinate object [*Gegenstand*] and end” (PR §7R/41). The concrete identity of self-consciousness consists in the universality which has particularity as its own opposite, but where this particularity is reconciled with the universal through the *concrete individual* (PR §7R/41). The third moment of individuality is the *freedom* of the will of the willing subject, who unites the universality of the ‘I’ with the particularity of desire in willing freedom itself.

This freely willing subject is not isolated or atomised. Indeed, Hegel points to the implicitly *intersubjective* character of the freely willing subject who wills freedom. As we saw, the Concept of will contains the moment of the universality of the ‘I’ as pure activity of abstraction, the universal which is *with itself* [*bei sich*]; it also contains the moment of particularity in which the universal determines itself, posits itself as *an other*, or is *difference* as the object or content of will. The third moment is the ‘I’ that *is with itself in the other* [*bei sich im Anderen*]; in determining itself as other or as particularity, it remains with itself and “does not cease to hold on to the universal” (PR §7A/42). The freely willing individual who wills freedom (that is unites particularity with the universal) embodies the concrete Concept of freedom, whereas the two moments of universality and particularity taken on their own are “thoroughly one-sided and abstract” (PR §7A/42). Indeed, we already possess this concrete freedom, Hegel remarks, in the form of feeling within friendship and love. In such relationships of mutual recognition, “we are not one-sidedly within ourselves, but willingly limit ourselves with reference to an other, even while knowing ourselves in this limitation as ourselves” (PR §7A/42). Within this determinacy of willing, we should not feel ourselves to be determined; rather our freedom lies in being both self-determining and in being determined in relation to the Other. Intersubjective freedom, articulated in the concrete individual, is to will something determinate, yet to be with oneself in the Other and thus to return to the universal (PR §7A/42). The moment of individuality thus points to the possibility of *mutual recognition*, the intersubjective freedom in which the subject finds its self-identity in relation with the Other, rather than attempting to dominate or destroy the Other’s particularity or difference in the name of an abstract freedom or universality.

The Concept of Self-Consciousness

It is in the logic of the Concept that Hegel undertakes his critique of modern subject-metaphysics, which we can consider with reference to Hegel’s account of the Kantian conception of self-consciousness. Hegel criticises Kant’s “subjectivisation” of the Concept, the reduction of Conceptuality to the empirical and transcendental self-consciousness of an individual. Hegel’s

exposition of the Concept thus serves as a critique of the “formalism” of modern subject-metaphysics. For this reason, Hegel’s analysis of the practical implications of abstract universality and identity is highly pertinent to our discussion of the identity/difference problem. As we have seen, Hegel argues that the categories of reflection, the binary pairs of identity and difference, form and content, and so on, are not adequate to comprehend the logical structure of self-conscious subjectivity. For this we must turn to the triune logic of conceptuality, which articulates universality, particularity, and individuality within a threefold “identity-in-difference”. We can observe Hegel’s criticism of the paradigm of reflection at work in his critical account of the Concept of self-consciousness, in particular the deficiencies of the Kantian model of pure self-consciousness:

The Concept, when it has developed into a *concrete existence* [Existenz] that is itself free, is none other than the *I* or pure self-consciousness. True, I *have* concepts, that is to say, determinate concepts, but the *I* is the pure Concept itself which, as Concept, has come into *determinate being* [Dasein]. (WL II 17/583 trans. mod.)

Hegel indicates in numerous remarks that the Kantian transcendental unity of apperception certainly attains the speculative level of the Concept. At the same time, he criticises Kant for presenting the purely formal transcendental subject in a relation of opposition to the manifold of intuition. Given Kant’s critical transformation of substance-metaphysics through the principle of self-determining subjectivity, we are nonetheless justified “in referring to the nature of the Ego in order to learn what the *Concept* is” (WL II 19/585 trans. mod.).

