

PART III

Chapter Five

Phenomenology as Ontology: Heidegger's Confrontation with Hegel

The 'monological' approach I taken thus far in analysing Hegel's conception of the identity/difference problem must now give way to a 'dialogical' approach to the Hegel-Heidegger relationship. Indeed, both Hegel and Heidegger themselves advocated such an approach to the practice of critical and 'originary' philosophical thinking. In the *Science of Logic*, Hegel remarks on the immanent critique that moves beyond mere external refutation in order to confront the problem at issue from within the philosophical standpoint of the Other.^[1] While in his 1930/31 lectures on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, we find Heidegger observing that if a genuine dialogue with Hegel is to occur, "we are required to be 'kindred'" with him in the sense of being "committed to the first and last necessities of philosophical inquiry arising from the matter [*Sache*]" (GA 32: 44/31). This chapter, then, attempts to pursue the "thinking dialogue" between Hegel and Heidegger, a dialogue centred on the meaning of Being, the relation between time and spirit, and the problems of finitude and infinitude. The focus of my discussion is Heidegger's "confrontation" with Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and how this critical engagement can be understood in terms of the problem of identity and difference as a basis for their respective critiques of metaphysics and philosophical confrontations with modernity.

Heidegger's relation towards Hegel underwent a number of significant shifts throughout his career. As Souche-Dagues has pointed out, we can identify three important phases in Heidegger's reading of Hegel: 1) The critique of the "Hegelian theory of time" in the 1925-26 Marburg lectures and in §82 of *Being and Time*. 2) The 1930/31 lectures on the "Consciousness" chapters of the PhG and the 1942-43 commentary on the Introduction to the PhG. 3) The 1957 lecture on "The Ontotheological Constitution of Metaphysics," based on a seminar on the *Science of Logic*, and the accompanying 1957 text on "The Principle of Identity". These three moments can also be characterised as marking three distinct attitudes adopted by Heidegger towards Hegel: 1) a simple refusal of the Hegelian problematic, 2) an attempt to assimilate Hegel into Heidegger's own project, and 3) a complicated "setting at a distance which wants to be an appropriation" (Souche-Dagues 1992, 246-247).

Souche-Dagues' schema is helpful for organising the enigmatic relationship between Hegel and Heidegger that developed over Heidegger's entire career. We can add to her schema three main phases in Heidegger's thought: 1) a critical rejection of Hegel from the standpoint of fundamental ontology and the *Destruktion* of the history of ontology; 2) a dialogical confrontation with Hegel from the perspective of the project of "overcoming metaphysics"; and 3) an "enveloping" appropriation of Hegel through the non-metaphysical thought of *Er-eygnis*, the "step back" behind metaphysics which discloses its unthought element. This chapter shall deal with the first two stages—the role of Hegel in Heidegger's never completed "Destruktion" of the history of ontology and in Heidegger's attempt to overcome metaphysics—which can be observed in Heidegger's brief analysis of the relation between time and Spirit, and in his interpretation of the PhG in relation to the problematic of finitude and infinitude. In Chapter Six I shall consider Heidegger's later texts from the 1950s, which attempt an "enveloping appropriation" of speculative Logic, a "step back" behind Hegelian dialectic thought in order to disclose the ontological difference between Being and beings as its unthought element. Heidegger's confrontation with Hegel, I want to argue, turns on the identity/difference problem in relation to finitude and infinitude on the one hand, and the "ontological difference" on the other.

Heidegger and the Question of Being

Let us begin with a brief introduction to Heidegger's rich philosophical project and Hegel's intriguing role within Heidegger's understanding of the history of metaphysics. Throughout his career, Heidegger's thought was guided by the question of the *meaning of Being* [*Sein*].^[2] Traditionally this question took the form of an inquiry into beings [*Seiende*] as such and as a whole, a decision that Heidegger maintains has had profound effects on the subsequent history of metaphysics. As we shall see, the "ontological difference" between Being and beings that Heidegger outlines here will prove decisive for Heidegger's confrontation with the metaphysical tradition and for his own project of thinking Being as such.

In his 1927 magnum opus, *Being and Time*, Heidegger describes how the question of Being motivated the inquiries of Plato and Aristotle, but has long since "ceased to be heard *as a thematic question of investigation*" (SZ 2/1). The originary impulses that sustained the inquiries of Plato and Aristotle have been "preserved in various distorted and "camouflaged" forms down to Hegel's *Logic*," but have long since been "trivialised" and have lost their original ontological significance (SZ 2/1). Indeed, the various "prejudices" concerning the meaning of Being—that "Being" is the most "*universal*" concept, that it is an *indefinable* concept, and that it is *self-evident*—indicate that the question of Being not only lacks a coherent answer but that the question itself remains problematic and obscure

(SZ 3-4/2-3). On the other hand, Heidegger points out, something like “Being” is always already understood in our everyday language and in our practical interactions with beings in the world. We live within an “average comprehensibility” of Being, which is articulated in everyday language and practical action (SZ 4/3). Indeed, if we ask the question “What is Being?” we have already presupposed an understanding of the “is” without being explicitly able to determine conceptually precisely what it means in this context (SZ 5/4). The obscurity of the concept of “Being” on the one hand, along with the non-thematic everyday pre-understanding of Being on the other, points to a fundamental difficulty in our philosophical understanding of the meaning of Being. Given that we always already move within an “average and vague understanding of Being,” but have no explicated concept of it, Heidegger thus sets himself the task of retrieving and repeating the *Seinsfrage* or question of the meaning of “Being” (SZ 4/3).

Like all questions, the question of Being has a definite formal structure. There is *that which is asked about* [*das Gefragte*], that which is *interrogated* in the inquiry [*das Befragte*], and that which is to be *ascertained* in the questioning, the *point* of the inquiry [*das Erfragte*] (SZ 5/4). In the case of the *Seinsfrage*, that which is to be asked about is “Being” [*Sein*]: “that which determines beings as beings [*Seiende als Seiende*], that in terms of which beings have always been understood no matter how they are discussed” (SZ 6/4-5). That which is to be *ascertained* is the *meaning* of Being, which is distinct from beings as such, and hence will require its own conceptualisation. This leaves open what is to be *interrogated* in posing the question of Being. Heidegger’s answer is that *we ourselves* are this exemplary being, a being capable of understanding Being and questioning itself as to its own Being: “Thus to work out the question of Being means to make a being—he who questions—transparent in its Being” (SZ 7/6). To avoid presuppositions attaching to notions of the “human being,” “consciousness,” the ‘I’ or “subject,” Heidegger uses the term *Da-sein* to describe ourselves in this ontological sense (SZ 7/6). Hence the formulation of the question of Being will require a prior explication of the Being of *Da-sein*, as that being which always already *exists* within an average comprehension of Being and is concerned *about* its very Being. To avoid inherited presuppositions or preconceptions, Heidegger reserves the term *existence* [*Existenz*] to describe our own way of Being. Existence describes our relation of understanding towards our own Being, the relation of understanding through which self and world are disclosed.

To understand Heidegger’s criticism of Hegel in §82 of *Being and Time*, we need to consider more closely the important task of a *de-struction* [*Destruktion*] of the history of ontology, which Heidegger sees as necessary in order to pose anew the question of Being. Heidegger’s confrontation with the metaphysical tradition is part of a project of uncovering the presuppositions that continue to shape our customary self-interpretations as historically existing *Da-sein*. As a distinct *existentiell* possibility of *Da-sein*, the existential analytic of *Da-sein*, which aims to uncover *Da-sein*’s own

historicity, is also shaped by this historically transmitted tradition.^[3] The elaboration of the question of Being must therefore also be conducted historically; that is, as Da-sein, we must inquire into our own history from an ontological perspective in order to arrive at “the positive appropriation of the past” (SZ 21/18). Only in this way can the analytic of Da-sein succeed in overcoming the two tendencies of a theoretical *self-objectification*, an ontological self-interpretation modelled on the world of available objects, and an historical *self-misunderstanding*, Da-sein’s interpretative entanglement within the ossified meanings of the inherited metaphysical tradition (SZ 21/18). As a result of these two tendencies, the productive appropriation of the past degenerates into an “uprooting” of Da-sein’s own historicity. The inherited meanings of an ossified metaphysical tradition end up obscuring the ontological meaning of Da-sein’s own existence, resulting in an obstruction of those “original ‘wellsprings’ out of which the traditional categories and concepts were in part genuinely drawn” (SZ 21/19). Consequently, Heidegger argues, a “de-struction” [*Destruktion*] of the ontological tradition is necessary in order to dismantle its ossified meanings and uncover the concealments it produces.

This critical deconstructing of ancient ontology is guided by the question of Being, and is based upon the original (Greek) experiences of Being from which the subsequent metaphysical determinations of Being were derived. The aim is “to stake out the positive possibilities of the tradition,” (SZ 22/20) to assign its boundaries and retrieve its forgotten or obscured potentialities. More precisely, this deconstructing asks after the thematic connection between the interpretation of Being and the interpretation of time in the metaphysical tradition from Plato and Aristotle, through medieval ontology, to Descartes and Kant. Once modern philosophy, grounded in the principle of self-consciousness, emerges with Descartes and Kant, the question of Being, already covered over, becomes further subordinated to the problem of self-conscious subjectivity. Indeed, Descartes’ *cogito sum*, which was to provide a new and secure foundation for philosophy, leaves undetermined “*the meaning of Being of the ‘sum’*” (SZ 24/21). Kant, by contrast, was the first thinker to open up a path towards “investigating the dimension of temporality” (SZ 23/20). Nonetheless, even Kant remained unable to fully develop the (Heideggerian) problematic of temporality, since he never explicitly examined the question of Being, and consequently failed to provide “a thematic ontology of Da-sein” (in Heidegger’s terms) (SZ 24/21). As we shall see, this narrative of the history of metaphysics as the history of the forgetting of Being provides the framework for Heidegger’s confrontation with major thinkers in the metaphysical tradition up to Hegel and Nietzsche.

Being and Time unfolds this existential analytic or fundamental ontology of Da-sein, whose Being is interpreted as being-in-the-world, care, and temporality as that which *ontologically* ‘grounds’ being-in-the-world as care. Its method is *phenomenological*: it is a description of the Being of Da-sein that undertakes “to let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself” (SZ 34/30).

Heidegger explicates this “formal” definition of “phenomenology” by drawing on the “originary” meanings of the concepts of *phainomenon* and *logos* in Greek philosophy. The Greek sense of “phenomenon” is twofold: it originally signifies that which *shows itself* or manifests itself and thus can be encountered; and it derivatively signifies that which shows itself as *other* than what it is, namely as *seeming* or *semblance* [*Schein*]. The Greek sense of *logos*, in its primary sense, is speech which manifests something, “apophantic” speech which makes manifest “what is being talked about” in speech, that discloses beings as intelligible in and through discourse (SZ 32/28). The historically received interpretations of *logos* as judgment, ground or reason, according to Heidegger, ultimately derive from this originary sense of apophantic speech.

Bringing these originary senses together gives us *phenomenology* as speech which manifests or makes visible and articulable the self-showing of something from itself. This is Heidegger’s gloss on the Husserlian maxim: “To the things themselves! [*Zu den Sachen selbst!*]” (SZ 34/30). We might note the irony here that Heidegger thereby ‘unconsciously’ repeats Hegel’s description of speculative philosophy, which aims to fully comprehend the “real issue” [*die Sache selbst*] (PhG §4).^[4] In any event, according to *Being and Time*, what ultimately shows itself in the manifestation of beings is the *Being* of beings: that which is concealed or covered over in the presentation of beings, but which is nonetheless made manifest in the self-showing intelligibility of phenomena. Phenomenology as descriptive-interpretative speech is therefore “the science of the Being of beings—ontology” (SZ 37/33). Indeed ontology, according to Heidegger is possible only as phenomenology, the only adequate mode of access to the Being of beings. This implies that phenomenological description at the same time is an *interpretation* of the Being of beings. In other words, the phenomenology of Da-sein’s existence is *hermeneutic* in the originary sense “which designates the work of interpretation” (SZ 37/33). *Being and Time* unfolds the phenomenological *hermeneutic* of Da-sein, an interpretation of our temporal Being-in-the-world; but it is also “hermeneutic” in the sense of an inquiry, through an interpretation of the basic structures of temporal existence, into the conditions of possibility of every ontological and historical investigation (SZ 37/33). Heidegger thus recasts the Kantian transcendental project and retrieves ancient ontology through the project of a “universal phenomenological ontology”: a hermeneutic of the Being of Da-sein which prepares the ground for the inquiry into the question of the meaning of Being within the horizon of Time.

