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Hegel's Logic of Freedom

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Submitted for the award of a doctoral degree in philosophy,

at the University of Sussex

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The thesis, whether in the same or different form, has not been previously submitted to this or any other University for a degree.

Charlotte Baumann

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University of Sussex

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Summary

“Being with oneself in the other” is Hegel’s famous definition of freedom, and, I argue, it is also the key topic of his entire *Science of Logic*. Hegel’s *Logic* is an ontological analysis of the underlying relational structure of everything: the structure of thinking as much as the structure of the world. Hegel proposes at the beginning of the *Logic* that this structure must display the form of “being with oneself in the other”, i.e. consist in a relation of identity and difference between a totality and its elements. After presenting the different forms of “being with oneself in the other” developed in the *Logic*, I will offer a new interpretation of the *Philosophy of Right* and the *Philosophy of History* in the light of my interpretation of the *Logic*. This serves to show how exactly *Philosophy of Right* is the exposition of the existence of freedom and how it is grounded in the *Logic*. While the connection between Hegel’s *Logic* and social philosophy has often been taken to have authoritarian and anti-individualist implications, I will show that this is not the case and that this connection instead highlights the republican aspects in Hegel’s theory.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used to refer to the works of Hegel.

I am working with the German version of the text, referencing the English translation of the central works I am using, if there is one. The reference (PR 15/3) thus refers to the German copy of the *Philosophy of Right* I am using on page 15 and to the English translation I am using on page 3. I have taken the liberty to amend the English translation where I saw fit.

- E1 *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften I*, ed by Eva Moldenhauer und Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt a.M. Suhrkamp, 1970)

The Encyclopaedia Logic, trans. by T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting and H.S. Harris (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1991)

- E1,17 *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1817)*, ed. by W. Bonsiepen and K. Grotzsch. (Hamburg: Meiner, 2001)

- E3 *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften III*, ed. by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1986)

Philosophy of Mind, trans. by William Wallace (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2008)

- GW 'Glauben und Wissen oder Reflexionsphilosophie der Subjektivität in der Vollständigkeit ihrer Form als Kantische, Jacobische und Fichtesche Philosophie', *Jenaer Schriften 1801-1807*, ed. by Eva Moldenhauer und Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1986), p.287-433.

- PG *Die Philosophie der Geschichte. Vorlesungsmitschrift Heimann (Winter 1830/31)* ed. by Klaus Vieweg (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2005).

- PR *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, ed. by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2000).

Elements of the Philosophy of Right, ed. by Allen W. Wood and trans. by Hugh Barr Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

- PRV21 *Die Philosophie des Rechts. Vorlesungen von 1821/22*, ed. by Hansgeorg Hoppe (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1005).

- PRV19 *Philosophie des Rechts. Die Vorlesung von 1819/20 in einer Nachschrift*, ed. by Dieter Henrich (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1983).

- VG *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, ed. by Eva moldauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1986).

The Philosophy of History, trans. by Sibree (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1956).

- VGP *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie I*, ed. by Eva Moldhauer and Markus Michel (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1971).
- ViG *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte. Einleitung in die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, ed. by Georg Lasson. (Leipzig: Meiner, 1930).
- VL *Vorlesungen über die Logik 1831. Nachschrift von Karl Hegel*, ed. by Udo Rameil, Hegel Vorlesungen, vol. 10 (Hamburg: Meiner, 2001).
- VLM *Vorlesungen über Logik und Metaphysik. Heidelberg 1817. Mitgeschrieben von F.A. Good*, ed. by Karen Gloy, series: Hegel Vorlesungen, vol. 11 (Hamburg: Meiner, 1992)
- VNS *Vorlesungen über Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaften. Heidelberg 1817/18*, ed. by C.Becker et al. (Hamburg: Meiner, 1983).
- VPW *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte. Berlin 1822/23. Nachschriften von K.G.J v. Griesheim, H.G. Hotho und F.C.H.V. v. Kehler*, ed. by Karl Bremer, Karl-Heinz Ilting and Hoo Nam Seelmann, Hegel Vorlesungen, vol. 12 (Hamburg: Meiner, 1996)
- VRP1-4 *Vorlesungen über Rechtsphilosophie*, vol. 1-4, ed. by Karl-Heinz Ilting (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1974).
- WL1,12 *Wissenschaft der Logik I. Die objektive Logik (1812/13)* ed. by Friedrich Hogemann and Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg: Meiner, 1987).
- WL1 *Wissenschaft der Logik I*, ed by Eva Moldenhauer und Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt a. M: Suhrkamp, 1986).
- Hegel's Science of Logic, trans. by A.V. Miller (New York: Humanity Books, 1969)
- WL2 *Wissenschaft der Logik II*, ed. by Eva Moldenhauer und Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1969).
- Hegel's Science of Logic, trans. by A.V. Miller (New York: Humanity Books,1969)

Hegel's Logic of Freedom

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Introduction

The relation between Hegel's *Logic* and social philosophy is a tricky one. This is so because while Hegel insists there is a very important connection, it is hard to precisely map this connection. If and how one draws this link will also have a profound impact on how one assesses Hegel's theory in general, and his theory of freedom in particular. There are a number of crucial questions in this regard: is Hegel's thought inherently authoritarian and totalitarian, or is it, on the contrary, deeply committed to individual freedom and civic liberties? Is he a supporter of pluralistic democracy, or a republican state or monarchy? Does Hegel refrain from prescribing anything at all, keeping his work purely descriptive? Such central questions, I believe, can ultimately only be addressed with reference to his entire philosophical programme, the basis of which is the *Logic*. If Hegel presents himself as a monist in the *Logic*, there are – depending on the type of monism – clear limits to how pluralistic a society he can endorse. If he believes that a rational society must meet the criteria developed in his *Logic*, then there are necessarily limits on how individuals can choose to arrange their interactions or on how they can contingently develop.