As we saw already in the account of self-consciousness in the PhG, the transcendental Ego is a pure self-related unity insofar as it abstracts from all its substantive content and withdraws into the “freedom of unrestricted equality with itself” (WL II 17/583). This means that Ego is a) a *universality*, namely a unity that is a unity with itself “only through its *negative* attitude”; it is a self-relation that establishes unity by abstraction, the capacity to dissolve all its concrete determinations within it. But the *Ego* as self-related negativity is at the same time b) *individuality* [Einzelheit] or an *individual personality*; it is a individual being that defines itself by excluding what is *other* than it and opposing this excluded otherness to itself. This self-conscious personality, characterised both by universality and individuality, is essentially self-determining in being able to oppose itself to all that is other and by *excluding* the latter from itself (WL II 17/583). Like the Kantian *empirical ego*, with its own given or determined representations, inclinations, interests, and so on, the subject or I is a concrete individual who wills this or that object as that which is excluded and opposed to itself. Hegel thus questions the Kantian dualism, or uncomprehended relationship between the formal-transcendental and empirical Egos: for Hegel, these are just two aspects (universality and individuality) of the self-conscious subject, to which

the moment of *particularity*, the qualitative determinations and diverse qualities of each individual subject, must also be added in order to comprise the threefold unity of universal, particular, and individual making up the Concept of self-consciousness.^[22] We should note that this oppositional relation between universal self-consciousness and individual personality closely resembles the relation of desire described in the PhG: “Certain of the nothingness of this other, ... it [the proto self-conscious subject of desire] destroys the independent object and thereby gives itself the certainty of itself as a *true* certainty” (PhG 107/¶174). What is missing in the “formalism” of Kantian and Fichtean account of self-consciousness, which opposes abstract universality and individual personality, is the moment of particularity or *desire*, which is relegated to domain of practical-moral self-experience (the struggle between duty and inclination, for example) unconnected with the formal structure of self-consciousness. We have instead a dualist, rather than “triune,” model of self-consciousness, one which opposes the universal ‘I’ (transcendental ego) and abstract individual personality (empirical ego), without incorporating the moment of particularity proper, the moment of particular desires, appetites, and inclinations described by Hegel in his account of the experience of desiring self-consciousness. A developed conception of self-consciousness, however, must do justice to all three dimensions of the ‘I’ as self-conscious subjectivity: the *particularity* of self-consciousness, manifest in desire, the abstract *universality* of the I in its formal-transcendental aspect, and the concrete *individuality* the subject manifest in the reflective “doubling” of self and other in intersubjective relations of recognition.

This is an important point in Hegel’s discussion of self-consciousness as Concept, for it refers us back to Hegel’s description of the concept of self-consciousness in the *Phenomenology* (¶176). In that context, Hegel characterised the first moment in the threefold structure of self-consciousness as “the pure undifferentiated ‘I,’” the immediate object of self-consciousness, which corresponds to the abstract universality discussed above. This immediacy of the ‘I’ is also mediated by a relation to otherness, a suspension of the independent object in the relation of *desire*, which partially corresponds with Hegel’s characterisation here of *individual personality*, whose self-identity is constituted through the negation and exclusion of otherness (WL II 17/583). We should note, however, that this version of (abstract) individuality as individual personality conflates aspects of particularity (desires, inclination) with individuality. What is missing in the Kantian conception of self-consciousness, however, is the *third* moment of the Concept (of self-consciousness) in which the first two find their truth, the moment of *concrete individuality* achieved through *mutual recognition*: the moment of a “doubled reflection” between self-consciousnesses in relations of intersubjective *recognition* through which a “self-consciousness exists *for a self-consciousness*” (PhG 108/¶177).