In schematic terms, we could summarise the trajectory of Heidegger’s hermeneutic of Da-sein as follows. Division I of *Being and Time* unfolds an hermeneutic analysis of Da-sein’s everyday existence as being-in-the-world, and then shows how the structural totality of being-in-the-world has the ontological and existential meaning of care. Rejecting the Cartesian standpoint of the *ego cogito*—which leaves completely obscure the ontological meaning of the “sum”—Heidegger commences with the

unified phenomenon of being-in-the-world, analysing Da-sein's practical comportments with ready-to-hand equipment within a referential totality of significances. Da-sein, initially and for the most part, remains circumspectively absorbed in its practical involvements within this equipmental environment. Theoretical cognition, in which beings are disclosed as objectively present, is founded in the more originary understanding of ready-to-hand things as items of practical use. Heidegger employs here a basic categorical distinction between things that are pragmatically encountered as *ready-to-hand* [*Zuhandenheit*], and those that are "theoretically" disclosed as *objectively present* or *occurrent* [*Vorhandenheit*]. These categorical determinations pertaining to *beings* (*Zuhandenheit* and *Vorhandenheit*) are distinct from the *existential* characteristics of Da-sein (which he calls "existentials") pertaining solely to Da-sein as a self-interpreting being that discloses the world through its preontological understanding of Being. Heidegger will go on to analyse such "existentials" as *mood* or *attunement* [*Befindlichkeit*], *understanding* [*Verstehen*], and *discourse* [*Rede*], as fundamental existential characteristics of Da-sein constituting the disclosedness of our "being-there".

Division II of *Being and Time* is devoted to an ontological repetition of the "preparatory fundamental analysis" of Da-sein, with the aim of disclosing originary ecstatic *temporality* as the ontological meaning of Da-sein as being-in-the-world and care. In his introductory description of Da-sein, Heidegger indicates that it can have essentially two modes of Being [*Seinsmodi*]: since Da-sein is "in each case mine," it can exist either in the mode of *authenticity* [*Eigentlichkeit*] in the sense of belonging to itself, of *owning* itself in relation to its possibilities of existence; or it can exist in the mode of *inauthenticity* [*Uneigentlichkeit*] in the sense of not-belonging to itself, or as not owning its own possibilities of existence.^[5] The interpretation presented in Division I, Heidegger observes, cannot lay claim to primordially, since it dealt only with the *inauthentic* Being of Da-sein in its average everydayness (SZ 233/215). What is needed is an analysis of the Being of Da-sein in its *authenticity* and its capacity for being-a-whole, that is to say an analysis of Da-sein's comportment towards its own *temporal finitude*. To this end it is the phenomena of anxiety, the call of conscience, and authentic Da-sein's anticipatory resoluteness that provide phenomenological clues to the otherwise covered-over phenomenon of ecstatic temporality. The phenomenon that provides the clue for an analysis of authentic care is that stance of anxious Da-sein that Heidegger calls *anticipatory resoluteness*: the anticipatory grasp of and resolute comportment towards Da-sein's own finitude or being-toward-death as its ownmost possibility. This singular experience of authentic finitude, Heidegger argues, allows Da-sein to experience temporality as a primordial phenomenon (SZ 303-304/280-281).

Heidegger famously abandoned the originally planned third division of Part One of *Being and Time*, entitled "Time and Being," which was to have investigated originary temporality as the meaning of Being (in general). Within the published text, it is only in Chapter III of Division II (§65) that

Heidegger turns explicitly to *originary temporality* as the ontological meaning of authentic care. To elaborate this claim, Heidegger draws upon the connection between care and selfhood—that is, the connection between anticipatory resoluteness and the *constancy of the self* [*Selbst-ständigkeit*], an existential-temporal unity which provides the ground for both the inauthentic They-self (which flees from its own temporal finitude through its absorption in the pragmatic world of circumspective concern) as well as the formal concept of an identically persisting subject (the “I think” which, as the “subject of logical behaviour, of binding together,” at bottom designates the “*sameness and constancy of something always already objectively present*”) (SZ 319/294-5). To be sure, Heidegger recognises the importance of the Kantian critique of the “substantial” interpretation of the subject. At the same time, the thrust of Heidegger’s critique is directed against Kant’s *subjectivisation* of temporality, which is reduced to a subjective form of pure intuition. Kant fails to advance to the recognition of temporal disclosedness [*Erschlossenheit*] as the meaning of Being in general or universal horizon of Being. To this end, Heidegger analyses the threefold unified process of *temporalising* according to the structural unity of Da-sein as authentic care: the future is what allows Da-sein to *come toward itself* in its finite existence; the past as ‘having-been’ [*Gewesenheit*] is what allows Da-sein to take over its *factical thrownness*; and the present as a *making present* [*Gegenwärtigen*] is what allows Da-sein to *encounter* beings that it grasps in practical action. This unified phenomenon “of the future that makes present in the process of having-been” is what Heidegger calls originary or *ecstatic temporality*: *finite* temporality that temporalises itself in three temporal “ecstases” or overlapping dimensions of the toward-itself, the having-been, and making present (SZ 326-327/299-301).

The *inauthentic* experience of time, centred on the absorbed manipulation of present beings in the present, along with the “vulgar” metaphysical concept of time as an endless succession of now-moments, are both derived from ecstatic or originary temporality. This originary phenomenon of finite temporality, however, remains covered over or obscured both within the experience of Da-sein and within the history of metaphysics. Heidegger’s task is thus to uncover this originary temporalising process, which is obscured by the everyday and “vulgar” interpretation of time, and to show that this finite, futural-projecting temporality of Da-sein is the ontological meaning of our being-in-the-world as care. These theses on originary temporality are summarised by Heidegger as follows.

Time is primordial as the temporalising of temporality, and makes possible the constitution of the structure of care. Temporality is essentially ecstatic. Temporality temporalises itself primordially from out of the future. Primordial time is finite (SZ 331/304).

The finite process of temporality is a futural projection that allows the presence of the present to

become manifest and meaningful in light of the process of having-been; it describes the “pastness” of the present that is constituted out of a projecting into the future that enables Da-sein to come towards and thus understand itself. The present is no longer the primary sense of time that actualises an empty future and immediately passes into the past. Rather, in originary temporality it is the future that draws the present into its presence in light its having been in the past. Although Kant was the first to broach this finite temporality as constitutive of the Being of Da-sein, according to Heidegger, this originary experience of temporality has nonetheless remained covered over throughout the history of metaphysics. Indeed, Heidegger ends up analysing Hegel’s conception of the relation between time and spirit as an exemplary case of the vulgar “metaphysical” interpretation of time.

Heidegger’s Criticism of Hegel on Time and Spirit

This schematic overview of the general plan of Heidegger’s existential analytic of Da-sein should suffice to situate his criticism of Hegel’s account of the relation between time and spirit. It is certainly significant that Hegel is the only figure in *Being and Time* singled out for an explicit critique. In this sense, we could regard Heidegger’s brief analysis of Hegel’s conception of the relation between time and spirit as a contribution to the task of a “de-struction” of the history of ontology.^[6] Temporality as such, according to Heidegger, has remained unthought or at least distorted and misunderstood within the history of metaphysics, with the sole exception of Kant (SZ 23/20). However, because Kant neglects to pose the fundamental question of Being, and lacks “a preliminary ontological analytic of the subjectivity of the subject,” he was unable to gain proper access to the ontological significance of the problem of temporality (SZ 24/21). Instead, Kant’s analysis of time ultimately remains tied to the traditional conception of time deriving from Aristotle, thereby preventing any investigation of the “decisive *connection* between *time* and the “*I think*,” and thus leaving the temporality of transcendental subjectivity shrouded in “complete obscurity” (SZ 24/21).

Heidegger traces Kant’s difficulties back to an appropriation of the Cartesian cogito without an ontology of Da-sein, and an assumed conception of time centred on the presence of the present. The “metaphysical” understanding of time is based upon the assumption that the definitive dimension of the experience of time is provided by the ordinary perception of the presence of beings encountered in the present. This fundamental difficulty becomes even more acute in the case of Hegel, who is taken to exemplify the “vulgar” metaphysical conception of time as an infinite sequence of discrete nows or present moments. Indeed, Hegel’s concept of time, according to Heidegger, is “the most radical way in which the vulgar understanding of time has been given form conceptually” (SZ 428/392). Throughout the philosophical tradition, Heidegger argues, time as “world-time” has been connected with the “soul”

or “spirit”; but it is Hegel who explicitly points out the connection between this “presentist” conception of time and the historical development of Spirit. Heidegger thus presents his brief critique of Hegel’s ‘metaphysical’ conception of time and Spirit (in §82) as a contrast to the *existential-ontological* interpretation of the originary or ecstatic temporality of Da-sein. Indeed Hegel’s account of the relationship between time and Spirit—that Spirit “falls into” historical time—is presented as evidence of how the metaphysical tradition has obliterated the question of temporality in favour of an ontologically inappropriate interpretation of Da-sein as objective presence.

In the final chapter of *Being and Time*, Heidegger considers the notion of originary temporality and the phenomenon of “within-timeness” as the origin of the ordinary conception of time. Heidegger observes that the vacillation between “subjective” and “objective” conceptions of time is taken up and developed into a higher unity by Hegel: Hegel attempts to show the relation between time and Spirit and the reasons why Spirit has to “fall” into time. Although it would appear that Hegel and Heidegger are in agreement over the fundamental historicity of Da-sein as a temporal being, Heidegger points out that his existential-phenomenological analysis of time is “distinguished from the outset in principle from that of Hegel,” and that “its orientation is precisely the opposite of his in that it aims at fundamental ontology” (SZ 405/372-373). Fundamental ontology is opposed to speculative dialectic, or more precisely, to Hegel’s exposition of the categories of time and space in the philosophy of nature, which is what Heidegger selects as his focus of discussion in §82. Indeed, Heidegger claims that an examination of Hegel’s interpretation of the relation between time and Spirit will help to illuminate the existential-ontological interpretation of the temporality of Da-sein.

In accordance with Aristotle’s demarcation of time within an ontology of nature, Hegel’s analysis of time is similarly located in the second part of the *Encyclopaedia* under the title: “The Philosophy of Nature”. Heidegger’s exposition of ¶¶254-258 of the *Encyclopaedia* aims to establish how Hegel’s basic conception of time, defined as “intuited becoming,” privileges the punctual moment of the present—as a now-here moment—within the abstract becoming or flux of successive moments. Heidegger argues that the logical conceptualising of time—as the negation of the negation of the punctuality of space—demonstrates how time has been formalised “in the most extreme sense” and levelled down to an “unprecedented degree” (SZ 432/394). Two points can immediately be made here concerning Heidegger’s claims. First, Hegel discusses space and time (in the Philosophy of Nature) as the most *minimal*, elementary, and *abstract* determinations of nature in general (space presupposes nothing but nature’s self-externality while time presupposes nothing but space). Space and time in this abstract sense already acquire a more concrete significance with “place,” the *posited* identity of space and time that is also their posited contradiction (Enz §261). With the category of place, the abstract punctuality of Now as present is already suspended: “Ebenso ist die Zeit ...” (Enz §260). The extreme

formalisation of time as a succession of Now moments that Heidegger attributes to Hegel is already challenged at this still relatively simple level of categorical development in the Philosophy of Nature. Although it may not be directly relevant in this context, the PhG, which deals with “subjective” time so to speak, similarly provides a critical demonstration of the untenability of the abstract punctuality of the Now in the experience of sense-certainty. These points cast doubt on Heidegger’s presentation of Hegel’s conception of time as such.

Nonetheless, Heidegger claims that Hegel’s determination of time as the *negation of negation* is the most radical version of the Aristotelian conception of time, but also the most levelled down conception of temporality in Heidegger’s sense. This *logical formalisation* of time is precisely what allows Hegel to make the connection between Spirit and its development through historical time: “Hegel shows the possibility of the historical actualization of spirit “in time” by going back to *the identity of the formal structure of Spirit and time as the negation of a negation*” (SZ 435/396). This is the decisive point in Heidegger’s discussion: the identity of time and Spirit as sharing the logical structure of the “negation of the negation” is also their reduction to an empty “formal-ontological” abstraction that obliterates originary temporality. This reduction makes possible their kinship as well as the ontologically obscure “actualisation” of Spirit in time that Hegel describes. In connecting time and Spirit in this manner, Hegel utterly obscures the origin of time as temporality, while also leaving unexamined “the question of whether the constitution of Spirit *as* the negating of negation is possible at all in any other way than on the basis of primordial temporality” (SZ 435/396).