In this thesis, I will offer a systematic and parallel reading primarily of Hegel's *Logic* and *Philosophy of Right*, but also of his *Logic* and *Philosophy of History*. I will explain why there is a parallel in the first place, and what this parallel means for his theory of the state, and particularly his theory of freedom. The foundational claim of the entire thesis is that Hegel implicitly develops a theory of freedom in the *Logic*. More precisely, over the course of his entire *Logic*, Hegel analyses different forms of “being with oneself in the other”, which Hegel defines in the *Philosophy of Right* as the basic form of freedom. After outlining this interpretation in the first chapter, I will analyse in detail his *Philosophy of Right*, reading each section as presenting one particular form of freedom – understood as “being with oneself

in the other” – that corresponds to one such form discussed in Hegel’s *Logic*. I will also analyse the forms of freedom presented in the *Philosophy of History*, once again reading them in parallel to the *Logic*. Surprisingly, only one book-length study on the connection between Hegel’s *Logic* and *Philosophy of Right* has been published in English, namely, Steinberger’s *Logic and Politics: Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*,¹ and none in German.² There is no book or article whatsoever expanding upon the parallel between the *Logic* and *Philosophy of History*. Even though Steinberger’s book presents a laudable exception, it only looks into very limited aspects of Hegel’s method. Steinberger does not propose an exact parallel between the *Logic* and *Philosophy of Right*, and he misses out on what the parallel implies for Hegel’s theory of freedom. The recent surge of books on Hegel’s theory of freedom³ have therefore not taken the *Logic* into account,⁴ since the key relevance of the *Logic* – not only for Hegel’s

¹ Peter Steinberger, *Logic and Politics: Hegel’s Philosophy of Right* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988). While writing up this thesis, two book projects on this topic have come to my attention. A PhD thesis is currently being reviewed for publication as a book, namely, Mathew J. Smetona, *Hegel’s Logic of Absolute Idealism and his Political Argument: The Conceptuality of Actuality*, 2010 <<http://proquest.umi.com>> (accessed 15th of September 2011). This thesis is fundamentally different from mine, since it interprets the Concept in the tradition of Brandom as many concepts connected by inference, rather than as a general structure of relations. The other book project is: Christopher Yeomans, *Freedom and Reflection: Hegel and the Logic of Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming). I have not had access to this work yet. However, in an article, Yeomans interprets the category Identity in the Logic of Essence as connected to self-determination. I generally agree with the point that identity – in the sense of self-relation – is important for Hegel’s theory of freedom. However, Yeomans offers an “erotic” interpretation of Identity, based on questions concerning whether something is the same – a view I do not endorse. And identity is certainly only one aspect of freedom, beside difference, for Hegel; an overemphasis on identity would turn Hegel’s theory into a theory of actions – actions in which subjects express themselves – rather than a theory of social relations, which it emphatically is. Yeomans anticipates in his article that he will read only the Concept in relation to the free will. I read the entire *Logic* in parallel to Hegel’s social philosophy. See his article: Christopher Yeomans, ‘Identity as a Process of Self-Determination in Hegel’s Logic’, in *Identity and Difference: Studies in Hegel’s Logic, Philosophy of Spirit and Politics*, ed. by Philip T. Grier (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007), pp. 63–82.

² There are, however, a number of articles or book chapters on this connection, see: Karl-Heinz Ilting, ‘Die logische und systematische Form der Rechtsphilosophie’, in *Karl-Heinz Ilting. Aufsätze über Hegel*, ed. by Paolo Becchi and Hansgeorg Hoppe (Frankfurt a.M.: Humanities Online, 2006); Emil Angehrn, ‘Die Entwicklung des Begriffs in Hegel’s Rechtsphilosophie’ in *Dialektischer Negativismus* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1992), pp.304–322; Vittorio Hösle, *Hegel’s System: Der Idealismus der Subjektivität und das Problem der Intersubjektivität*, vol 1 (Hamburg: Meiner, 1988), pp. 60–127; Henry S. Richardson, ‘The Logical Structure of Sittlichkeit: A Reading of Hegel’s Philosophie of Right’, in *Idealist Studies*, 19 (1989), pp. 62–76; Henning Ottmann, ‘Hegelsche Logik und Rechtsphilosophie: Unzulängliche Bemerkungen zu einem ungelösten Problem’, in *Hegels Philosophie des Rechts. Die Theorie der Rechtsformen und ihre Logik*, ed. by Dieter Henrich and Rolf-Peter Horstmann (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982), pp. 382–392; Dieter Henrich, ‘Logische Form und reale Totalität: Über die Begriffsform von Hegels eigentlichem Staatsbegriff’, in *Hegels Philosophie des Rechts. Die Theorie der Rechtsformen und ihre Logik*, ed. by Dieter Henrich and Rolf-Peter Horstmann (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982), 429–450; Lu de Vos, ‘Die Logik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie: eine Vermutung’, in *Hegel-Studien*, 16 (1981), pp. 99–121. While Henrich analyses the political state as three syllogisms, though not on the basis of the *Philosophy of Right*, de Vos (pp. 102f, 107) proposes that the three sections of *Philosophy of Right* parallel the three books of the *Logic*, as I do.

³ I am thinking of works such as: Timothy Luther, *Hegel’s Critique of Modernity: Reconciling Individual Freedom and the Community* (Lanham, ND: Lexington Books, 2009); Sara MacDonald, *Finding Freedom: Hegel’s Philosophy and the Emancipation of Women* (Montreal: Mqup, 2008); Domenico Losurdo, *Hegel and the Freedom of the Moderns* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); Adriaan T. Peperzak, *Modern Freedom: Hegel’s Legal, Moral and Political Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publications, 2001); Frederick Neuhouser, *Foundations of Hegel’s Social Theory: Actualizing Freedom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Paul Franco, *Hegel’s Philosophy of Freedom* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); Alan Patten, *Hegel’s Idea of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁴ An exception is Peperzak, insofar as he discusses the relevance of the *Logic* in the first chapter of his book. For him, the relevance of the *Logic* for the *Philosophy of Right* is limited to the method of deduction. See: Peperzak, *Modern Freedom*, pp. 72ff. Other interpreters do make a reference to the *Logic*, but do not expand upon this point nor analyse it systematically. For example, Wallace claims that freedom is based on the *Logic* (p. xxvi), and even mentions “being with oneself in the other”, but he

state but specifically for his conception of freedom – has yet to be explicated.⁵ Apart from offering a unified and new interpretation of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, this thesis thus establishes and explicates its link to social philosophy and offers a new and systematic reading of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and *History*.

In this introduction, I will, first, present four positions one might take on the Logic-social philosophy connection, locating my own position on the academic map. Then, I will give a brief overview of the six chapters of the thesis.