In general terms, the individuality of the Ego consists in the unity of abstract freedom and determination, of universality and particularity. The specific significance of the aspect of *individuality*

refers to the possibility of my taking up a distanced or critical attitude in respect of the determinations which are *mine*: of consciously forming or ‘educating’ my personality, rearticulating the relationship between universal norms, social institutions and practices, and my own particular needs, desires, inclinations, and so on. According to Hegel, the possibility of this ‘distantation’ process through which my individuality is developed in relation to universality and particularity depends upon intersubjective recognition of and by the Other. For it is only in the process of mutual recognition, the “spiritual doubling” of self-consciousnesses, that individuality, in the sense of a critically self-chosen and individuated sense of self-identity, can be formed in solidarity with the dimensions of universality and particularity in a community of Others, a communicative context of social and political institutions, social practices, cultural meanings, and historical self-understandings. In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel clearly indicates that with the moment of intersubjective recognition we have arrived at the Concept of *Spirit*: “this absolute substance which is the unity of the different independent self-consciousnesses which, in their opposition, enjoy perfect freedom and independence: ‘I’ that is ‘We’ and ‘We’ that is ‘I’” (PhG 108/¶177). This suggests that the logical structure of Spirit involves the ‘triune’ logical pattern of Conceptuality, which encompasses all three dimensions of universality, particularity, and individuality within a comprehensive, self-differentiating unity, a conceptually articulated unity of ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ aspects of Spirit (social objectivity and individual subjectivity) that is self-reflexively comprehended within absolute Spirit (cultural-historical forms of self-interpretation culminating, according to Hegel, with the self-comprehension of this process in speculative philosophy). This ‘self-identity in otherness’ between individual self-conscious subjects is *freedom* as the rational unity of the universality of the ‘I,’ the particularity of individual desires, and the ‘reflective’ individuality of rational autonomous subjectivities within their historically defined social and cultural communities. It is this moment that discloses self-consciousness as concrete individuality within the relational context of intersubjective recognition. On Hegel’s view, then, Kant’s conception of self-consciousness, which opposes formal universality with (abstract) individual personality, thus lacks the moment of *individuality* proper required for fully developed and self-comprehending Spirit.

One point worth clarifying in this context is the relationship between the phenomenology and logic implied in this discussion of the Concept of self-consciousness. This very difficult interpretative issue can only be mentioned, rather than resolved, in this context, but requires some further comment in the context of our present discussion of the Conceptual structure of self-consciousness. On the one hand, it is clear that Hegel’s phenomenological account of the experience of the freedom of self-consciousness implied that the moment of mutual recognition is necessary for what is presented in conceptual-categorical terms in the *Logic* as “individuality”. It is only in the process of mutual recognition that the moment of reflective “doubling” is articulated, the moment in which the self finds

its self-identity in otherness through a reciprocal movement of recognition of and by the Other. This anticipates, as Hegel remarks, the ‘I’ that is a ‘We’ and the ‘We’ that is an ‘I’. More difficult is the question whether the *Logic itself* shows the need for mutual recognition by pointing to something in the logical structure of individuality that anticipates or mirrors mutual recognition. In other words, does the process of recognition find its “ground” in the logical structure of individuality within the Concept of self-consciousness as such? To be sure, Hegel does not explicitly link the moment of individuality in the Concept with the process of mutual recognition in the Concept of self-consciousness. Nonetheless, this claim would seem to be implied in Hegel’s account of the manner in which universal, particular, and individual are articulated in the structure of the Concept; the moment of mutual recognition corresponds with or mirrors the moment of individuality in the Concept of self-consciousness, the aspect that mediates between the extremes of formal universality (the undifferentiated or pure ‘I’) and the particularity of the desiring subject with its particular drives, inclinations, and interests.

Where the parallel breaks down is in Hegel’s account of the opposition between formal universality (the transcendental ‘I’) and (abstract) individuality or what he calls here “individual personality” (WL II 17/583) (namely, the empirical ego that conflates both the particularity of desiring self-consciousness and the abstract individuality of the person with his/her own personal identity). I have suggested that Hegel’s criticism of Kant turns on noting this conflation of particularity and individuality in Kant’s account, and the lack of a unified account of the three dimensions of self-conscious subjectivity, namely an account of the unity of formal universality, desiring particularity, and intersubjectively constituted individual self-identity within a community of Others defined by relations of recognition. Nonetheless, the fact that Hegel’s own account of the precise relationship between the threefold structure of the Concept and the Kantian version of self-consciousness remains unclear, invoking a parallel between the Concept and the transcendental ego on the one hand, and invoking the threefold structure of Conceptuality when describing the “Concept of self-consciousness itself (PhG ¶176) on the other, suggests that these issues were not entirely clear in Hegel’s mind either. We can say that the Kantian version of self-consciousness illustrates, according to Hegel, the underlying structure of Conceptuality, without itself being a successfully developed version of the Concept of self-consciousness as such. Indeed, for Hegel, such an adequate Concept of self-consciousness is possible only through an account of the intersubjective constitution and Conceptually articulated structure of Spirit: namely, by appropriating the phenomenological account of the development of self-consciousness into Spirit, and thence comprehending the logical exposition of the underlying categorical structure of Spirit as “Concept”.