Heidegger insists that this brief discussion of Hegel cannot claim to decide whether “Hegel’s interpretation of time and Spirit and their connection is correct and has an ontologically primordial basis” (SZ 435/396). Nonetheless, in a spirit of philosophical dialogue devoted to the matter or *Sache* itself, I suggest that Heidegger’s crucial claim with regard to Hegel deserves further critical engagement. Here I draw attention to Heidegger’s compressed discussion of the essence of Hegelian Spirit as *the Concept* or *Begriff*. Heidegger defines Hegelian Conceptuality as “the very form of thinking that thinks itself: Conceiving *itself*—*as grasping* the non-I.” (SZ 433/395). This definition of the Concept is interpreted as the differentiation and comprehension of the difference between the ‘I’ and the non-I, “the grasping of *this* differentiation, a differentiation of the difference” between I and non-I (SZ 433/395). The Concept thus has the formal structure of the “negation of a negation”. The “absolute negativity” of the Concept, for Heidegger, gives “a logically formalised interpretation of Descartes’ *cogito me cogitare rem*” (SZ 433/395). The Concept comprehends itself in *self-consciousness*: it is the “conceivedness of the self conceiving itself,” the self as it can authentically be, namely as *free*, a universality that is just as immediately “individuality” (SZ 433/395).^[7]

Heidegger's interpretation of the Hegel is certainly legitimate in its general character: the 'I' is the existing Concept, according to Hegel. At the same time, however, Heidegger does not recognise that this way of understanding the relationship between the I and the Concept does not take into account the (logical) *limitations* of the category of existence, and the fact that self-consciousness is for Hegel the 'real-philosophical,' finite actualisation of the Concept. Here we must consider the difference between the structure of the Concept and that of the 'I' as subjective spirit. As I argued last chapter, Hegel takes issue with the formalism of Kantian-Fichtean conceptions of self-consciousness: these lack the third moment of the Concept, the aspect of individuality proper, which would correspond with the moment of reciprocal recognition that constitutes the intersubjective unity-in-difference of self-consciousness as subjective Spirit. We must distinguish here between the "infinite" structure of the Concept, the absolute, reflexive self-enclosure of the Concept as unitary or unique; and the "relative" independence of the I, which is self-reflexive only through the *recognition* of the Other, a process of "doubling" or mutual reflection in which the Other is both absorbed *and* released, both integrated *and* set free. The character of this process of recognition of and through the Other, moreover, necessarily depends on the historically given structures of objective and absolute Spirit. For Hegel, the 'I' is *unitary* only by not being *unique* or solitary: it finds its self-identity in otherness only within a plurality that preserves the Other. To this extent, the I genuinely does "fall into time" insofar as the character of its self-identity depends on something which it, as finite spirit, can never fully absorb and sublimate; it depends on the historical actuality of objective and absolute Spirit as an Other of which it is *merely an aspect*, but in which it finds its self-identity and freedom in the sense of being with itself in otherness. Only Spirit in its evolving totality fully *realises* the Concept: in its historical actualisation it overcomes time within time itself.

Moreover, by emphasising the parallel between the formal structure of self-consciousness and the Concept, Heidegger's "Cartesian" interpretation fails to comprehend the *hermeneutic aspects* of Hegel's account of the relation between the 'I' as existing Concept and Spirit as self-comprehending totality. Hegel's characterisation of the 'I' as existing Concept merely indicates its *formal* structure as a unity of universality, particularity, and individuality. It does not yet disclose those 'real-philosophical' conditions (namely the concrete historical forms of developing recognition) that make possible the determinate actualisation of this formal structure (represented by the $I = I$). Spirit is the concrete or actualised Concept that must appear in historical time, not simply because of the formal structure of the "negation of the negation" shared by time and Spirit, but because finite spirit remains dependent on objective and absolute Spirit for its concrete self-identity in otherness. Spirit as totality is certainly not reducible to subjective Spirit as individual self-consciousness. Nonetheless, Spirit 'exists' concretely and historically only because there are self-conscious individuals who can acquire adequate self-

consciousness within historically developing structures of mutual recognition, work off their natural particularity and inequality in a historical process which progressively discloses Spirit in its concrete rationality, and thus (re)produce (objective and absolute) Spirit as that which in turn makes possible the finite self-consciousness of these historically situated individuals. The PhG depicts this process as a recollection of the historical-dialectical experience in which Spirit recognises itself within “comprehended history”—a process of conceptual-historical recollection without which, Hegel tells us, absolute Spirit would remain “lifeless and alone” (PhG 434/¶808).

Although Heidegger’s brief critical analysis does not claim to do justice to Hegel’s broader philosophical project, Hegel is still presented as exemplifying the vulgar metaphysical conception of time. Questions must be asked, however, about the adequacy of Heidegger’s interpretation. Why does Heidegger focus on the concept of time taken from the philosophy of Nature rather than Hegel’s explicit discussions of the historicity of Spirit? Moreover, why is Heidegger’s discussion in this respect restricted to the most elementary classification of time in the Philosophy of Nature?^[8] Heidegger thus appears to ignore the *hermeneutical* dimension of Hegel’s procedure in appropriating and conceptualising categories and models from the history of philosophy. Heidegger fails to recognise the hermeneutic significance of Hegel’s method of simultaneous *exposition* and *critique* in presenting categorical systems within speculative philosophy. Heidegger finds Hegel to have recapitulated in the Jena Lectures Aristotle’s theses on time in the *Physics*; but that is because Hegel hermeneutically appropriates these Aristotelian themes within the philosophy of nature as one aspect of the speculative system (comprising Logic, philosophy of Nature, and philosophy of Spirit). In the paragraphs Heidegger discusses from the “Mechanism” chapter of the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel examines the categorical structure of time and space pertinent not only to Aristotle but to *Newtonian mechanics*. The latter certainly remains within the paradigm of the logic of essence that is the subject of Hegel’s *critical exposition* in this part of the system (paralleled, for example, by the analysis of the dialectic between force and law in the PhG). This discussion, however, cannot provide an adequate example of the essential relationship between time and Spirit, for the simple reason that nature occupies a different conceptual/categorical level to that of Spirit and thus cannot provide the basis for conceptualising self-conscious spirit in its historical development. In §82 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger overlooks this hermeneutic dimension in Hegel’s discussion of time within the philosophy of Nature and Hegel’s critical exposition of the ‘I’ as the *finite* actualisation of the Concept.

Finitude and Infinitude: Heidegger’s Reading of the PhG

Heidegger’s brief encounter with Hegel in *Being and Time* illustrates Hegel’s curious role in the

destruction of the history of ontology. This project of de-struction, which aimed to demarcate the critical boundaries of inherited metaphysical concepts and thus to uncover the underlying but obliterated significance of Being, seemed to encounter an impasse in the case of Hegel. As Souche-Dagues notes, this first phase of “simple refusal” failed to do justice to the complexity and power of Hegel’s speculative thought. Hegelian metaphysics cannot be reduced to a corpus of historically ossified material in need of critical de-struction and ontological re-animation, but presents a radical challenge to the claims of fundamental ontology in the sense that Hegel claimed to have achieved the suspension of substance- and subject-metaphysics within the speculative metaphysics of Spirit. Heidegger thus embarks upon a different strategy, a dialogical confrontation with Hegel that is part of the project of overcoming metaphysics in the sense of comprehending the underlying question of the metaphysical tradition (the question of Being) and of consequently responding to the forgetting of the ontological difference between Being and beings. In this regard, Hegel is now understood as representing the beginning of the completion or consummation of Western metaphysics (with Nietzsche as the conclusion to this process), a process that must be critically displaced in order to prepare for the possibility of an “other beginning” of (no-longer-metaphysical) thought.

Heidegger’s next sustained engagement with Hegel occurs in the 1930/31 lecture series on the opening chapters of the PhG and which is centred on the problematic of *finitude*. As Heidegger remarks in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Hegel forecloses the problem of finitude opened up by Kant’s discovery of the transcendental imagination and of the transcendental horizon of time as temporality. However, following Kant’s reversion (in the B edition of the KRV) to the primacy of the *understanding* (rather than transcendental imagination), Hegel restores the mastery of speculative Logic over metaphysics and thereby forecloses the problem of finitude by integrating the latter into infinitude of reason. Indeed, Heidegger claims, the struggle initiated by German Idealism against the Kantian thing-in-itself shows the increasing forgetfulness of the problem of finitude (KM 244/171). We must therefore ask what Heidegger means by “the problem of finitude”: how Hegel is supposed to have foreclosed genuine access to this central problem of “the inner possibility and necessity of metaphysics”? (KM 244/171).

As a preliminary answer, we may state that finitude, for Heidegger, refers to a fundamental aspect of our temporal existence, namely our capacity to exist in the mode of *authenticity* [*Eigentlichkeit*], in which we grasp our existential possibilities in light of a resolutely affirmed being-toward-death. Finitude refers to Da-sein’s inability to be its own factual ground, to accept its fundamental “groundlessness,” its existential “thrownness” as an entity for whom its own Being or existence is always an issue. Da-sein exists as finite in the sense that the possibility of death, as the limit of existence, creates the need to either ‘cover over’ this fundamental finitude by not recognising and

accepting our ‘groundlessness’, or else choosing to act resolutely in the face of the ‘nullity’ of our temporal existence. It is this question of the finite Being of Da-sein that Heidegger believes is foreclosed by Hegel’s speculative logic and phenomenology. Before turning to Heidegger’s further discussion of Hegel, it is worth indicating that this theme of finitude is also present in the PhG. Hegel discusses, for example, the way in which the path of phenomenological experience is for natural consciousness “pathway of despair [*Verzweiflung*],” a path on which it experiences the “loss of its own self” (PhG 56/¶78). In the experience of the life-and-death struggle, moreover, the future ‘slavish’ consciousness experiences the dread of encountering death, confronting its own finitude which it then proceeds to ‘work off’ through social labour. Finally, the “unhappy consciousness” has awareness of its inner self-estrangement, its unhappy realisation that it is both a finite consciousness and infinite self-consciousness without being able to satisfactorily reconcile these extremes within its own self. Hegel therefore deals squarely with the phenomenon of finitude, even though it is supposed to be overcome in thought insofar as we attain to the philosophical self-comprehension of Spirit.

These issues can be clarified further with regard to Heidegger’s explicit confrontation with Hegel’s PhG. To this end, I shall briefly discuss Heidegger’s 1928 lecture course on German Idealism and the contemporary philosophical situation (GA 28). In the “Introduction” to the latter, which forms the basis of §§36-41 in Part Four of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Heidegger broaches the topic of finitude by turning to Kant as the first philosopher to pose metaphysics as a *problem*. Kant performs a *Grundlegung* of metaphysics through a critique of pure reason, a laying of the foundation for metaphysics through an essential determination of what our finite reason is, and what it is capable of as finite (GA 28: 36). Indeed, the KRV closes with a recollection of the speculative interests of Reason in the ideal of the “highest good”. The interests of reason, both as speculative and practical, are formulated in Kant’s famous questions, which philosophy poses from a “cosmopolitan point of view”: 1) What can I know? 2) What ought I to do? 3) What may I hope? These questions correspond to the objects (nature — freedom — immortality) of the three disciplines of *metaphysica specialis* (cosmology — rational psychology — theology), and are gathered up in Kant’s final question: “What is the human being?” Philosophy as metaphysics is thus transformed into philosophical *anthropology*. All three questions presuppose a finitude of capacity, of the ought, and of permissible hope: the very asking of these questions, Heidegger contends, points to a fundamental finitude of reason and finitude of human being.^[9] By this Heidegger means the fundamental *limitation* of our temporal existence, since we are beings who find ourselves “thrown” into the historically disclosed horizon of Being. Indeed, Heidegger is critical of Kant’s question “What is the human being?” because it articulates the shift towards philosophical anthropology. This ‘subjectivisation’ of the question of Being, for Heidegger, points to the need for a more originary questioning that moves beyond the immediately present human being.

In the Hegel section of the lectures on German Idealism, Heidegger praises Hegel for his critical confrontation with Kant. The Hegelian principle of idealism, Heidegger points out, takes the Idea to articulate the a priori identity of the non-identical in reason, the absolute identity of S (the particular [*Besondere*—in the form of Being) and P (the universal—in the form of thought) (GA 28: 200). Heidegger even sees Hegel as very close to himself in emphasising the role of the transcendental imagination in comprehending the originary synthetic unity of apperception within the transcendental deduction.^[10] At the same time, it is on just this point that the opposition between Hegel and Heidegger becomes apparent: Hegel realises the importance of the transcendental imagination from the standpoint of the problem of absolute identity, but then interprets it as a manifestation of reason in the sphere of empirical consciousness. Heidegger, by contrast, takes the transcendental imagination as deriving from *temporality*, while “the construction of reason is merely an empty abstraction from the imagination” (GA 28: 201).

Heidegger maintains that this point of contrast at the same time marks Hegel’s basic criticism of Kant: that reason is no longer a genuine problem, since it is apprehended at a “subordinate” level in being handled in terms of the understanding [*Verstand*]. It is no longer the speculative or absolute identity but rather the *non-identity* of an absolute “a posteriority”—the fundamental difference marked between intuition and categories—that serves as a basic principle. In this sense, for Hegel, Kantian idealism is merely an “empiricist” critique of our cognitive powers that reverts to the level of *finitude*: “a cognition of subjectivity, not the absolute” (GA 28: 201). According to Heidegger, Hegel’s basic intention arises out of the confrontation with the Kantian conception of finitude: the problem of metaphysics derives logically from the deduction of the categories, while the finitude of the understanding must be overcome and driven forward towards absolute cognition in a manner that overcomes both the Fichtean and Schellingian positions. For Hegel, speculative knowledge is knowledge of “the conscious identity of the finite and the infinite,” which must be comprehended as the identity of intuition and reflexion (GA 28: 202).