Different approaches to the logic of Hegel's social philosophy

The first position one can hold on the connection between Hegel's social philosophy and *Logic* is perhaps the obvious one, namely, that there is no connection (despite Hegel's claims to the contrary). Since the state structure Hegel presents cannot merely consist in a collection of empirical facts – in which case it would be philosophically irrelevant – it is necessary to suppose that there is something else at the base of his theory, that is, some proposition from which he derives his presentation. Indeed, Hegel himself claims that his state derives from the “concept of the will” (PR §7). The recent studies of Hegel's conception of freedom therefore use the concept of the free will – particularly his

then only gives a list of diverse things prefigured by the *Logic* (p. xxvii, also p. 48). See: Robert M. Wallace, *Hegel's Philosophy of Reality, Freedom and God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Dudley notes that freedom is first developed in Hegel's Concept in the *Logic*, see: Will Dudley, *Hegel, Nietzsche and Philosophy: Thinking Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 16.

⁵ Some Anglo-American interpreters – notably, Merold Westphal, Pippin, and Winfield – have argued that Hegel's Concept is linked to his conception of freedom. My view is closer to Merold Westphal's, since Pippin conceives of freedom only as the freedom of thinking, not as a general structure. But in contrast to Westphal, I extend the claim to say that the entire *Logic* implicitly analyses forms of freedom, and on this basis it is linked to the *Philosophy of Right*. See: Merold Westphal, ‘Hegel's Theory of the Concept’, in *Selected Writings on G.W.F. Hegel*, ed. by Lawrence Stepelevich (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1993), pp. 27-40; Robert B. Pippin, ‘Begriffslogik als Logik der Freiheit’, in *Der Begriff als Wahrheit. Zum Anspruch der Hegelschen Subjektiven Logik*, ed. by Anton Friedrich Koch, Alexander Oberauer and Konrad Utz (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2003), pp. 223-237; Richard Dien Winfield, *From Concept to Objectivity. Thinking Through Hegel's Subjective Logic* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 51ff. As already mentioned, Yeomans interprets Identity in the Logic of Essence in connection with self-determination, see: footnote 1.

As regards German speaking scholars, Lakebrink has written a sizeable volume on the *Logic* and freedom. It is, however, opaque and it links freedom to Hegel's method, which is less useful for social theory. See: Bernhard Lakebrink, *Die Europäische Idee der Freiheit. 1. Teil. Hegels Logik und die Tradition der Selbstbestimmung* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1986). On one particular category in connection to freedom, see: Tommaso Pierini, *Theorie der Freiheit. Der Begriff des Zwecks in Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik* (München: Fink Verlag, 2006). Also, Theunissen critically points to social implications of the *Logic* at the end of his book. See: Michael Theunissen, *Sein und Schein. Die kritische Funktion der Hegelschen Logik* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1994).

definition of freedom as “being with oneself in the other” – as the starting point from which to derive his system of right. However, this brings about the strange result that implicitly proposes there to be a logical method of derivation to the *Philosophy of Right*, which is different from the logic described in the *Logic*. This deduction may even suggest to some that the concept of the free will functions as an ontological ground for Hegel’s system of right, and yet it is not supposed to be linked to the *Logic*, which is the official ontology in Hegel’s system. Apart from these systematic difficulties, there is an additional question as to how much can actually be deduced from Hegel’s definition of free willing in §7. Since Hegel explicitly only speaks about freedom when acting, this definition is too narrow to be applicable to all sections of the *Philosophy of Right*, which also discusses other forms of freedom (such as belonging to a family or state). If, on the other hand, one reads §7 as presenting only one example for a more general formula, it becomes hard to say how else it can be legitimately concretised, let alone which forms would be a misuse of the formula. In fact, the mere expression “being with oneself in the other” can be employed to legitimise a dictatorship – individuals completely identifying with and submitting to their other, namely, the dictator – as well as many other types of social order. As such, merely appealing to this expression will make it difficult to explain why Hegel favours the system of right that he proposes, and how exactly it must be understood.

If we suppose that Hegel’s social philosophy is linked to and grounded by the *Logic*, as Hegel claims it is, the evaluation of this link varies according to how one interprets the *Logic*. Traditionally, Hegel’s *Logic* has often been read and criticised for its supposed substance-monism: the one absolute underlies everything and expresses itself in finite things. In terms of social theory, this entails an authoritarian conception of the state, whereby all individuals are instances or means of actualisation of the one substance, namely, the state or spirit. They can only be free if they completely identify with the state, recognise it as their own substance, and take its freedom – the state sovereignty – to be

theirs. Marx,⁶ Popper⁷ and Berlin⁸ have all presented different versions of this criticism, while Taylor⁹ positively appraises Hegel's supposed substance-monism in an attenuated form.

American philosophers – such as Brandom,¹⁰ Pippin,¹¹ Pinkard¹² and McDowell¹³ – have set out to salvage Hegel from the criticism of being authoritarian, and have done so by socialising and historicising the *Logic*. The *Logic* does not enquire into the fundamental nature or structure of all things, but rather says something about how we conceive of things. Rather than describing the structure of *the* Concept, namely, as the basic structure of all reality, Hegel instead only proposes that in any society there are many mutually implicating concepts and norms which we take to be valid. The exact constellation of concepts is not pre-determined and given in the *Logic*, but results from a historically contingent process of reasoning. Despite the very interesting results of this proposal, the problem is that this view can hardly be reconciled with the text of Hegel's *Logic* or his many remarks on the function of the *Logic* in the real-philosophy.

The third proposed reading of the *Logic*, and the one which I will support, can be called “relation-monism”. Many interpreters have used similar terms. Horstmann calls Hegel's *Logic* a “relation-ontological monism”.¹⁴ Iber reads parts of Hegel's *Logic* as a “metaphysics of absolute relationality”,¹⁵ (Theunissen also uses the term “absolute relationality”,¹⁶ albeit

⁶ Karl Marx, ‘Aus der Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts (§§ 261-313)’ in *Marx Engels Werke*, vol 1 (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1956), pp. 201-336 (p.217).

⁷ Karl Popper, *Open Society and its Enemies*, vol. 2 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1957), pp.30ff.

⁸ Isaiah Berlin, ‘Two Concepts of Liberty’, in his *Four Essays on Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp.118-172.

⁹ For example, Taylor says that individuals are “vehicles” of cosmic spirit. Spirit, like one substance, has individuals as its accidents or, in this case, instruments. See: Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p.89.

¹⁰ Robert Brandom, *Tales of the Mighty Dead: Historical Essays in Metaphysics and Intentionality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Robert Brandom, *Reason in Philosophy. Animating Ideas* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2009).

¹¹ Robert B. Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

¹² Terry Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

¹³ John McDowell, ‘Hegel's Idealism as a Radicalization of Kant’, in *Having the World in View* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 69-89.