Nonetheless, to return to the *Logic*, Hegel still praises Kant for having moved beyond the “reification” of the ‘I’ in which the understanding is treated as though it were a mere property or

faculty of the 'I' as an indeterminate substrate (WL II 17/584). As Hegel notes, Kant supersedes this reificatory model of the understanding in discussing the transcendental Ego in such a way as to emphasise its "Conceptual" character.

It is one of the profoundest and truest insights to be found in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that the *unity* which constitutes the nature of the Concept is recognised as the *original synthetic* unity of *apperception*, as the unity of the *I think*, or of self-consciousness (WL II 17-18/584)

This proposition also articulates the basis for Kant's transcendental deduction of the categories, whose legendary difficulty, for Hegel, is due to its speculative character, which forces us to advance beyond representation to the *thought* of the relation between the categories and the (synthetic) unity of self-consciousness. Pure self-consciousness contains the beginning of the true apprehension of the Concept as an identity-in-difference (or "synthetic unity"), something completely opposed to "that empty identity or abstract universality which is not within itself a synthesis" (WL II 22/589).

At the same time, Hegel criticises Kant's failure to develop this speculative insight further: the very conception of "synthesis" which Kant invokes suggests a representational model of external or subjectively imposed unity and a mere combination of self-subsistent and separate entities (WL II 23/589). Indeed, Kant falls back to standpoint of reflection—that of abstract universality or empty identity—by "subjectivising" self-consciousness into a merely formal self-identity that remains "conditioned" by, or opposed to, the sensuous manifold of intuition. Kant does not recognise that the limits of our cognitive understanding and phenomenal experience are due to the *finite* character of the categories of the understanding. Instead, Kant (uncritically) assumes that the categories are merely determinations "originating in self-consciousness," rather than being "objective" determinations of reflection that structure self-consciousness itself. Moreover, Hegel claims that Logic also exhibits the elevation of the *Idea* to the speculative level from which it becomes "the creator of nature" (WL II 25/592). It is this *subjectivisation* or even *psychologisation* of the Concept that forms the basis for Hegel's generalised critique of subject-metaphysics. Kantian idealism does not remain at the speculative level because of its inability to conceive the Subject other than as the empirical or transcendental self-consciousness of the *individual*. Kant is thus unable to overcome the dualism between the manifold of intuition and the universality of concepts in order to consider the categories *in and for themselves* (WL II 27/594).

The untenable consequences of Kant's "subjectivisation" of the Concept are central to Hegel's general critique of subject-metaphysics. Kant's reversion to the abstract identity and universality of self-consciousness does not advance beyond the formalism and dualism between self-consciousness and the

empirical manifold, and correspondingly the dualism between transcendental and empirical egos. Subject-metaphysics remains caught at the level of *Verstand* rather than attaining the standpoint of *Vernunft*. This failure to properly suspend substance and subject results in a formal conception of freedom as empty self-determination, a conception that fails to unite formal freedom with determinate content. Hegel's (counter)example is of the ethical subject who is "conscious of the content of his action as something necessary, something that is valid in and for itself". It is only through this rational consciousness of freedom that "his abstract freedom becomes a freedom that is actual and rich in content, as distinct from freedom of choice, a freedom that still lacks content and is merely possible" (Enz §158A/233). The corresponding conception of self-identity developed within subject-metaphysics remains in opposition to otherness, either seeking to dominate it (the autonomous subject dominating the object or Other) or else dominated by it (the heteronomous subject determined by otherness and thus denied its subjective freedom). The implicit domination-relations within the metaphysics of the understanding, Hegel concludes, can be overcome only by the speculative freedom of self-identity in otherness that defines the Concept.