Hegel’s overcoming of the Kantian metaphysics of finitude in favour of the infinite power of reason, the comprehension of the speculative identity of finitude and infinitude, prepares the ground for Heidegger’s own confrontation with Hegelian metaphysics. Indeed, the *Anseinandersetzung* with Hegel, Heidegger remarks, is the most rigorous precisely where it might appear to be the easiest: in the contrast between the Absolute and our own manifest finitude as *Da-sein*. Despite his radicality in thinking speculative identity, Hegel nonetheless cannot reverse the metaphysical forgetting of the question of Being, and the forgetting of the question concerning the ontological constitution of finite subjectivity as such (GA 28: 210). Hegel only formally overcomes the finitude of subjectivity through the idea of totality, but this means that we must investigate the question of the mode of being of finite

subjectivity as *Geist*, as well as the problem of the Being of the Absolute comprehended as absolute Concept. Heidegger thus regards Hegel as having failed to meet the Kantian challenge to construct a “metaphysics of Da-sein” oriented by the problem of finitude. For Heidegger, Hegel reverts to a “pre-Kantian” standpoint in the sense of retreating from the opening provided by Kant’s discovery of the transcendental imagination as the ground of ontological synthesis. The (“Kantian”) problem of temporality is thus foreclosed in favour of a radicalisation of the synthetic power of infinite (rather than finite) reason, now comprehended as “Spirit”.

Heidegger takes up this challenge in the 1930/31 lecture series devoted to reading the “Consciousness” and “Truth of Self-Certainty” chapters of the PhG, and in the later (1942/3) commentary on the “Introduction” to the PhG, entitled “Hegel’s Concept of Experience” (in *Holzwege*). In the lectures on the PhG, Heidegger explicitly situates his critical dialogue with Hegel in the context of the post-Kantian project of constructing a metaphysics of finitude centred on the finite self-conscious subject. The confrontation between Hegel and Heidegger thus takes place on the terrain of *the problematic of finitude*, the “crossing” between the Hegelian project of thinking the infinity of Spirit and the Heideggerian project of thinking the finitude of Being. In a very explicit formulation, Heidegger writes:

In our obligation to the first and last inherent necessities of philosophy, we shall try to *encounter* Hegel on *the problematic of finitude*. This means, according to what we said earlier, that through a confrontation with *Hegel’s* problematic of infinitude we shall try to create, on the basis of our own inquiry into finitude, *the* kinship needed to reveal the spirit of Hegel’s philosophy (GA 32: 55/38).

Heidegger’s aim here is clear: to continue the task of a critical *Destruktion* of the history of ontology through a confrontation between the Hegelian problematic of finitude and Heidegger’s own inquiry into finitude, and in so doing to provide the “kinship” or common problematic necessary to engage in a ‘thinking dialogue’ with Hegel on the question of Being. According to Heidegger, Hegel’s *Phenomenology* remains bound to the traditional philosophical conception of finitude, which is incorporated into Hegel’s speculatively conceived concept of infinitude.^[11] Although Hegel “ousted finitude from philosophy” by sublating it within the infinitude of reason, this was only an “incidental finitude,” Heidegger claims, a conception inscribed within the metaphysical tradition that Hegel was forced to take up and transmit (GA 32: 55/38).

As distinct from Kant, with Hegel infinitude becomes a more significant problem than finitude, since the interest of speculative reason is to suspend all oppositions within the rational totality. This suspension of finitude through infinite reason thereby also raises the “question of the *not* and the

negation whereby the not-finite must, if it can, come to truth” (GA 32: 55/38).^[12] In this sense, Heidegger understands the project of post-Kantian Idealism to consist in the systematic attempt to overcome the “relative” knowledge of finite consciousness (in the sense of object-dependent knowledge of otherness) in favour of *the absolute knowledge* of speculative reason (in the sense of a no longer “relative” or object-dependent self-knowledge). As ab-solving or *detaching* itself from the relativity of consciousness, absolute knowledge *detaches* itself from relative cognition such that consciousness becomes aware of itself or becomes *self-consciousness*. Heidegger’s interpretation of consciousness rests on the assumption that the entire phenomenological exposition adopts the standpoint of absolute knowing in the sense of an *absolvent* knowledge that has absolved itself from any dependency on the consciousness of objects (GA 32: 72/51). The absolvent knowing, belonging to the phenomenological “we,” is entirely detached from the relativity of ordinary human knowing (GA 32: 71/50). It is only with the *unity* of consciousness and self-consciousness in *reason* that knowledge becomes “*purely unbounded, purely absolved, absolute knowledge*” (GA 32: 23/16). Phenomenology can thus be characterised as “the *absolute self-presentation of reason (ratio—logos)*, whose essence and actuality Hegel finds in *absolute spirit*.” (GA 32: 42/30).^[13]

The Presupposition of the Absolute and the Phenomenological ‘We’

Heidegger draws attention to the fact “that *Hegel presupposes already at the beginning what he achieves at the end*”—namely absolute knowledge (GA 32: 43/30). Absolute knowledge must be presupposed from the outset of the exposition: “if we do not already from the beginning know in the mode of absolute knowledge,” then we cannot truly understand the *Phenomenology* (GA 32: 48/33). Hegel in fact presupposes that the Absolute is “with us” in and for itself, all along” (PhG 53-4/¶73). Indeed, Heidegger takes this statement to capture Hegel’s fundamental position. We should point out, however, that, for Hegel, this statement is only meant to indicate that even the most radically false beliefs, by their very nature as self-transcending, point to and strive towards those truths that are not immediately disclosed. As Aristotle suggested, we always already stand within the light of (ontological) truth, in this case, the truth of the whole that emerges only as a result of the development of the whole.

Heidegger addresses this issue further in his discussion (in the *Kantbuch* and the 1928 lectures on German Idealism) of the problem of a metaphysics of finitude. With Hegel’s metaphysics of spirit, according to Heidegger, finitude is reabsorbed within the infinitude of speculative reason. Yet this very finitude, Heidegger contends, defines the “need” of philosophy in the contemporary context, namely to think the question of Being through the finitude of Da-sein. For Heidegger, this need can be described as the “distress” [*No!*] of Being itself, a distress which becomes manifest to us “only when we

ourselves are compelled [*genötigt*]” to pose the question of our finitude in order to open the way to think the question of Being (GA 32: 56/39). We readers of the PhG are presumably also affected by this compulsion, and must, according to Heidegger, already move within the element of absolute knowledge if we are to understand the phenomenology. But if we are already in possession of absolute knowledge, there seems to be no need to confront the problems of finitude and infinitude as they are developed within phenomenology. The problems of finitude and infinitude, according to Heidegger’s reading, only make sense because we are already in possession of absolute knowledge; but this means that the path of the “experience of consciousness” and the transition to speculative logic begin to appear somewhat superfluous. Why not proceed directly to the Logic without any laborious introduction to Science? According to Heidegger, Logic seems to be a presupposition of reading the phenomenology, rather than phenomenology being an introduction to Logic, as Hegel maintains.

This raises the question: Who is the “we” in Heidegger’s reading of Hegel? Heidegger’s interpretation presupposes that the PhG begins absolutely with the Absolute, and consequently that the phenomenological observer is already in possession of absolute knowledge. Hegel’s phenomenological examination of figures of consciousness and knowledge becomes, in Heidegger’s hands, an inquiry into the fundamental ontology of Being interpreted as absolute self-knowing and self-willing Spirit. This is in keeping with Heidegger’s basically *ontological* interpretation of the PhG from the standpoint of an inquiry into the fundamental question of Being. Indeed, Heidegger insists that we reject interpretations of the PhG that take it to be “an introduction to philosophy” leading from “the so-called natural consciousness ... to a genuine speculative philosophical knowledge” (GA 32: 42/29). Heidegger’s *ontological* interpretation emphasises, rather, the unfolding of absolute knowledge as a fundamental-ontological presupposition. We must have already abandoned the “natural attitude” of everyday consciousness, “not just partially, but totally,” if we are properly to understand phenomenological experience (GA 32: 48/33).

This abrupt dismissal of any “propaedeutic” or “educative” interpretation of the PhG as a *Bildungsprozess* is maintained in Heidegger’s 1942/43 essay on “Hegel’s Concept of Experience,” which also emphasises the presupposition of the Absolute in its presence to us. According to Heidegger, the PhG initially develops from, and finally returns to, the standpoint of absolute knowledge: an understanding of the end is presupposed by the beginning, and the way in which the beginning is the end has already been decided from the standpoint of the Absolute. Heidegger thus again rejects traditional interpretations of the PhG as an “edificatory” or self-transformatory introduction to philosophical Science, a propaedeutic for “natural consciousness” to educate it to the level of philosophical or absolute knowledge. Such approaches are rejected for failing to comprehend the ontological meaning of the *Phenomenology* as the self-presentation of the Absolute in its presence

(*parousia*) to us (HW: 143/51). Natural consciousness is not educated up to the level of philosophical Science; rather, natural consciousness is dismissed as incapable of following the presentation. “The presentation of phenomenal knowledge,” Heidegger tells us, “is not a path that natural consciousness can tread” (HW: 144/53).^[14] It is worth mentioning the obvious difficulty that this interpretation is sharply at odds with Hegel’s numerous and explicit statements in the text: Hegel describes the phenomenology as a “ladder” to the standpoint of Science (PhG 23/¶26), as an “education” of the individual consciousness which repeats the formative path of universal Spirit as though “in a silhouette”(PhG 25/¶28), a “path of *doubt*” or even “path of *despair*” (PhG 56/¶78), and as the “detailed history of the *education* [*Bildung*] of consciousness itself to the standpoint of Science” (PhG 56/¶78). Heidegger’s interpretation seems *prima facie* to contradict Hegel’s repeated assertions in the PhG.

Heidegger’s response is to point to the fundamental-ontological significance of the project of phenomenology. In this *onto-egological* interpretation, the phenomenological ‘we’ has from the outset “lost the option of being this or that person and thus of being, randomly, an ego.” (GA 32: 67/48). Rather, ‘we’ are absolute knowers or mediators of Being, already in possession of absolute knowledge, who observe the restless development of *ontic* consciousness (as a relative knowledge of beings) towards *ontological* consciousness (as an absolute knowledge of Being). Heidegger’s reading thus implies that the phenomenological “we” is to be understood along the lines of a “subjectivised” version of Heidegger’s “fundamental ontologist” who is already as it were in possession of absolute knowledge. “We” are not the philosophically educated and historically situated readers of the *Phenomenology*, desirous of edificatory self-transformation and philosophical-historical *Besinnung*. Rather, for Heidegger, the generic “we” refers to those who have already attained to absolute, fundamental-ontological knowledge of the whole. The dialectical experience of consciousness, as absolute knowledge (of Being) coming to itself, is explicitly understood by “us” as proto-fundamental ontologists, “those who, with the beingness of beings in mind, are already provided with Being” (HW: 188/126-127).

Heidegger’s *onto-egological* interpretation can be contrasted, I suggest, with a *historicist-propaedeutic* interpretation, which emphasises the *historical* character of the process of educative cultivation to the level of Science. The phenomenological ‘we,’ on this interpretation, refers to the culturally and historically situated ideal or imputed readers of the *Phenomenology*: philosophically cultivated individuals who desire, but do not yet possess, Science, and are therefore to be educated to the level of speculative philosophy in order to transform their self-understanding [*Besinnung*] as historical subjects of modernity. The *Phenomenology* on this view is a philosophical-historical propaedeutic to Science that has an intrinsically *dialogical* structure: the cognitive claims of a given figure [*Gestalt*] of consciousness is

presented by natural consciousness in its ‘own voice,’ while the structural inadequacies of each cognitive attitude, according to its own standard of truth, emerges for ‘us’ as phenomenological observers. ‘We’ can grasp the self-testing of consciousness and the immanent transitions to progressively more complex and integrated figures of consciousness in a manner that ought to be intelligible to the superseded forms of natural consciousness, but usually *is not* due to the latter’s basic “unthinking inertia” (PhG 57/¶80). Indeed, for Hegel, natural consciousness is prone to a certain existential inertia or thoughtlessness, sentimentality, lack of reflection, and historical amnesia concerning its own historical-phenomenological experience: it stubbornly clings to the “barren Ego” in fleeing from the universal and seeking “only to be for itself” (PhG 57/¶80). At the conclusion of the phenomenological drama, we realise that we have been observing the philosophico-historical conditions of our *own* experience as dissatisfied modern subjects. We need not therefore presuppose absolute knowledge of Being. Rather, absolute knowledge, as the philosophical self-comprehension of the history of spirit, is the *result* that is also the *ground* of our experience of self-alienated modernity.