¹⁴ Rolf-Peter Horstmann, *Ontologie und Relationen. Hegel, Bradley, Russell und die Kontroverse über interne und externe Beziehungen* (Königstein, Ts: Athenäum, 1984), pp. 36, 104.

¹⁵ Christian Iber, *Metaphysik absoluter Relationalität. Eine Studie der beiden ersten Kapitel von Hegels Wesenslogik* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1990).

¹⁶ Theunissen, *Sein und Schein*, p. 47.

to characterise another part of Hegel's *Logic*). Henrich, Günther¹⁷ and Flach employ other expressions, such as “self-relation of the negative”,¹⁸ or “reflection into oneself and another”,¹⁹ to denominate the relational character of the *Logic*. There is certainly no unified “relation-ontological” school of interpretation. Some scholars arrive at their views by focusing on the importance of negation or reflection in Hegel's *Logic*, while others analyse his idea of organicism and subjectivity. Apart from Theunissen's very particular and critical study, motivated by his own philosophical and religious programme,²⁰ nobody has actually presented a unified and systematic interpretation of the entire *Logic* in this vein. There are, however, three statements that I take to be basic assumptions of a relation-ontological reading of the *Logic*, and which I presuppose in my own interpretation: (1) Hegel's *Logic* is an ontology, that is, an enquiry into the underlying basis of everything; (2) This basic ground of everything is a structure, not an entity or substance, for Hegel. Hegel supposes that the foundational structure of the world involves the relation between elements that form a whole. The whole is what Hegel calls the absolute and elements are what I will call finite things, simply to denote the opposite of a whole; (3) The absolute consists in a specific relation between finite things, minimally their identity, yet over the course of the *Logic*, Hegel also introduces the relation between the absolute thus conceived and finite things. I will propose that the relation of identity and difference between finite things, and between finite things and the absolute, must be understood as forms of “being with oneself in the other”, basic relations of freedom. Though other studies, particularly the work of Henrich,²¹ implicitly prepare for this conclusion, nobody has proposed my thesis to date and certainly not developed it systematically by analysing the entire *Logic*.

¹⁷ See: Gotthard Günther, *Grundzüge einer neuen Theorie des Denkens in Hegels Logik* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1987), p.ix.

¹⁸ Dieter Henrich, ‘Hegels Grundoperation. Eine Einleitung in die Wissenschaft der Logik’, in *Der Idealismus und seine Gegenwart. Festschrift für W. Marx* ed. by Ute Guzzoni, Bernhard Rang und Ludwig Siep (Hamburg: Meiner: 1976), pp. 208-230 (p.222).

¹⁹ Werner Flach, *Negation und Andersheit* (München: Reinhard Verlag, 1995), p.73.

²⁰ Theunissen, *Sein und Schein*.

²¹ Particularly: Henrich, ‘Hegels Grundoperation’, but also: Dieter Henrich, ‘Erkundung im Zugzwang. Ursprung, Leistung und Grenzen von Hegels Denken des Absoluten’, in *Das Interesse des Denkens. Hegel aus heutiger Sicht*, ed. by Wolfgang Welsch

What does a “relation-ontological” reading of the *Logic* imply for Hegel’s social theory? Two things are clear. Like the substance-monist reading, this approach accepts Hegel’s claim that the *Logic* is an ontology, that is, it attempts to describe the fundamental structure of everything. This implies that the system of right Hegel analyses in his *Philosophy of Right* is grounded on the *Logic*, and that the *Logic* is prescriptive as regards what the rational society, described in the *Philosophy of Right*, should be like. Yet, unlike substance-monism, it does not directly imply an authoritarian reading. While social structures are pre-determined by the *Logic* and prevailing social norms – as pragmatists claim – Hegel’s discussion of different possible structures of relations may well lead to a democratic (and, indeed, in my view, republican) model of the state. The absolute is seen as relational, a specific structure of relations, which means, in social terms, that it consists in a specific relation between individuals. The relation-ontological view thus allows for a non-authoritarian Hegel and is in this respect akin to the pragmatist approach. Since there are only very few proposals for social implications of a relational account of the *Logic* – notably, Günther,²² Theunissen,²³ and perhaps also Angehrn²⁴ – most of which are notoriously hard to understand, I will propose my own unified and systematic argument as to how exactly to read the *Logic* as a relation-monism, and how this works out for Hegel’s social theory.

Overview of the thesis

The structure of this thesis is as follows. In the first chapter, I present my interpretation of the *Logic* and divide the latter into four parts: one introductory part, where the topic of

and Klaus Vieweg (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2007), pp. 9-32. Dieter Henrich, ‘Andersheit und Absolutheit des Geistes’, in *Selbstverhältnisse* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2001), pp.142-172; Dieter Henrich, ‘Absoluter Geist und Logik des Endlichen’, in *Hegel in Jena*, ed. by Dieter Henrich and Klaus Düsing, Hegel-Studien Beiheft 20 (Bonn: Bouvier, 1980), 103-118.

²² Gotthard Günther, *Idee und Grundriss einer nicht-Aristotelischen Logik* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1959).

²³ See the end of his book *Sein und Schein* together with his article: Michael Theunissen, ‘Die verdrängte Intersubjektivität in Hegels Philosophie des Rechts’, in *Hegels Philosophie des Rechts. Die Theorie der Rechtsformen und ihre Logik*, ed. by Dieter Henrich and Rolf-Peter Horstmann (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980), p.317-381.

²⁴ Emil Angehrn, *Freiheit und System bei Hegel* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977).

“being with oneself in the other” first arises, and three parts corresponding to the rest of the *Logic of Being* and the other two books of the *Logic*. In chapters 2 to 5, I analyse the introduction and the three sections of the *Philosophy of Right* in parallel with these four divisions. My basic argument is that in the introduction to the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel introduces “being with oneself in the other” in parallel to the beginning of the *Logic*. Abstract Right, Morality, and Ethical Life, develop different forms of freedom, that is, different versions of this basic thought. Moreover, they resemble the *Logic of Being*, the *Logic of Essence* and the *Logic of the Concept*, respectively. In the sixth and final chapter, I read Hegel’s *Philosophy of History* with help of the *Logic*, supposing that each historical state presents a specific form of freedom or “being with oneself in the other”, albeit only the freedom of the state itself.