I have argued that Hegel's *Logic* performs a fundamental critique of substance and subject-metaphysics: that the conceptual and categorical resources of the latter are inadequate to overcome the domination-relations implicit within the logic of reflection; and that they thus fail to suspend the opposition between finite and infinite, subject and object, universal and individual, in favour of the non-hierarchical unity of the Concept. As my brief excursus on the Concept of self-consciousness will have suggested, the third moment of the Concept points to reciprocal recognition as the mark of intersubjective freedom. Indeed, speculative logic is ultimately a logic of freedom in which subjectivity and objectivity are no longer opposed but find their self-identity in otherness within the threefold unity of universal, particular, and individual, the self-developing logical structure of Conceptuality. Indeed, Hegel's basic problem throughout the *Logic*, I have suggested, is that of "giving difference its due": to suspend the "reifying" logic of identity and difference in favour of the self-developing freedom of the Concept. It is in this sense that we could speak, with Theunissen, of the Logic as concealing a critical theory of "communicative freedom," one in which the conceptual domination-relations implicit within the metaphysics of the understanding are finally suspended within the speculative comprehension of freedom as being with oneself in the Other. Hegel thus suspends the categories and logic of reflection (identity, difference, ground) in favour of the triune speculative logic of Conceptuality (comprising universality, particularity, and the individual), which is more adequate to comprehend the complexity of self-consciousness as spirit within modernity.

This 'utopian' dimension of Hegel's critical confrontation with metaphysics of substance and

subject has important implications for Heidegger's reading of Hegel. Hegel's speculative Logic is motivated, I have argued, by the problem of preserving and developing determinate difference within the logic of Conceptuality, and thereby thinking speculative freedom in the sense of being with oneself in otherness. To attribute a conception of abstract universality and privileging of formal identity to Hegel's logic is thus a serious misinterpretation of its simultaneous expository and critical functions. As we have seen, the entire problematic of identity, difference, and contradiction is superseded by the threefold Conceptual 'unity-in-difference' of universality, particularity, and individuality. As we shall see, Heidegger's confrontation with Hegel will turn on the challenge Hegelian speculative thought presents to Heidegger's radical project of overcoming metaphysics by attempting the task of thinking the truth of Being, no longer conceived according to the paradigms of the metaphysical tradition. The problem concerning the validity of Heidegger's interpretation of Hegel's metaphysics therefore comes directly to the fore: is Hegel, as Heidegger insists, the consummate metaphysician of subjectivity and identity, whose system of speculative logic, as the epitome of "onto-theology," obliterates difference and, above all, the ontological difference? Or does Hegel provide conceptual resources for challenging Heidegger's radical confrontation with the metaphysical tradition, and moreover, with the conceptual-philosophical bases of modernity? The question to be addressed now is whether Heidegger's (post-metaphysical) thinking can successfully overcome Hegelian Logic, or whether Hegel's speculative dialectic is able to meet the challenge Heidegger's thinking poses to metaphysics in modernity.

[1] Hegel's concept of pure being in this sense recalls Parmenidean being, which is "indivisible" and "all like itself". Cf. Parmenides' account of pure being as "abiding the same in the same place it rests by itself, and so abides firm where it is" (Fr. 8). Parmenides is the first thinker to have enunciated "the simple thought of *pure being* as the absolute and sole truth," hence can be regarded as the founder of the idea of philosophical *Wissenschaft* (WL I/1 76/88). But as Hegel will proceed to demonstrate, Parmenides' strict separation of the two paths—those of being and of non-being—cannot be maintained as such. Pure being, lacking all determinateness, is purely empty; as an empty thought it is indistinguishable from *nothing*.