Why assume this historicist-propaedeutic reading of the phenomenological “we”? One reason is that it avoids the difficulty in Heidegger’s ontological interpretation that presupposing absolute knowledge seems to make redundant the project of a phenomenology even before it begins. Within Heidegger’s interpretation, the PhG quickly becomes an absolute ontology or “all-consuming” science of the Absolute, rather than an introduction to the speculative system. If we presuppose that the “we” is already in possession of absolute knowledge, we also presuppose knowledge of the categories and concepts underlying the figures of consciousness and self-conscious reason depicted in the PhG. This means that Hegel’s claims concerning what the phenomenology is to perform (to be a ‘ladder’ to Science, a path towards philosophical self-education) become nonsensical: any introduction via phenomenology to the speculative system as a whole becomes unintelligible. The presupposition of an absolute standpoint not only renders phenomenology superfluous but also makes it collapse before it even begins.

An historicist-propaedeutic interpretation answers this difficulty by pointing out that the immanent phenomenological exposition is precisely what educates “us” both to recognise the experiences of consciousness as historical figures of spirit and to recognise ourselves within this experience. The phenomenological path of self-consummating scepticism is supposed to be a path that the so-called “natural consciousness” of the (historically situated) reader can tread, precisely in order to learn that its self-alienation can be overcome in thought through the conceptual comprehension of its historico-philosophical experience. The historically achieved level of conceptual-philosophical understanding—the “reflection philosophy of subjectivity” culminating in Kantian idealism—provides the only “presupposition” necessary for comprehending the transformation from “natural” or rather

philosophically naïve consciousness to the level of self-comprehending Spirit or speculative thought. As Hegel himself states, the philosophically naïve reader “has the right to demand that Science should at least provide him with the ladder to this standpoint, show him this standpoint within himself” (PhG 23/¶26), a right based upon the individual’s “absolute independence,” the *right of subjectivity* that is one of the distinctive achievements of modernity.^[15] In this sense, we can question Heidegger’s assumption that the “we” must refer to “those who already from the outset know *absolutely* and who apprehend and determine things in the manner of *this* knowing” (GA 32: 66/47). The naïve consciousness need not be excluded from phenomenology as a path that it cannot tread. Rather, the naïve consciousness of the modern subject can claim its right of subjectivity in being educated to the standpoint of science by climbing (and thus “suspending”) Hegel’s phenomenological ladder to Science.

Heidegger’s response to this issue is to point to the inherently *circular* character of the *Phenomenology* that, like all philosophy, “merely unfolds its *presupposition*” (GA 32: 52-53/36). In this case, it is the absolute knowledge of Being that allows the Being of self-conscious spirit to comprehend itself. Heidegger’s strongly “circular” interpretation, however, faces the problem of accounting for Hegel’s rejection of the notion that philosophy develops out of a fundamental presupposition (as in Hegel’s criticisms of Reinhold’s basic presuppositions of philosophising). For Hegel, rather, the end emerges out of a process which is itself included in the result. Hegel’s fundamental hermeneutical principle is that “the whole is the true”—the truth emerges as a result of the whole process and the whole process in its self-unfolding is the site of the emergence of truth. The phenomenological exposition is therefore not the unfolding (and legitimation) of the foundational truth of an initial presupposition (such as the absolute knowledge of Being), but rather the path of absolute or self-consummating skepsis: it is the unfolding of the *untruth* of whatever presuppositions consciousness makes about itself, the untruth of its own (limited and self-contradictory) standards of knowing and truth, this ‘untruth’ being itself a necessary ‘moment’ of truth as it is disclosed in the whole developmental movement. Indeed, it is only failure of the pre-judgements or prejudices of natural consciousness that produces the possibility of Science’s claim to be conditionless. The PhG itself presents the “deduction” of the necessity of the subject-matter of Science itself, the demonstrated “liberation from the opposition of consciousness” (WL I/1 33/49) and attainment of the speculative level of pure thought-determinations that is the only ‘presupposition’ of the Logic as such. It is in this sense that Science begins with itself, with the matter itself [*Sache selbst*] without any external reflections or presuppositions.^[16]

Although the finite knower—as with Aristotle—always already stands within the ontological truth of the whole, and more specifically, within a definite appearance or configuration of Spirit,

knowledge itself begins with the most abstract, the most radical misunderstanding of itself (sense-certainty), thus embarking upon its self-transformation through its own dialectical experience. The absolute, therefore, is a result, which in turn provides the ground of that which constitutes the beginning, in this case, sense-certainty as the consciousness of immediacy, whose truth is revealed to be grounded in the self-comprehension of historical and intersubjective Spirit. In this sense, Hegel's project in the PhG is radically anti-foundationalist: Hegel rejects all (Cartesian, Fichtean, or Reinholdian) foundationalism in favour of a radically self-constructing process through which the disparity between knowing and truth is finally overcome. Indeed, one could say that for Hegel it is not truth but rather *falsity* that is its own index: the necessary inconsistency of (finite) figures of consciousness and historical configurations of Spirit is precisely what drives the dialectical process forward towards genuine self-comprehension in speculative philosophy or absolute knowledge. The PhG, as Hegel reminds us, describes the coming-to-be of *Wissenschaft*, a becoming that is "quite different from the 'foundation' of Science; least of all will it be like the rapturous enthusiasm which, like a shot from a pistol, begins straight away with absolute knowledge, and makes short work of other standpoints by declaring that it takes no notice of them" (PhG 24/¶27). In asserting absolute knowledge as the absolute presupposition of the PhG, Heidegger appears not to have heeded Hegel's important caveat concerning the Absolute as a result that is also the ground of the whole process of its own becoming.

To be sure, Heidegger's ontological interpretation of the 'we,' as the absolute subject or absolvent knower of Being in its ontological truth, acknowledges the role of the critical dialogue between "natural" and philosophical consciousness. This ontological interpretation, however, emphasises the *static* character of the phenomenological exposition that makes explicit how the Being of beings is to be grasped conceptually as absolute Spirit, construed as absolute subjectness. The 'we' expresses the ontological consciousness of the absolute knowers of Being in its self-disclosure. What is lost in this interpretation, however, is the fundamentally *dynamic* character of the phenomenological exposition, the restless negative movement of infinite self-consciousness: a negativity that drives the historical manifestation of the interconnected shapes of Spirit in the process of their *historical* self-disclosure and *philosophical* self-comprehension in Absolute Spirit.

For Heidegger, on the other hand, the problem of the historicity of Spirit is forgotten in favour of an ontological grounding of the question of Being. Since the 'we' already moves within an *ontological* understanding of Being, there is no possibility of an introduction into the speculative system. Instead, the introduction gives way to a changed attitude or fundamental decision on the part of the thinker motivated by the failure of metaphysics to think the question of Being. Indeed, Heidegger points to the need for a radical *decision* on the part of the philosophical reader, a distress that is not only "of our own

human being” but which is that of Being itself; a distress that would compel the thinker to commit resolutely to the questioning of our finitude as a way of opening up the question of Being (GA 32: 56/39). We could ask here whether this moment of decision indicates a Cartesian-Husserlian, or more precisely, an early Fichtean-Schellingian moment of radical resolve or *Entschluß*: a decision to return to the fundamental question, hitherto covered over by the tradition, and an attempt to confront Hegel on the problem of finitude in order to uncover the hidden ground of metaphysics. In the First Introduction to the 1794 *Wissenschaftslehre*, for example, we find Fichte stating that the ultimate basis of the difference between “dogmatists” (who assert the primacy of the thing-in-itself) and “idealists” (who assert the primacy of self-conscious freedom) lies in “the difference of their interests” (WL I 433/15). Philosophical idealism depends on a fundamental decision, either for freedom of the self over objectivity or the subordination of the self to objectivity, and this decision ultimately rests on the “level of humanity” to which one belongs, either the level of freedom or the level of servitude.^[17] This ‘elitist’ conception of the innate superiority of certain types of (authentic) individual, those capable of the esoteric insights of philosophical truth, stands in direct contrast to Hegel’s in principle ‘egalitarian’ approach which sees the educative path towards speculative Science (its sheer difficulty notwithstanding!) open in principle to all rational individuals, who can “demand” that Science show them the “ladder” to the philosophical point of view. I shall return to the implications of this moment of Fichtean ‘decisionism’ in Heidegger’s later thinking.

Heidegger on Finitude

This brings us to the “crossroads” of which Heidegger speaks in relation to Hegel: the problem of the *infinite* in Hegel and Heidegger’s understanding of *finitude* in relation to the meaning of Being. As Heidegger asks:

Is the understanding of Being absolvent, and is the absolvent absolute? Or is what Hegel represents as in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as absolvence merely transcendence in disguise, i.e., finitude? (GA 32: 92/65)

Heidegger is concerned to ask whether Being in its essence is *finite* and how this finitude is to be understood with reference to *Being* rather than in relation to *beings*. This is in contrast with what Heidegger takes to be Hegel’s conception of Being qua *infinity*, in which “the infinity of absolute knowledge determines the truth of Being,” and does so such that “it has already sublated everything that is finite into itself” (GA 32: 106/75). For Heidegger, Hegel’s sublation of finitude means that all

philosophy moves *in* and *as* this sublation of finitude, which occurs in the process of a *dialectical* movement. Heidegger thus raises the question of the finitude of Being, a question that has hitherto not been raised but which has implicitly “motivated previous metaphysics” (GA 32: 106/75). This is why the confrontation with Hegel over the problem of finitude and infinitude is “inherently and historically necessary” as well as being a productive precondition for thinking through the question of Being.

Let us turn to Heidegger’s account of the Hegelian concept of infinity. Heidegger indicates two aspects to this concept: 1) Hegel’s grounding of the problem of Being in the *logos*, manifested in Hegel’s “logical” account of thinking as speculative knowledge or *dialectic*; and 2), the transposition of this logical grounding in Descartes’ turn towards the *ego cogito*, manifested in “Hegel’s fundamental thesis,” as formulated by Heidegger: “Substance is in truth subject”^[18] (GA 32: 108-9/76-77). Heidegger narrates the philosophical-historical background to Hegel’s conception of infinity as follows. Hegel’s speculative philosophy follows the Greek conception of Being as grounded in the *logos*, but transforms this Greek understanding through the modern conception of self-grounding subjectivity (implying both grounding in the self as well as being grounded in itself). Descartes transposes the *logos* onto the plane of self-consciousness, which is developed in Leibnizean monadology as a “radical theory of the substantiality of substance” (GA 32: 109/77). Kant then establishes the domain of transcendental self-consciousness as providing a clear horizon for the metaphysical problematic of Being. Following Kant, Fichte takes the absoluteness of the ‘I’ into account for the first time, albeit incompletely, in the *Wissenschaftslehre*. In the wake of Kant and Fichte, and shaped by Schelling’s doctrine of identity (between nature and Spirit), Hegel finally comprehends the subject as absolute Spirit by logically conceiving the essence of true infinity within, and emerging from, “the essence of I-hood as subjectivity” (GA 32: 109/77).

Heidegger thus describes the Hegelian concept of infinity as having both a “logical” and “subjective” grounding. The *Phenomenology* undertakes the proper “subjective” grounding of infinity *in* the subject and *as* subject, while the proper “logical” grounding is developed in the *Science of Logic*. On Heidegger’s reading, the concept of infinity is “inherently and necessarily grounded in the second [subjective] one” (GA 32: 110/77). The logical meaning of infinity is grounded in the infinite character of self-consciousness, which is in fact the reverse of Hegel’s procedure, namely to point to self-consciousness or subjectivity as a “formal” manifestation of the logical structure of infinity. We can therefore raise certain questions here about Heidegger’s interpretation of infinity and self-consciousness, and his claim that the logical meaning of the infinite is grounded in the structure of self-consciousness (rather than the reverse). Indeed, Hegel’s *own* account of the infinite character of self-consciousness emphasises its inadequacy as an exemplification of the true infinite. For it is precisely because of its *subjectivity* that self-consciousness is not the full or complete manifestation of

the infinite (understood as self-subsisting independence that incorporates the finite within itself). To be sure, self-consciousness is the “existing Concept,” but certainly not its full reality or concrete actualisation, which is rather *Spirit* in its whole developed articulation. In this case, namely the standpoint of self-consciousness as itself a *Gestalt* (or series of figures in the PhG) sublated by Reason, we have the finite (subject) as infinite, but not the infinite (spirit) as finite, or articulated as a concrete individuality. The result is an opposition between an abstract self-identity of self-consciousness that attempts to dominate and integrate otherness, an otherness that is reproduced in this very process such that the opposition between Self and Other can never be overcome.