In the first chapter, I present my interpretation of the *Logic*. My key claims in this part are as follows. Firstly, the *Logic* enquires into the basic structure underlying all reality, and Hegel proposes that this structure must involve the relation between a whole and related elements, the absolute and finite things. Secondly, already at the beginning of the *Logic*, Hegel concludes that the relation between finite things and their relation to the absolute must be one of identity and difference, and this is the basic form of “being with oneself in the other”. Throughout the *Logic*, I will argue, Hegel therefore develops successive and improving versions of this basic relation: In the *Logic of Being*, “being with oneself in the other” takes the form of completely separate finite entities that are also identical – literally one and the same – in which respect they are absolute. This conception is most prominently described in the One and the Many. In the *Logic of Essence*, the absolute Essence is conceived as “being with oneself in the other” in the sense of the pure relation of identity and difference underlying the self-identity and differences between finite things. Since finite things are supposed to be “with themselves in the other”, namely, other finite things, and the absolute as their source is also “with itself” or expressed in them, this basic

relation appears three times here – once as the source of the relations of finite things; again as the relation between finite things; and lastly as the overreaching relation between the source and finite things. In the *Logic of the Concept*, Hegel presents the absolute as an organic whole that is nothing but the concrete interrelation of its elements, thus “with itself” in relation to them. Finite things are also “with themselves” in other finite things and in the absolute, in that (like organs) they can only truly have their particular character in relation to the other organs within the organism.

The second chapter serves to show how Hegel creates the formula “being with oneself in the other”, as well as why he believes it characterises true freedom. I do this by analysing in detail how Hegel introduces free willing in paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 in the introduction of the *Philosophy of Right*, and explicating it in parallel to the beginning of the *Logic of Being*. The main point here is that Hegel first proposes two contradictory definitions of free willing – once as pure self-relation, and again as pure other-relation – which he then integrates into the third and correct definition which is “being with oneself in the other”. I will show that Hegel models these three elements on Being, Finitude, and Being-for-Oneself, in the *Logic*. Hegel’s basic argument is that freedom not only requires a relation of identity, such that my acts and thoughts are mine, but also requires determinacy, namely, that I will something specific which means wanting to do something to someone or something else, other than me, the I or logical subject wanting it. As Hegel argues also in Finitude in the *Logic*, it is thus the relation to another that makes me determinate and defines me. The problem is that this contradicts my self-determination – only me defining myself – unless the other can somehow be integrated into my own willing. This is the (still very abstract) solution that Hegel proposes in the formula “being with oneself in the other”. It is only over the course of the *Philosophy of Right* and the *Logic*, I will argue, that Hegel will offer different accounts of how this initial sketch of a solution can actually be enacted.

Chapters 3 to 5 analyse the sections of the *Philosophy of Right* in parallel with the three books of Hegel's *Logic*. In chapter 3, I analyse abstract Right with the help of the Logic of Being. One key proposition is that persons are "with themselves in the other", in a manner similar to that of the One and the Many in the Logic of Being. More precisely, Hegel supposes that a person must be free in the sense of logical Infinity – i.e. the pure relation only to oneself. And he concludes, as in the *Logic*, that such a form of freedom can only be realised in the relation to identical and yet separate others. The person shall be infinitely free, free to own anything, not free in the finite sense of doing what she wants to her own limited property. The person can only be free in this sense if everything is the property of a person, and if all those persons are something she could also be; all other persons are basically nothing but an ideal instance of herself, as in the One and the Many. Their property only counts as an unactualised aspect of her, or an aspect of her that is distinguished from her, but not a real other or limit to her will. Persons are thus "with themselves" in each other in the sense that each one necessarily takes the other persons only as a copy of herself.

In chapter 4, I analyse Morality in parallel to the Logic of Essence. The form of free willing is conceived as the Essence of the wills of individuals and yet also an ought, that is, a demand which they may fail to realise. Essence and the form of free willing is the mere idea of self-relation, of "being with oneself" in one's expression, and it is supposed to underlie all free self-relation of individuals: when their acts are theirs, they instantiate the form of free willing, since they are "with themselves" in the change they affect in the world, it belonging to them. The problem is, however, that the change they affect in the world is not only determined by the individuals' wills, but also by external circumstances. In this respect, individuals fail to realise the form of free willing, which is why it remains only an ought, a demand to be met. The solution Hegel will offer is to claim that freedom must be reconceived so that the other in her very otherness – as a distinct individual – is also part of my freedom, rather than merely a canvas on which I may express my own will.

In the fifth chapter, I read Hegel's account of Ethical Life with reference to the Logic of the Concept. In my reading, the family resembles the Concept, while civil society resembles Objectivity, and the state resembles the Idea. It is this section of the *Philosophy of Right*, together with Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, that I consider crucial for assessing whether Hegel's argument is authoritarian. My key proposition is that the Concept and family can still be understood as potentially authoritarian, but that the Idea and the state cannot. In the family, individuals are supposed to be "with themselves" in relation to other family members, inasmuch as they affirm them in what they inherently are (a mother can only be a mother in relation to a child). This is similar to a whole with the form of the Concept, in which, Hegel proposes, each related element (like an organ) is only what it is by virtue of its relation to the other elements. The problem is that what and how individuals internally want to be – how the woman wants to be a mother – may not coincide with the role of differentiation established within the whole or family. Hegel does not consider this potential problem in the case of the family, but he is aware of the problem. Hegel's awareness is evident in the state and Idea, where he introduces the moment of reflection, the reflection of the related elements on the whole, their differentiated relation. Individuals can only be truly "with themselves" in society, affirmed in their particular characters and interests in their social roles and relation to others, if they can collectively influence how those roles interconnect. This is the function of the estates assembly in my reading.

In the sixth and final chapter, I read Hegel's *Philosophy of History* in parallel to the end of the Logic of Essence and the entire Logic of the Concept. Hegel conceives historical states as instantiations of free spirit. Even in early state forms, the state represented by the government is "with itself" in its citizens, whereupon they follow its laws. The state in the broad sense of the entire society is free and determines itself, its own structure. This conception of freedom underlying the *Philosophy of History* seems to have an authoritarian tendency, as well as appearing anti-individualistic. Comparing China and India to different

aspects of Substance, the Greek polis to the Concept, the Roman Empire to Objectivity, and Europe to the Idea, I will, however, show that the state can only truly be free and self-conscious, with spirit only truly existing and capable of being actualised, if individuals are also free. The state must exist within the individuals' own minds and their convictions; it must be the organic relation between them, and its self-consciousness ultimately means that they collectively oversee their own relations. Over the course of history, as Hegel sees it, individuals thus come to be "with themselves" in the state, in that they freely and rationally agree with its laws, can express their own particular interests and individual thoughts within it, and can participate in law-making, collectively structuring their own society according to a shared ideal.