[2] Cf. Redding: "Hegel's arguments are meant to establish something about the *conditions for the intelligible communicative application of concepts to the world*" (1991, 440). See Redding's account of the relationship between Hegel's Logic of Being and the "polar thinking" to be in Pre-socratic thought as well as "various premodern and preliterate communities" (1991, 446ff.).

[3] The philosophical reference is to Heraclitus, who first brought forward the higher concept of becoming, a category that incorporates difference such that all that flows is nonetheless steered by the *logos*.

[4] Cf. Houlgate: "What Hegel lays out in the opening chapter of his *Science of Logic* is the process whereby thought, which tries to think pure indeterminacy, is led by its own intrinsic necessity to the thought of becoming and to the thought of bare determinacy" (1991, 56).

[5] Theunissen has subjected this exemplary case of *Aufhebung* to serious criticism, arguing that there is no recognisable figure of suspension to be found here (1980, 187). The difficulty lies in Hegel's equating of the *disappearance* of the moments of being and nothing with their *suspension*. Becoming is the *vanishing* of being into nothing and nothing into being; but also the *suspension* of the moments of coming-into-being and ceasing-to-be, which results, or should result, in the "*immediate* unity of these moments" in determinate being. There is no transition here from one category to the other, but rather a presentation of "one and the same matter [*Sache*] under the two aspects of becoming and of determinate being" (1980, 195). Hegel must therefore assume a "double perspective" that distinguishes between "external reflection" and "critical exposition" and that clearly separates these perspectives from each other (Theunissen: 1980, 189). The fact that Hegel does not justify this double perspective, however, makes questionable the transition between becoming and determinate being.

[6] The other, however, is also to be taken as independent and self-subsistent, the *to heteron* of Plato or, more generally, the other as physical nature, the other of Spirit (WL 106/118).

[7] To be sure, the 'ought' of moral action is supposed to be a transcending of limitation, but this is still only a *finite transcending* valid only within the sphere of finitude. Thus, for example, duty is taken to be an ought that is opposed to the particular will; the ought is held up as an ideal standard against which actuality and individual actions are shown to be morally deficient. Such is the case within the sphere of finitude, Hegel argues, but this sphere is embedded in a deeper context of Reason and Law, which are not definable merely according to an 'ought' (as opposed to that which is real and actual). Rather, they themselves have actuality, and realise themselves with a definite concrete content. To oppose an empty 'ought' to concrete actuality, as do Kant and Fichte, is to remain caught within a one-sided interpretation of actuality that "clings to finitude and thus to contradiction" (WL I/1 123/136).

[8] Absolute indifference is the fundamental determination of Spinoza's conception of substance in which every determination of being is posited as vanished: "With Spinoza, the moment of difference —attributes, thought and extension, then the modes too, the affections, and every other determination —is introduced quite empirically; it is the intellect, itself a mode, which is the source of the differentiation." (WL I/1 381/383). According to Hegel, Spinoza's attributes indeed express the whole of substance and the unity of the order of things and of thought; but this difference is an external or quantitative difference posited by the intellect or understanding. Difference is not grasped as qualitative, that is, as immanent within the indifferent unity of absolute substance: "substance is not determined as self-differentiating, not as subject" (WL I/1 381/383).

[9] Cf. Pinkard's account of Hegelian Logic, which emphasises the explanatory substructure/superstructure approach to the world that Hegel analyses in the Logic of Essence (1988, 55ff.).

[10] Cf. Pippin's remark: "A reflective reliance on essence, or ground, or causal laws, the determinations of 'reflection' in general, will make possible far more successfully a coherent self-understanding of what there will be called the "identity" and "difference" of any object of thought" (1989, 197-198).

[11] I am drawing this interpretative point from Theunissen's landmark study of the critical function of Hegel's Logic in *Sein und Schein*. The unity of presentation and critique, argues Theunissen, is the central problem in Hegelian Logic, and recognition of this problem allows us to discern its genuinely critical and practical meaning. The *indifference* of determinations in the Logic of Being and *domination-relations* characterising reflection in the Logic of Essence are at the centre of Hegel's critical confrontation with the entire metaphysical tradition. The logic of the Concept, for Theunissen, finally suspends these deficient standpoints, resolving the indifference of Being and relations of domination in Essence in the logic of the Concept as a theory of "communicative freedom" (Theunissen, 1980).