For clarification of this point we may turn to Hegel’s critique of the “bad” infinity of Kantian self-consciousness (and its Fichtean variant) in the *Science of Logic*. Hegel is concerned here in particular with the practical effects of the opposition between finite and infinite within the “spurious” infinite belonging to the understanding. The latter—in the form of “quantitative progress to infinity which continually surmounts the limit it is powerless to remove, and perpetually falls back into it”—is exalted in the philosophy of reflection as something ultimate and even divine (WL I/1 222/228). Within the sphere of practical reason, the “progress to infinity” is likewise exalted in the feeling of the sublime, in which the subject, to quote Kant in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, “raises himself in thought above the place he occupies in the world of sense, reaching out to infinity” (WL I/1 223/229). This exaltation of the limitless progress indicates, for Hegel, rather the failure or succumbing of thought: the “bad” infinite of the Kantian moral subject results in a “wearisome repetition” in which a limit vanishes and reappears, is displaced into a beyond in order to be overcome, but in being overcome is once again displaced into another beyond, and so on *ad infinitum*. What results from such an endless progression is only the feeling of *impotence* in relation to this unattainable infinite as an *ought-to-be*, an alienation generated by the reflective understanding which attempts, but always fails, to *master* the finite (WL I/1 223/229).

Hegel’s critique of the Kantian account of self-consciousness points to the practical effects of the opposition between freedom and nature. Within Kant’s account, the infinity of outer sensuous intuition is opposed to the infinite of self-consciousness in its abstract universality. As Kant states, in withdrawing from and negating the sensuous world, the abstract but solitary freedom of self-conscious subject “knows *himself as equal to himself*”. In withdrawing into its abstract self-identity, the self-conscious subject finds that its freedom lies in its (abstract) self-identity that is defined by excluding and opposing itself to “the fullness of nature and Geist,” which confronts it as a *beyond* (WL I/1 224/231). The contradiction that emerges here is the same as that which structures the infinite progression: that between “a returnedness-into-self which is at the same time immediately an out-of-selfness” (WL I/1 225/231). The contradiction emerges between a self-identity defined by opposition to an Other, an

Other that is essential to the constitution of this self-identity, but which at the same time contradicts its essential character as a solitary self-relation or *solus ipse*. The result is a perpetual *longing* reminiscent of the self-alienation of the unhappy consciousness and “beautiful soul” of romanticism: the unsatisfiable desire to overcome the breach between the solitary and self-determining “void of the ego,” and the fullness of sensuous otherness, where the latter is negated by self-consciousness yet still present in the form of an unattainable beyond.

The practical implications of this deficient form of self-identity and universality are highly significant. Hegel argues that the antithesis between finite and infinite—or “the manifold world and the ego raised to its freedom”—results in a relation of *domination* in which the infinite nonetheless fails to master the finite. Self-consciousness, in determining itself in its abstract self-identity, proceeds to determine nature and attempt to liberate itself from it: the result is an *objectification of the finite* (nature) and *reification of the infinite* (the free subject) in which the power of the ego over the non-ego (sense and outer nature) is conceived such that morality can and ought to progress while the power of finite sensuousness is diminished (WL I/1 225/231). The moral project of achieving a perfect adequacy of the free will in relation to the universal moral law is in fact an unending progress to infinity, an achievement that is “represented as an *absolutely unattainable* beyond” (WL I/1 225/231). The struggle and meaning of morality is defined precisely through this unattainability of moral truth as an overcoming of the opposition between infinite freedom and finite sensuousness. Here we might think of the Kantian realms of phenomenal nature and noumenal freedom, which remain independent and distinct, yet are both aspects of one and the same self-conscious subject.

What emerges here is a contradictory relation between the finite sphere of sensuous nature and the infinite sphere of moral freedom, where both of these self-subsistent and opposing spheres “are moments of *one and the same simple being*, the ego” (WL I/1 226/232). The will is defined in opposition to nature and indeed *as* the opposition to nature as the sphere that it must sublimate. Nature and the sensuous nature of the human being, on the other hand, remain independent of moral determination and “indifferent to limitation by an other” (WL I/1 226/232). The result of this opposition within the phenomenal-noumenal subject is that “the conflict of morality and sense is represented as the ultimate, absolute relation” (WL I/1 226/232).^[19] The conclusion I want to draw from this analysis is that it is impossible for the logical Concept of infinity in its true sense to be grounded in the infinity of self-consciousness, as Heidegger maintains. Indeed, Hegel’s critique of the *subjectivism* of the infinitude of self-consciousness explicitly argues against Heidegger’s thesis. For the infinitude of self-consciousness remains a “bad” infinite mired within an insurmountable opposition to the finite that takes the form of an endless progress towards an unattainable beyond. Heidegger thus misattributes to Hegel the very conception of the spurious infinite that Hegel attempts to overcome.^[20]

Heidegger on Self-Consciousness

The limitations of Heidegger's onto-egological interpretation become most apparent in his discussion of Hegelian self-consciousness. The basic difficulty throughout Heidegger's reading is that Hegelian self-consciousness is reduced to a fundamentally Fichtean version of the Cartesian *ego cogito*. The result is a failure on Heidegger's part to grasp the dialectic of dependence and independence of self-consciousness and the problem of the freedom of self-consciousness in the unhappy consciousness.

According to Heidegger, in the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness, the Concept of infinity is "accessible absolutely" only for us, the phenomenological observers (GA 32: 180-181/124). Consciousness, for its part, only becomes aware of the 'I' that differentiates itself from itself and thus knows that it is not differentiated from itself. In becoming conscious of this inner difference between the 'I' and the self, consciousness knows itself as self-consciousness. Heidegger describes this transition to self-consciousness in Fichtean terms:

we can say that by saying I, I is posited as I: I = I. But I "equals" I is just the difference which has to be made, solely in order basically not to be a difference. Since this inner difference has the character of an I [*ichlich*] and posits itself, it differentiates itself at the same time from the not-I. (GA 32: 181/125).

Along with the self-positing of the 'I,' the realm of subjectivity, the realm of objectivity is also opened up as "a realm for encountering this or that being which has the character of a not-I." (GA 32: 181/125). Heidegger takes this "Fichtean" formulation of Hegel's conception of self-consciousness to show—using a Husserlian term—the "ego-logical" justification that and how self-consciousness is the condition of the possibility of consciousness of thinghood and objectivity in general. Heidegger's Fichtean interpretation, however, misses essential aspects of Hegel's conception of self-consciousness as Spirit, above all Hegel's own conception of the *finitude* of the subject. This positing of the non-I as otherness or objectivity is, for Hegel, the moment of the *finitude* of empirical self-consciousness, a finitude that must be overcome within the higher intersubjective totality of Spirit. Indeed, such finitude can be overcome only through intersubjective relations of *recognition* between self-conscious subjects, where the actuality of these intersubjective relations constitutes the "We" of the historical community defined as a particular configuration of objective and absolute Spirit. Heidegger's "formalist" *egological* interpretation of Hegelian self-consciousness misses these intersubjective and recognitive aspects of Spirit.

Heidegger's approach to the Being of the self remains firmly inscribed within this

fundamentally Fichtean interpretation of self-consciousness. For Heidegger, Hegel conceives the 'I' in terms of the *cogito*, and self-being in terms of self-consciousness, but this conception of self-consciousness is oriented toward an ontological comprehension of the *Being* of the self (GA 32: 197/136). The issue that emerges here concerns the independence of the self or its *self-being*. For Heidegger, this means that Hegel moves beyond the reflection model of self-consciousness and toward a construction of the essence of self-consciousness "by way of *being-for-another*" (GA 32: 199/138). One would therefore expect here a discussion of the role of desire and recognition in the constitution of self-consciousness. Instead, according to Heidegger's reading, Hegel develops at this point a new concept of Being as *infinite Life*. To be sure, Heidegger does turn to a very brief consideration of desire, but he omits to extend this discussion to the crucial section on the struggle for recognition. According to Heidegger, self-consciousness, in its movement of return into itself, is grasped as desire, defined as "the passion of the self for itself" (GA 32: 199/138). The experience of desire is oriented by a desire for objects that never attains complete satisfaction but rather only ever produces new desires. Consciousness of the desired object is not simply left behind within self-consciousness, but is "sublated and drawn into consciousness's knowledge of itself" (GA 32: 199/138). According to Heidegger, desiring self-consciousness thus has a double object: 1) "the I posits itself as a particular vis-a-vis another particular," namely the object desired; and 2) "the I takes into itself this doubling of itself and thus manifests in itself a relation to the absolute" (GA 32: 199/138).

Heidegger's account of desire and self-consciousness calls for some critical commentary, since there is no such relation to the Absolute, according to Hegel, in the experience of desire. According to Hegel, self-reproducing desire incessantly reproduces the *dependence* of self-consciousness on an alien objectivity; the experience of desire is that of the independence of its *object*. The satisfaction of desire (in which self-consciousness remains chained to life) does not provide for the certainty and abiding self-identity of the Ego. Although desire is certainly a *necessary* aspect of self-consciousness, expressing the fact that it is always a self-consciousness of life in its particularity, desire is not *sufficient* to grasp the concrete individuality of self-consciousness as the "existing" infinite. Desire has a "doubled" object in the sense of being a relation towards a particular sensuous object of desire, as well as a self-relation in respect of an objective, the "for-the-sake of which" of my desiring actions, my own life as the ultimate objective of desire. Heidegger subsumes this abstract form of self-identity or self-relation in desire to a relation with the Absolute: the Other is forgotten in this ontological interpretation.

Indeed, Heidegger fails to account for the moment of *concrete individuality* in the Concept of self-consciousness. Returning to my earlier discussion of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel defines the Concept of self-consciousness as comprising three essential moments: the pure undifferentiated 'I' (universality), the mediation through the object of desire (particularity), and the movement of recognition between

self-conscious subjects (concrete individuality) (PhG 108/¶176). While Heidegger accounts for the first moment (the abstract self-identity of the 'I as I = I) and the second moment (the particularity of self-consciousness as desire), he has no account of the third moment (concrete individuality articulated through intersubjective recognition). In this sense, Heidegger, like Kant and Fichte, remains at the level of reflection in conceiving of self-consciousness according to an abstract *formalism*: a deficient conception of self-consciousness which fails to unite all three moments of universality, particularity, and the crucial third moment of individuality achieved through intersubjective recognition.

Instead of elaborating how the independence of self-consciousness emerges from the experience of mastery and servitude, Heidegger turns to a discussion of Life as Hegel's new concept of Being. On the basis of this account of Life, Heidegger claims that the phenomenology of Spirit is "*the fundamental ontology of absolute ontology, or onto-logy in general*" (GA 32: 204/141). The PhG provides the last possible justification of the metaphysics of subjectivity presumably before Heidegger's own attempt to overcome the latter through fundamental ontology. Another reason for Heidegger's puzzling emphasis on Life soon becomes apparent: it prepares the way for Heidegger's criticism of Hegel's parenthetical remark on Time. In the middle of the exposition of Life, Hegel remarks *en passant* that Essence is "absolutely restless infinity": it is the simple essence of Time, which, in his equality with itself, has the pure shape of Space" (PhG 105/¶169). Heidegger returns here to his earlier criticism of the relation between time and Spirit, concluding that this remark in the PhG provides strong evidence that "time and space are for Hegel primarily problems of the philosophy of nature" (GA 32: 208/144), and that Hegel simply transposes a concept of time derived from the philosophy of nature into the spheres of history and Spirit. As a result, Hegel fails to develop the problematic of time in terms of history or even Spirit, "for the simple reason that this would run a counter to Hegel's basic intention as anything could" (GA 32: 208/144). Heidegger's charge is that it is *Hegel* who remains mired within the reification of the temporality and historicity of the subject through an ontologically inappropriate interpretation of the self that remains rooted in an ontology of things.

It should be remarked that this thesis could not be substantiated without serious consideration of Hegel's *Logic*, which Heidegger eschews in this context but gestures towards in later essays such as "Identity and Difference". In the context of the PhG, Heidegger opposes his own conception of the relation between Being and Time to that of Hegel: Heidegger's thesis 'that the essence of Being *is* time' is the exact reverse of what he takes to be Hegel's thesis, namely 'that Being *qua* infinity *is* the essence of time'. Conceived ontologically, Heidegger argues, the essence of Being is "being-identical-with-itself in being-other"; conceived egologically, it is the "inner difference" of self-consciousness as the 'I = I'; conceived theologically, it is the absolute or self-comprehending Concept. Within this onto-ego-theological conception of Being *qua* infinity, Heidegger concludes, time proves to be an appearance of

Being, one belonging to nature rather than spirit (GA 32: 209/145). Heidegger thus repeats the criticism, made in *Being and Time*, of how Spirit must fall into time (from timeless eternity) in order to realise itself historically. That Heidegger completely neglects the question of the historicity of Spirit—the PhG is, after all, a *begriffene Geschichte*—is evinced in his claim that Hegel’s explication of Being *qua* infinity is “nothing less than leaving time behind on the road to Spirit, which is eternal” (GA 32: 212/147). The problem here is that Heidegger restricts Hegel’s conception of time to the domain of the philosophy of nature,^[21] and misleadingly argues that Hegel transposes a representational notion of time as empty succession into the domain of historical Spirit. In doing so, Heidegger’s ontogological approach forecloses the precisely the problems that are novel to Hegel’s theory of self-consciousness: the role of concrete individuality as intersubjective recognition and the question of the historicity of self-conscious Spirit.