Chapter 1

Hegel's *Logic* as a theory of freedom

In this chapter I will show that “being with oneself in the other” is not only Hegel’s famous definition of freedom, but also the key topic of his entire *Logic*. The point is not that Hegel explicitly develops a theory of freedom in his *Logic*.²⁵ Rather, Hegel’s *Logic* is an ontological enquiry into the structure of finite things and the absolute, and their interrelation. Already at the beginning of the *Logic*, Hegel proposes that finite things and the absolute must necessarily be integrated in the way that things are “with themselves” in other things, and the absolute is “with itself” in them, and vice versa. The entire remainder of the *Logic* presents different versions of this basic thought, concretising how exactly this requirement could be met. In other words, the *Logic* enquires into what exact relational structure finite things and the absolute must display in order for one to claim that each is “with itself” in its respective other. The aim of this PhD is to specify what this obscure formula – namely, “being with oneself in the other” – means for Hegel, and the different forms in which this formula appears in Hegel’s work. Since “being with oneself in the other” is Hegel’s definition of freedom and the topic of his *Philosophy of Right*, I will subsequently read the three sections of the *Philosophy of Right* as describing three distinct forms of Hegel’s basic formula for freedom, a formula that can be explicated by means of the *Logic*. In the last chapter I will analyse freedom as Hegel presents it in his *Philosophy of History* and read it in parallel to the *Logic*. Even though it is quite clear that each section of the *Philosophy of Right* and each historical state describes a form of freedom for Hegel, as yet nobody has presented each one as a different form of “being with oneself in the other”, and much less proposed that they are based on Hegel’s *Logic*.

²⁵ He does call the *Logic* the “science of freedom” though, in the 1817 Encyclopaedia (E1,17 §5).

My presentation will proceed as follows: The first and introductory part (I) starts with a brief characterisation of the ontological project Hegel pursues in the *Logic* (I.1), followed by a general explanation of why and how “being with oneself in the other” can be a topic of his *Logic* (I.2). In the main part of the chapter (II) I will first show how the basic idea of “being with oneself in the other” emerges at the beginning of the *Logic* (II.1), and then give an overview of the entire *Science of Logic* drawing attention to the different forms of “being with oneself in the other” presented in it (II.2-4).

I will not take great pains to defend the idea that Hegel’s *Logic* is indeed an ontology,²⁶ since the burden of proof clearly lies with those who deny that it is.²⁷ Besides Hegel’s abundant references to “metaphysics” (WL1 16/27, 61/63) and to the “objective existence” of thought determinations (E1 §86A; WL1 45/51), his critique of a merely “subjective Idealism” (E1 §45A) and the use he makes of the *Logic* in the real-philosophy, there is no avoiding the fact that Hegel lacks a theory of language and is scornful of epistemology. These are two alternative interpretations on offer. Hegel’s *Logic* is an ontology in the sense of an enquiry into what constitutes the basis of all reality – not in a looser, more modern sense of an enquiry into the basic categories we use to conceive reality.²⁸ Explaining Hegel’s *Logic* with help of Kant is thus certainly a useful exercise, but one has to admit, as does Houlgate,²⁹ that the Kantian categories can only have an objective sense for Hegel, denoting basic foundational structures of reality. Hegel explicitly rejects the “essentially

²⁶ The vast majority of German interpreters read the *Science of Logic* as an ontology, or at least as Hegel’s (possibly failed) attempt at an ontology. See, for example: Dieter Henrich, ‘Formen der Negation in Hegels Logik’, in *Dialektik in der Philosophie Hegels*, ed. by R.-P. Horstmann (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978), pp.213-229 (p.246); Rolf-Peter Horstmann, *Wahrheit aus dem Begriff: Eine Einführung in Hegel* (Anton Hain: Frankfurt a.M., 1990), pp.18ff. Also some English-speaking scholars read the *Logic* as an ontology, see for example: Frederick Beiser, *Hegel* (New York: 2005), pp.53ff. Stephen Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel’s Logic* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2006), pp. 115ff. Also, even though more indirectly: John Burbidge, *The Logic of Hegel’s Logic. An Introduction* (Peterborough, ON, Canada: Broadview Press, 2006), pp. 24f, 35. For Hegel as a metaphysician, see: Frederick Beiser, ‘Hegel, a non-metaphysician? A Polemic’, *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, 32 (1995), pp. 1-13. And more recently: Robert Stern, *Hegelian Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

²⁷ This so called non-metaphysical view was first prominently proposed by Hartmann and then picked up upon and further developed by American scholars such as Brandom, Pippin and Pinkard. Hartmann’s basic proposition is that Hegel’s *Logic* is a categorical theory analysing concepts that structure the world as it is perceived by us, the categorical structure of a world given to us by experience. See: Klaus Hartmann, ‘Hegel: A Non-Metaphysical View’, in *Hegel. A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Alasdair MacIntyre (Garden City, NY: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), pp. 101-124.

²⁸ Rolf-Peter Horstmann distinguishes between ontology in the sense of an analysis of our most basic categories, as in Kant, and ontology as an enquiry into ‘what really exists’, the true and foundational reality. I agree with Horstmann that Hegel’s *Logic* is an ontology in the second sense. See: Horstmann, *Wahrheit aus dem Begriff*, p.20.

²⁹ See: Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel’s Logic*, p.140.

subjective meaning” (WL1 45/51) which Kant attributes to the categories, and Hegel denies that the content of knowledge is a “subjective product, enclosed in self-consciousness” (E1,17 §5). What Hegel expounds in the *Logic* is the actual basic structure of things, not the subjective way human beings cognize them.

I. Introducing Hegel’s logical-ontological project

Hegelian metaphysics

Hegel claims that “the logical determinations in general, not just those of being, may be looked upon as definitions of the absolute” (E1 §85).³⁰ The *Logic* presents a succession of definitions of the absolute and, since Hegel directly proposes that the absolute cannot exist by itself, that is, without finite things, he also offers corresponding definitions of finite things. The absolute is always the absolute of all finite things defined in a specific way and Hegel analyses pairs – such as Being and Determinate Being, the Infinite and the Finite, the one One and the many Ones, Essence and Appearances, and so on. Having said this, it must be noted that Hegel should not be misunderstood as presupposing some given entity called the absolute, which he tries to define.³¹ Rather, Hegel enquires into the most basic reality, the ground of all things. At the beginning of the *Logic*, he encounters the question of whether there is only one or many such grounds. If it were only one, it would be absolute; if not, it would be finite. The terms – “the absolute” and “finite things” – should thus not be understood as referring to specific given entities about which Hegel wants to know

³⁰ Hegel also says: “Hence it may well be said that every beginning must be made with the absolute, just as all advance is merely the exposition of it” (WL2 555/829).