[12] As Hegel writes, essential difference is "difference in and for itself, not difference resulting from anything external" (WL I 266/417).

[13] We should note here Hegel's play on *Vergleichung* (comparing) as that act which establishes *Gleichheit* and *Ungleichheit* (likeness and unlikeness). As analysed in the *Phenomenology*, this external reflection is manifest in the perceptual consciousness of thinghood, which introduces contrastive restrictions and comparisons—the 'insofar of' sides and respects—in order to avoid contradiction in the thing itself (WL 420).

[14] See also Wolff (1981, 39ff.) for a detailed discussion of the Kantian doctrine of dialectical opposition and its relevance for Hegel's concepts of opposition and contradiction.

[15] Kant described the "amphiboly of concepts of reflection" arising from the confusion of the empirical with the transcendental use of the understanding (KRV B316 ff.). In the use of subjective concepts such as identity and difference, which apply to the relation between concepts used in making objective judgments, we require a "transcendental deliberation" in order to ascertain to which cognitive power (understanding or sensibility) our given presentations belong. The amphiboly arises when we confuse the empirical use of such concepts with their transcendental use, and take identity, difference, to refer to appearances or even things in themselves rather than to relations between concepts used in judgment and their relation to one or other of our cognitive powers.

[16] Indeed, the contradictoriness of things is due to their finitude, an opposition that is resolved in the higher sphere of the infinite, that is, in their ground. Thus, for example, the oppositional character of finite consciousness is manifested in the contradictions and antinomies uncovered by the abstract understanding, an experience analysed in the "inverted world" section of the *PbG*. There we analysed how the contradictory experience of the inverted world reflects the oppositional structure of consciousness into itself, thereby bringing consciousness to the stage of recognising its inner difference or contradiction. The resolution of this contradiction—the identity-in-difference of appearance and (rational) essence within the infinity of self-consciousness—establishes self-consciousness as the *truth* of consciousness. Self-consciousness is the *ground* into which the contradictions of finite consciousness are sublated.

[17] As Theunissen remarks, Hegel attempts to perform "a destruction [*Destruktion*] of the philosophy of absolute substance as the system of unfreedom" in order to actualise the programme of a "system of freedom," in order to think substance also as subject (1980, 327).

[18] Indeed, to interpret the logical meaning of "subject" for Hegel will become crucial in evaluating Heidegger's charge that Hegel completes the metaphysics of subjectivity and obliterates the ontological difference.

[19] Hegel further illustrates the difference here between what is merely common and what is truly universal by citing Rousseau's well-known distinction between the "general will" and the "will of all": the laws of the political State must emerge from the general will [*volonté générale*], which need not be the will of all [*volonté de tous*]. The general will is the Concept of willing, while actual laws are particular determinations of willing as grounded in this Concept (Enz §163A1/241).

[20] As Kolb notes, the terms that Hegel chooses to describe the three dimensions of the Concept—the universal, the particular, and the individual—are meant to parallel the traditional (scholastic) logical terms of genus, species, and individual (1986, 60-61).

[21] Indeed, there are for Hegel a number of senses of universality, from the immediate universal, formal universality, to concrete universality.

[22] Hegel's discussion is somewhat unclear on this point, since he mentions the moments of (abstract) universality and (abstract) individuality, understood as "individual personality". The latter, as an abstract, undeveloped form of individuality, is not the same as the developed sense of concrete individuality that Hegel will describe in terms of mutual recognition. Rather, particularity and individuality are conflated or merged in the Kantian dualism between the universal transcendental ego and the empirical ego as encompassing both particular desires and inclinations as well as the

individuality of being a concrete Other (individual personality). Precisely how self-consciousness becomes individuated as this unified universal-particular-individuality (that is as a form of finite spirit) is perhaps *the* problem that Hegel grapples with in the PhG.