Hegel’s Concept of Experience

Heidegger’s 1942/43 interpretation of the Introduction to the PhG is his most intensive treatment of Hegel’s philosophy as a whole. Here I shall attempt only a brief analysis with particular reference to the role of the ontological difference. For the critical question is whether Hegel actually does neglect the ontological difference in the exhibiting of the dialectical experience of consciousness, or indeed within the unfolding of dialectical-speculative logic.

Modern philosophy, for Heidegger, is defined by the search for an absolute foundation for knowledge in “unconditional self-certainty” (inaugurated by Descartes), and an a priori or transcendental grounding for this knowledge (critically delimited by Kant). Heidegger thus cites Hegel’s famous remark on Descartes in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*^[22]—concerning the discovery of the terrain of self-consciousness—but without discussing Hegel’s criticisms of the dualism of Cartesian metaphysics. Hegel, according to Heidegger, inherits and completes this search for an absolute or self-grounding knowledge that is grounded in the unconditional self-certainty of self-consciousness. At this point, however, a distinction needs to be made. There is no doubt that Hegel does search for absolute (in the sense of *self-grounding*) knowledge. The question is what provides the basis for this absolute knowledge? For Hegel, we could say that it is based on the self-referential closure of the system of categories as general conditions of intelligibility. According to Heidegger, it is based on the certainty of unconditional self-knowledge, that is, based upon a radicalisation of the Cartesian-Fichtean self-knowing subject. But as we shall see, although Heidegger does articulate the ontological dimension of Hegel’s project of constructing a system of absolute or self-grounding knowledge, he nonetheless interprets this process as itself grounded in the self-certainty of the self-conscious subject.

Let us consider this point in more detail. Hegel is the first philosopher, Heidegger notes, to fully possess the terrain of self-certain subjectivity once the Cartesian “*fundamentum inconcussum*” is thought of as the Absolute itself. The Absolute, Heidegger explains, is Spirit:

that which is present and by itself in the certainty of unconditional self-knowledge. Real knowledge of beings now means the absolute knowledge of the Absolute in its absoluteness (HW: 129/28)

Heidegger’s formulations are certainly legitimate as far as Hegel’s claim to develop a system of absolute knowledge is concerned. From an ontological point of view, Heidegger develops in this connection his fundamental thesis concerning the meaning of the *Phenomenology*: that Hegel presupposes the presence or *parousia* of the Absolute to us, and that the Absolute wills to disclose its Being through (absolute) knowledge. Hegel’s aim from the beginning of the *Phenomenology*, Heidegger remarks, is “to point out the Absolute in its advent with us” (HW: 131/31). Indeed, Heidegger takes Hegel’s remark that the Absolute is “in and for itself, already close to us of its own accord” to be the fundamental statement of Hegel’s conception of Being in the PhG. Being or the Absolute is always already present to us as that within and according to which knowledge in general is possible: “This closeness to us (*parousia*) is in itself already the way in which the light of truth, the Absolute itself, casts its ray upon us” (HW: 130-131/30). The Absolute *is* as the ontological horizon of Being through and in which beings are disclosed to us in their intelligible presence.

Heidegger then shifts emphasis in his reading of Hegel in order to develop a thesis crucial for Heidegger’s overall philosophical project: that in the course of modern philosophy, from Descartes to Hegel and Nietzsche, the meaning of Being is progressively *subjectivised* until it is obliterated entirely (in modern technology or what Heidegger will call *Ge-stell*). This thesis of a *subjectivisation of Being* is a central feature of Heidegger’s reading of the PhG and of Hegel’s role in the completion of Western metaphysics. For Heidegger, modern philosophy since Descartes has taken possession of the terrain of subjectivity as “the self-certainty of mental representation in respect of itself and what it represents” (HW: 132/33). Hegel in turn takes complete possession of the terrain of subjectivity by transforming it into self-knowing and self-willing Spirit. According to Heidegger, philosophy becomes “Science” in the absolute metaphysics of Hegel precisely because “it draws its meaning from the nature of the subject’s self-certainty which knows itself as unconditional” (HW: 132/33). Philosophical Science is thus the completion of the Cartesian project of a self-grounding knowledge that has its absolute foundation in the unconditional self-certainty of the knowing subject.

What does Heidegger mean here by the “subject”? Since Leibniz, Heidegger claims, entities

have been understood to be whatever is intelligible as representable for a cognitive subject. The subject in speculative metaphysics

now is what truly—and that means here with certainty—lies before me, the *subiectum*, the *hypoikeimenon*, which philosophy since its beginnings has had to recognize as what is present. (HW: 132/33)

The subject has its Being in the representing relation to the object, and in *being* this representing relationship it also represents itself to itself as a subject. The mode of Being of the modern metaphysical subject is self-certainty, in the sense of a self-conditioned, or rather, *unconditional self-knowledge*. This mode of Being as unconditional self-knowledge is what Heidegger calls the *subjectness* of the subject:

To be a subject, that is, to be in the subject-relation, is what constitutes the subjectness of the subject. Subjectness consists in unconditional self-knowledge (HW: 133/34).

The Being of the subject is subjectness in the form of self-grounding self-knowledge, which Hegel raises to the level of speculative Science. This unconditional self-awareness, which for Heidegger is the goal of the PhG, articulates the subjectness of the subject and provides the basis for conceptualising “being as being” [*Das Seiende als Seiende*] as a mode of self-grounding self-knowledge. Interpreting the beingness of beings as “subjectness” means that Being is “subjectivised”: subjectness is now tantamount to “the absoluteness of the Absolute” (HW: 133/34).

A problem arises here, however, that merits further discussion: how can the subject, whose Being as subjectness is determined with reference to the subject-object relationship, be considered *absolute*? As we saw earlier, Heidegger’s characterisation of the subject throughout his engagement with Hegel is that it is constituted through being “relative” to an other; the subject’s knowledge is a “relative” knowledge of objects, while its own finitude is precisely what prevents it from attaining any self-grounding status as “absolute”. The subjectness of the subject is now defined as the Being of the subject-object relation, which is raised to the level of unconditional self-knowledge: but how can the subjectness of the subject be identified with the “absoluteness of the absolute”? The very notion of a subject as “absolute” seems self-contradictory, since the subject, in its very subjectness, according to Heidegger, remains inscribed within the paradigm of the subject-object relationship, and thus marked by its “relative” status, its insurmountable finitude. Absolute knowledge, according to Hegel, attempts to suspend the subject-object relationship in favour of speculative reason as the self-comprehension of

the Absolute in absolute Spirit. According to Heidegger, however, absolute knowledge is not grounded in the self-referential totality of the system of thought-determinations, but rather in the Being of the subject-object relation qua “subjectness,” which seems to reduce the speculative knowledge back to the level of ‘relative’ knowledge.

A final point to consider in Heidegger’s interpretation is the problem of the ontological difference within the PhG. According to Heidegger, this fundamental difference between Being and beings provides the unthought origin and element of metaphysics in its entire history from Plato and Aristotle to Hegel and Nietzsche, a history of decline [*Verfallsgeschichte*], the forgetting of the ontological difference and of the question of Being. Heidegger introduces the ontological difference into his interpretation of Hegel’s phenomenology, aligning ontological knowledge with “Being” and ontic or natural consciousness with “beings”. “Natural consciousness” is akin to ontic or pre-ontological consciousness that pertains to beings as present to consciousness, ontological consciousness describes the ab-solvent standpoint of the phenomenological “We” who heed the Being of beings in absolute knowledge. Indeed, Heidegger’s interpretation of Hegel’s “natural consciousness” assimilates the latter to fallen or inauthentic Da-sein which, absorbed in the concern with objectively present beings, covers over any authentic ontological experience of the temporality of Da-sein, or indeed of Being as such (HW: 148/60-61). As Heidegger remarks:

In its representation of being, natural consciousness is not aware of Being, and yet must pay heed to it. It cannot avoid including in its representation the Being of beings in general, because without the light of Being it could not even lose itself to beings (HW: 148/61).

Here the ontological difference is explicitly invoked in order to clarify Hegel’s distinction between the *for-itself* standpoint of consciousness and the *for-us* standpoint of the phenomenological observer. The very possibility of phenomenology is opened up by the ontological difference between beings apprehended by natural consciousness and Being as comprehended by the phenomenological “we”.

Drawing on the analytic of Da-sein in *Being and Time*, Heidegger interprets “consciousness” as *ontic* or preontological consciousness whose object comprises *beings* taken as *representable*. At the same time, consciousness is also “ontological consciousness” in the sense of having an awareness of the beingness of beings as *objectivity*. The parallel Heidegger is drawing here refers to the ontic or preontological understanding belonging to Da-sein in its everyday being-in-the-world; Da-sein has a preontological or non-thematic understanding of Being (in Heidegger’s sense of that temporal horizon which makes possible the intelligibility of beings). Consciousness too has a preontological understanding even though consciousness itself does not think Being as such but rather only represents

the “beingness of beings” as objectivity. Heidegger thus attempts to absorb Hegelian phenomenology within the project of thinking the difference between Being and beings. Indeed, in this sense, “natural ontic preontological consciousness *is* in latent form the differentiation between the ontically true and ontological truth.” (HW: 177/108). Phenomenology is the process of making explicit this implicit difference between ontic and ontological truth, of comprehending the (implicit or unthematized) experience of the ontological difference between Being and beings. Indeed, for Heidegger, it is precisely the ontic-ontological dialogue between ontic consciousness and ontological understanding constitutes the dialectical experience of consciousness. Heidegger’s theses concerning the ontological meaning of self-consciousness and the subjectivisation of the Absolute are thus brought together in his interpretation of the dialectical movement of experience as naming “the Being of beings”. Hegel’s concept of “experience,” according to Heidegger, names that which appears, insofar as it appears, the *on bei on*, or beings thought in their beingness (HW: 180/113).

‘Experience’ is thus no longer an epistemic but rather an *ontological* term: according to Heidegger, *experience* is now a word of *Being* designating the *subjectness of the subject*. The dialectical experience of consciousness involves a comparison between *ontic* preontological knowledge and *ontological* knowledge; a dialogue or *legein* takes place between these two poles in which the claims of ontic and ontological consciousness are heard (HW: 183-84/118). This dialogical character of ontic-ontological consciousness prompts Hegel to call the movement of consciousness “dialectical,” where the latter is understood ontologically as the experience of consciousness defined as subjectness. “Experience is the beingness of beings,” Heidegger states, “whose determination, qua *subiectum*, is determined in terms of subjectness” (HW: 184/119).

Here we should note that Heidegger’s interpretation of experience as the ontic-ontological dialogue of self-conscious Spirit appears to have displaced the earlier characterisation in terms of the subject-object relation: experience now names the ontic-ontological dialogue that moves beyond the subject-object relation in order to disclose the ‘ontological difference’ at the heart of the Absolute. The *parousia* of the Absolute, with which Heidegger’s interpretation began, returns in the interpretation of experience: Hegelian ‘experience’ names the presence of the Absolute to us and its dialectical self-disclosure as subjectness. The underlying assumption in Heidegger’s claim is that consciousness is defined through the relationship between ontic and ontological awareness; hence the dialectical experience of consciousness names the process by which ontological understanding of this difference—namely the ontological meaning of subjectness—is progressively conceptualised. The ontological difference itself, for Heidegger, provides the concealed basis for the conceptual articulation(s) of this difference within the dialectical experience of consciousness. Although the ontological difference provides the (hidden) basis for the dialectical account of consciousness, Heidegger maintains that it

also remains the *untthought* ground of the metaphysical tradition up to and including Hegel.

Heidegger's ontological reading concludes with the "turning" of natural consciousness towards Being or the presence of the Absolute: the inversion of consciousness is construed as returning us—the phenomenological ontologists who "skeptically pay heed to the Being of beings" (HW: 204-5/149)—to our nature, "which consists in our being in the *parousia* of the Absolute". As phenomenological ontologists "already provided with Being" (HW: 188/126-127), we allow the ontic-ontological dialogue of experience—the *parousia* of the Absolute—to unfold of its own accord, its will to be with us or disclose itself in ontological knowledge.

At this point Heidegger articulates the explicit connection between the metaphysics of subjectness and the modern understanding of Being as technology. As we have seen, Heidegger argues that the absolute discloses itself as subjectness. This modern understanding of Being as subjectness, which culminates with Hegelian absolute Spirit and Nietzschean will to power, determines modernity as the epoch of technology. Heidegger thus connects his critique of metaphysics with the confrontation with modernity: the critical encounter with technology as completed subject-metaphysics is announced through Hegel's interpretation of Being as subjectness.