³¹ I thus agree with Stephen Houlgate that, since Hegel tries to pursue a presuppositionless science, he cannot be presupposing that there is an absolute or finite things whose nature he wants to analyse in the *Logic* (See: Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel’s Logic*, p.122). Yet, I believe there is another way of understanding what Hegel means by the absolute in the *Logic*. The absolute and finite things are merely relative and generic terms referring to a whole and its elements, terms Hegel comes up with when describing different possible ontological structures of the world. Throughout the *Logic*, Hegel calls the first aspect “the absolute”. The second aspect is not consistently called finite things, but I will do so for the sake of clarity. In the present work, finite things denotes simply the opposite of the absolute, something that is not all-encompassing, one and only, but rather limited and beside others.

something. They are rather only relative and generic terms, referring very generally to a whole and something that is not a whole, something limited that exists beside others. Since Hegel concludes already at the beginning of the *Logic* that the foundation of all reality must be some structure that involves a whole and elements, or, an absolute and finite things, it is clear that those terms are applicable throughout the *Logic*.

Hegel states that the first two books of his *Logic* take the place of “that part of this metaphysics which was supposed to investigate the nature of the ens in general” (WL1 61/63), i.e. the place of “ontology” (WL1 61/63).³² Hegel is thus saying that the *Logic* is an enquiry into the foundation of all reality. That he does not explicitly define the third and last book of the *Logic* as an ontology does not mean that it is not also an enquiry into the ontological basis of everything. Rather, Hegel wants to point to a particularity of his own system, which sets him apart from traditional metaphysics and ontology. In his *Science of Logic*, Hegel tries to unite traditional ontology with the modern theory of subjectivity as put forward by Kant and Fichte. In the last book of the *Logic*, Hegel reaches the conclusion that the ontological foundation of all reality must be subjectivity itself. Subjectivity, in so far as it is discussed in Hegel’s *Logic*, thus only refers to a complex structure, a specific relation between the absolute and finite things, which is revealed as the true basis of all reality.³³ As such, Hegel fits squarely into the tradition from Fichte to Schelling, as he reads the structure of reason as foundational of all reality, rather than a merely epistemological claim about how finite (human) beings must cognize. Unlike Fichte, Hegel does not start his *Logic* with the “absolute I” out of which all finite things issue, but instead proceeds from Being and Nothing, introducing subjectivity only as the concretisation of a very basic ontological

³² Traditionally, the distinction is made between general metaphysics or ontology, which is the theory of the general nature of being or everything that is, and special metaphysics. Special metaphysics deals with the soul, the world or nature, and God. A few lines later, after stating that at least parts of his *Logic* constitute an ontology, Hegel says that the first two books of the *Logic* also contain the rest of metaphysics, i.e. an enquiry into the soul, world and God. However, he says, his *Logic* analyses these topics only as “forms free from those substrata, from the subjects of figurative conception” (WL1 61/64). The *Logic* does not ask: ‘What is the nature of the soul?’, but rather it analyses the different basic structures of all finite things and the absolute. It is thus clear that the basic structure of the soul is also discussed, even though Hegel does not explicitly mention it.

³³ This is not my original insight, but a point made by many scholars. See for example: Horstmann, *Wahrheit aus dem Begriff*, p.59ff.

constellation. Due to his ideal of a presuppositionless science, Hegel cannot presuppose subjectivity as something prior and given.³⁴ This explains why he begins with the simplest possible ontological thought, namely, Being, and then shows that this thought must be combined with other thoughts until the point at which you reach the conception of subjectivity.³⁵

What enables Hegel to unite ontology with the theory of subjectivity is, in my view, his ontology of relations or absolute form. Horstmann calls this “relation-ontological monism”.³⁶ Hegel presupposes, as Iber puts it, that “reality, be it spiritual or natural reality, is essentially structured by relations of form (Formverhältnisse), which are in turn graspable according to the formalities of our thought structures.”³⁷ The term “structure” is very fitting and is often used to explain what Hegel takes to be the ontological basis of reality.³⁸ Hegel thus does not enquire into the absolute and finite things in terms of asking what they truly are, but rather by attempting to understand the true and basic, underlying structure, which involves a relation between the absolute and finite things. Since those structures can be analysed by means of our logical thinking – not because they stem from us, but inversely because our reason is one subsequent realisation of these structures – his ontological enquiry takes the form of a logic, i.e. a science of thought. The *Science of Logic* thus proposes a succession of possible constellations³⁹ of the absolute and finite things. One key motivation for introducing subjectivity into his ontological theory is Hegel’s idea of an absolute form – without any external matter or content; that is, the demand that everything

³⁴ Cf. Christian Iber, ‘Was will Hegel eigentlich mit seiner Logik? Kleine Einführung in Hegels Logik’, in *Hegels Seinslogik. Interpretationen und Perspektiven*, ed. by Andreas Arndt und Christian Iber (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000), pp.13-32 (p.29).

³⁵ As Düsing points out, Hegel avoids presupposing an absolute subject by “explicating pure subjectivity as the first principle of the Logic within the Logic”. See: Klaus Düsing: *Subjektivität und Freiheit* (Stuttgart Bad-Cannstatt, Germany: Frommann Holzboog, 2002), p.164.

³⁶ Horstmann, *Ontologie und Relationen*, pp. 36, 104.

³⁷ Iber, ‘Was will Hegel eigentlich mit seiner Logik?’, p.15.

³⁸ Gotthard Günther says, for example, “differences in being are reflected in the logic as differences in structure”. See: Gotthard Günther, ‘Strukturelle Minimalbedingungen einer Theorie des objektiven Geistes als Einheit der Geschichte’, in *Beiträge zu einer operationsfähigen Dialektik*, vol. 3 (Hamburg: Meiner, 1980), pp.136-182 (p.140).

³⁹ I use the term constellation without any connection to the Adornian use of it. Constellation should be taken to mean a complex structure of relations, which in the case of Hegel – and very much in contrast to Adorno – form a singular whole.

shall be part of a web of relations beside which nothing else exists.⁴⁰ Hegel rejects Kant's idea of a thing-in-itself that affects our senses and gives us the content of intuitions. Abstracting from this element of Kant's thought, Hegel is thus left with subjectivity or reason as a complex structure of relations within which (thought) objects are distinguished, posited as existing independently from reason and yet completely contained within it.