Within subjectness, every being becomes as such an object. ... If, in the era of subjectness [i.e., modernity] that is the ground of the nature of technology, nature *qua* Being is placed in opposition to consciousness, then this nature is only the sum total of particular beings taken as the object of that modern technological objectification which lays hands indiscriminately on the estate of things and men (HW: 192/132).

What is striking in this analysis is its proximity to Hegel's *own* critique of the metaphysics of reflection. Hegel too criticises the practical effects of the principle of abstract identity and universality that results in the obliteration of particularity, the domination of otherness, and the reification of subjectivity. Modernity, for Heidegger, is the era of subjectness and hence of technological objectification. Modern technology is itself nothing other than natural consciousness that "accomplishes the unlimited self-assuring feasibility of everything that is through the irresistible transformation of everything into an object for a subject" (HW: 149-150/62-63). But as we have seen, Hegel's own critique of the subjectivisation of the Concept, the "bad" infinity of the understanding, also emphasises the domination, reification, and objectification resulting from modern subject-metaphysics. In this sense, Heidegger's critical remarks here represent a repetition of Hegel's own critical confrontation with modern metaphysics of the subject and its moral-practical implications. On this point at least, the dialogue between Hegel and Heidegger finds its shared matter of thinking in the critical confrontation

with the metaphysics of modernity. As we shall see, the fundamental difference between Hegel and Heidegger turns on their respective relationships to modernity. Hegel provides a critical legitimation of modernity, which also includes a critique of the anachronistic character of subject-metaphysics (which belongs to early modernity) within ‘fully developed’ modernity. This is in contrast with Heidegger’s assertion that modern subject-metaphysics provides the basis for the nihilism of technological modernity. The categories of reflection such as identity and difference are not adequate, according to Hegel, to account for self-conscious subjectivity as Spirit within fully developed modernity; while for Heidegger, identity and difference do adequately describe the apotheosis of subject-metaphysics within technological modernity, which means that identity and difference must be taken up within a non-metaphysical, onto-poetic thinking of Being.

A final question to be considered in regard to Heidegger’s interpretation is whether Hegel really does overlook or obliterate the ontological difference. This topic will be discussed in greater detail next chapter. For the moment, let us note that Hegel shares with Heidegger the aim of overcoming the modern metaphysics of the subject (or, for Heidegger, of “subjectness”) precisely because of the “objectification” of Being and “reification” of the subject (or, for Heidegger, the ontological misinterpretation of Da-sein as an occurrent substance-subject and universal forgetting of Being). As opposed to Heidegger, Hegel’s project of a phenomenology of Spirit is motivated by the aim of overcoming the standpoint of *finitude* (the understanding) because of its reification of self-conscious subjectivity within the dichotomies of finite reflection. In the *Logic*, moreover, Hegel explicitly and critically analyses the categories of Being and determinate beings (*Sein* and *Dasein*) in order to show that the abstract immediacy of pure Being finds its determination in the plurality of finite determinate beings. Similarly, in the sphere of appearance, Hegel analyses the categories of existence and actuality [*Wirklichkeit*] in order to show that the immediacy of existence (existent things with properties) finds its truth in actuality as the “perfect interpenetration” of essence and existence (taken as appearance) (WL I 324/480). Actuality names the absolute as the totality in which finite existents, manifest in appearance, have their essential ontological ground.

Hegel recognises, at least implicitly, the ontological difference between Being and beings, but also that this difference cannot remain uncomprehended. Rather, Hegel’s *Logic* could be understood as a conceptual interpretation of the sequence of complex figures assumed by the “ontological difference” within the different categorical systems structuring substance- and subject-metaphysics. Hegel does not obviously forget or disregard the ontological difference, but rather attempts to comprehend the immanent logic of this difference as it is articulated within the categorical paradigms of Being, Essence, and Conceptuality. In response, Heidegger’s basic criticism of Hegel will be that the very project of a *Science of Logic* evinces the obliteration of the ontological difference in favour of the

logical grounding of the Being of beings. The truth of the whole, according to Hegel, can emerge only as the immanent result of the process of its own unfolding, while for Heidegger, it discloses itself in the experience of a concealed and discursively incommunicable originary event. Precisely this difference is what renders Heidegger's attempts at a thinking dialogue with Hegel resolutely *monological* in character.

I have argued that Heidegger's ontological interpretation fails to do justice to the themes of desire and recognition and the crucial moment of concrete individuality in Hegel's exposition of self-consciousness. In Heidegger's account, the need to overcome the self-alienation of the unhappy consciousness becomes the need to overcome the objectifying thinking of ontic consciousness in order to return to the *parousia* of the Absolute. In this case, the *negativity* of the historical experience of Spirit is lost in favour of a recovery of the originary question of Being. Indeed, Heidegger's overarching narrative of metaphysics as a forgetting of Being through the objectification of beings within absolute subjectness plays like an inverted version of Hegel's account of the historically disclosed self-comprehension of absolute Spirit. What is lacking in Heidegger's account, however, is what Hegel called the "labour of the negative". Instead of a dynamic historical unfolding of intersubjective spirit we have the *Verfallsgeschichte* of a perennial forgetting of Being. Heidegger's confrontation with Hegelian metaphysics remains determined by a philosophical metanarrative culminating not in freedom of subjectivity (as for Hegel) but in the nihilism of modern technology. But Heidegger at this point has only dealt with Hegelian phenomenology and not yet confronted perhaps the most challenging text in the history of metaphysics, a text that points, according to Heidegger, to the "end of metaphysics" as "onto-theology", namely Hegel's *Science of Logic*. As we shall see, Heidegger's confrontation with Hegel now has to move into another sphere: no longer to *overcome* metaphysics but rather to detach itself and thereby *recover* from it. Heidegger thus attempts to engage in a "thinking dialogue" with Hegel concerning the problem of the ontological difference, the "unthought" and hidden ground and origin of the metaphysical tradition, and the relation of the ontological difference to the obliteration of Being in modernity as the epoch of planetary technology. Hegel plays a pivotal role in Heidegger's metanarrative of the history of Western metaphysics and its culmination in the nihilism of modern technology. We now turn to Heidegger's final reckoning with Hegel's challenge to overcoming the metaphysics of modernity.

[1] Cf. "The genuine refutation must penetrate the opponent's stronghold and meet him on his own ground; no advantage is gained by attacking him somewhere else and defeating him where he is not"

(WL II 14/581).

[2] I shall follow the convention of translating Heidegger's *Sein* with "Being" and *das Seiende* with "being(s)"

[3] Heidegger distinguishes *existentiell* possibilities—individual Da-sein's concrete ways of understanding and acting in the world—from *existential* understanding—explicit thematisation of the structures and meaning of existence in general. See SZ 12-14/10-13.

[4] As we shall see, for his part Heidegger rejects any parallelism between Hegelian, Husserlian, and Heideggerian phenomenology. See Heidegger GA 32 (1980).

[5] This situation is in fact more complicated, as Heidegger elsewhere appears to distinguish *three* modes of Being: "Mineness belongs to Da-sein as the condition of possibility of authenticity and inauthenticity. Da-sein always exists in one of these modes, or else in the modal indifference to them" (SZ 53/49). This apparent "third mode" of Da-sein's existence becomes significant in deciding whether average everydayness, and the social normativity of *das Man*, the 'They', counts as inauthenticity or as the modally indifferent condition of Da-sein. Indeed, one can make the argument that the conceptual pair of authentic/inauthentic plays a pivotal role in the transition from the basic interpretation of Da-sein (as pragmatic being-in-the-world), through its intermediate interpretation (as a structure of care), to its final interpretation as originary temporality. Moreover, the apparent conflation of "inauthenticity" with "everydayness" in Heidegger's account of the everyday being of Da-sein suggests the intrusion of cultural-ideological motifs concerning Heidegger's critical conception of modernity.

[6] See Souche-Dagues (1979) for a detailed critical analysis of Heidegger's interpretation of Hegel in §82 of SZ.

[7] In support of this "Cartesian-Fichtean" interpretation of the Concept, Heidegger cites Hegel's statements that "the *I* is the pure Concept itself which, as concept, has come into *existence* [*Dasein*]" (WL II 17/583), and that the *I* is "*first*, this pure self-related unity, ... as making abstraction from all determinateness and content and withdrawing into the freedom of unrestricted equality with itself" (WL II 17/583). I have already discussed (in chapter four) how these passages are significant in relation to Hegel's parallel between the threefold structure of the Concept and the three aspects (universal, particular, and individual) of the Concept of self-consciousness.

[8] Hegel seems to suggest in the section on the animal organism in the *Enzyklopädie* that at higher levels of natural organisation "time" (and space) itself receives more concrete, higher determinations. The "subjectivity" of the animal is a "free time" that, according to inner contingency, "determines itself as place" (Enz §350).

[9] As Heidegger remarks in the *Kantbuch*: "an all-powerful entity need not ask: What can I do, i.e., What can I not do? ... Whosoever asks: what can I do? betrays thereby a finitude. Whosoever comes wholly to be moved by his innermost interest in this question reveals a finitude in the depths of his essence" (KM 216/151).

[10] Heidegger goes so far as to remark: "One can understand the transcendental deduction only if the originary synthetic unity is grasped in terms of the transcendental imagination. Statements about the power of imagination that I myself could have copied from Hegel! But precisely here is the place where the sharpest opposition becomes discernible and the field of confrontation defines itself (GA 28: 200).

[11] The issue here is analogous to one which Heidegger addresses in his essay on Schelling's *Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, namely, the problem of the relation between system and freedom, and how finitude as such is to be overcome by the system of reason.

[12] In fact Heidegger does not deal with the problem of the not and negation as such in Hegel until 1937/38. See (GA 68: 3-42).

[13] For Heidegger, Hegel's understanding of *reason* basically fulfils the traditional conception of the Greek *logos*, via its transformation into the Latin *ratio*, and later development as reason or *Vernunft* in conjunction with the traditional discipline of 'logic'. This explains Hegel's presentation of the conceptual and categorical structure of the Absolute, which simultaneously integrates the basic metaphysical positions of the Western tradition from Greek ontology to transcendental idealism, in terms of a "science of logic".

[14] On the other hand, Heidegger states a few pages later that natural consciousness "is alive in all shapes of Spirit, lives in all of them in its own way—including especially the shape of absolute knowledge that comes about as absolute metaphysics" (HW: 149/62). This remark does not seem at all reconcilable with Heidegger's claim that natural consciousness is barred from the phenomenological path.

[15] "The intelligible form of Science," according to Hegel, "is the way open and equally accessible to everyone, and consciousness as it approaches Science justly demands that it be able to attain to rational knowledge by way of the ordinary understanding" (PhG 15/¶13).

[16] See Houlgate's discussion of the significance of Hegel's project of a speculative logic that satisfies the (modern) historical demand for "free, *self-grounding* thought" (1986, 41ff.).

[17] Fichte asserts that there are two major types of human existence, those "who have not yet raised themselves to full consciousness of their freedom and absolute independence," and thus remain immersed in the world of objects and things (much like Heidegger's description of existence in the mode of inauthenticity); and those who have become conscious of their self-sufficiency and independence of external objectivity, namely the true (idealist) philosophers (WL *Werke* I 433/15).

[18] We should note in passing that this formulation significantly alters, in a rather one-sided and rigid manner, Hegel's own thesis in the PhG: that the True is to be grasped "not only as *Substance*, but equally as *Subject*" (PhG 181/¶17).

[19] Cf. Hegel's related critical discussion of the Fichtean $I = I$ in its *quantitative* difference from the opposing non-ego, the *partial* determination of the ego by the non-ego and non-ego by the ego, such that the non-ego in its no-being remains "opposed as something not suspended" (WL I/1 227/232). Fichte's doctrine of self-consciousness thus results in the construction of the non-ego as an infinite obstacle [*Anstoss*] or absolute other. This self-contradictory freedom of self-consciousness means that the final relation between ego and non-ego remains an infinite progress, a longing and aspiration—"the same contradiction with which the system began" (WL I/1 227/233).

[20] Indeed, Heidegger avoids direct reference to the crucial distinction between the infinite of the understanding and the infinite of reason, relying instead on the exposition of the infinite provided in the Jena logic (GA 32, 110-111/77-78).

[21] Already in Hegel's discussion of Life, however, the idea of time as abstract flux (of the process of life) is supplemented by the *Bestehen* or enduring subsistence of particular organic forms, which also implies another conception of time at play in this sphere. Cf. "It is this very flux, as a self-identical independence which is itself an *enduring subsistence* [*Bestehen*], or *substance*, in which, therefore, they are present as distinct members and parts existing on their own account." (PhG 105/§169 trans. mod.).

[22] Cf. "Here, we may say, we are at home, and like the mariner after a long voyage in a tempestuous sea, we may now hail the sight of land; with Descartes the culture of modern times, the thought of modern Philosophy really begins to appear, after a long and tedious journey so far." (VGP III 120/217).