What remains to be established is the status of the different constellations Hegel proposes in the *Logic* and how they are, for Hegel, at the basis of real things. Hegel refers to constellations which occur later in the book as "truer definitions of the absolute" (E1 §87), and he insists that subsequent constellations contain earlier ones. I am unable to analyse in detail Hegel's conception of truth, but it may be said that conceptions that occur later in the *Logic* are more coherent and complex, since they contain preceding ones, as well as being at the basis of more of the real world. When presenting Quantity, which is an early conception of the absolute and things, Hegel says: "Quantity is, in any case a stage of the Idea, and it must be accorded its due as such, first as a logical category, and then in the world of objects, both natural and spiritual" (E1 §99A). Quantity is a "stage" or element of what Hegel will discover to be the final and true ontological structure of reality, namely, the Idea. It thus does have some validity both as a logical structure and as the basis for the "world of objects". Yet, Hegel continues, "here again a distinction emerges at once, namely, that determinations of magnitude do not have the same importance in objects of the spiritual world as they have in objects of the natural world" (E1 §99A). This addition shows that Hegel presupposes a hierarchy of natural and spiritual entities, just as he supposes a hierarchy of logical conceptions. Simple logical constellations fully explicate certain simple things and elements of complex phenomena. In order to properly understand and determine the complete metaphysical basis of complex things we require

⁴⁰ Introducing his Concept, the first form of subjectivity, Hegel explains that it is the absolute form, the entire *Logic* being the "science of absolute form" (WL2 265/592).

more developed logical conceptions, presented later in the *Logic*. This means that while the constellations at the beginning of the *Logic* can be exemplified by a stone, as well as by a person, the later conceptions can only be applied to complex natural phenomena, organisms, and, finally, human thought, action and interaction.

“Being with oneself in the other” as a topic of Hegel’s Science of Logic

My interpretation is based on two fundamental claims. First, the entire *Science of Logic* analyses different structured relations between the absolute and finite things. Second, Hegel’s basic way of understanding these relations is “being with oneself in the other”, which is also his famous definition of freedom. “Being with oneself in the other” is a strange formulation, but it must be understood, I propose, as the relation of identity and difference to something or someone else. There is something “other”, different from myself, and yet I am with *myself* when relating to it, thus *not* with something other than me. In my view, Hegel already proposes at the beginning of the *Logic* that both the relation between finite things and their relation to the absolute must necessarily have this form of “being with oneself in the other”: they must be related to one another as different and yet also identical. The subsequent content of the *Logic* analyses different versions or concretisations of this insight.

How and why “being with oneself in the other” emerges as a topic in the *Logic* will be presented in detail in the next section, which discusses the beginning of the *Science of Logic*. For now it can be said that Hegel deems it untenable for a monist to simply deny the diversity and independent existence of things. As Arndt puts it, Hegel is concerned with “the question how to unite the finite and the absolute in such a way that both exist at the same time and neither the reality of the limited nor the reality of the inner connection, for

which the absolute at first stands, is destroyed”.⁴¹ The monist proposition that all things form one absolute, would be unconvincing if it were supposed to mean that all things are in fact one and the same simple entity, like one simple substance.⁴² Hegel therefore has to conceive the absolute in such a way that it contains finite things as diverse and independently existing – they are its “other” or opposite, and yet the absolute is somehow also present in the diverse and many things, “with itself” in relation to them. Inversely, Hegel has to conceive finite things in such a way that their distinct natures and independent existences do not contradict them all constituting one unity, one and the same absolute. Diverse things must not be swallowed up in the absolute, but must somehow be affirmed in their own independent and manifold characters by their belonging to the one absolute, be “with themselves” in it, even though the one absolute is, per se, their opposite.

The minimal requirement for a convincing conception of the absolute is thus the following: Finite things cannot simply be the one absolute, but they must also be distinct from it, many and independent. Finite things must be both identical and different to the absolute,⁴³ or, in other words, the absolute must be “with itself in its other”, namely, the finite many, diverse things. Inversely, as regards finite things, Hegel needs to show that their own particular natures and their independent existences are somehow contained in the absolute. That finite things belong to the absolute cannot be a covert way of claiming they are fundamentally all the same, distinct but only as dependent moments within the absolute. Hegel wants to think that finite things have their own specific natures and exist independently and, nevertheless, that they also belong to the absolute. Indeed, they are affirmed in their own characteristics by belonging to the absolute.

⁴¹ Andreas Arndt, *Dialektik und Reflexion. Zur Struktur des Vernunftbegriffs* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1994), p.172.

⁴² In this case, Hegel would have the problem of explaining why they seem to be many after all, and the appearance of them being many would remain outside the absolute, making it the negative of things and thus exactly not absolute or all-encompassing.

⁴³ Dieter Henrich offers a detailed and very interesting analysis of this exact relation in: Henrich, ‘Erkundung im Zugzwang’, p.18.

This is certainly not an easy task. What enables Hegel to make this claim is his proposition that finite things are constituted by relations. More precisely, Hegel supposes that it is the relation to other finite things that makes them distinct and specific, while it is their self-relation which constitutes their independent existence. The first thought is called determinate negation, and means that it is only the distinguishing from other things, that is, the distinguishing relation between them, that makes this thing what it is. A liquid is liquid because it is not a solid. The second thought is that things remain the same in all their aspects (and over time); they are self-identical or self-related, and this constitutes their independent existence. Over the course of the *Logic*, Hegel progressively incorporates ever more of these relations between things into the conception of the absolute. The absolute comes to be the total distinguishing relation between things – making them distinct – as well as the source and expression of their self-relation or independent existence. As in the case of an organism, the other-relation of things – the relation between the organs – comes to affirm their own internal nature, and is thus a self-relation – one organ being with itself in the other – and the absolute, the organic whole, which is also identical to and distinct from the many, distinct organs – with itself in them.

It is worth noting that one inspiration for Hegel's relational argument, and particularly the last and complete form of the absolute, is a Kantian theory of subjectivity,⁴⁴ read, however, in an ontological way: The idea that the independent existence of things consists in a self-relation is clearly present in Kant when he proposes, in the transcendental deduction, that the subject thinks its objects of thought as independent objects – i.e. entities that are independent from it – because it synthesises or identifies many intuitions as all being part of one object. In other words, it is the identifying relation between the many aspects of things that makes them independent objects – i.e. objects that are thought to be

⁴⁴ Hegel makes ample reference to Kant's transcendental deduction when expounding the structure of his Concept (WL2 254ff./584ff.) and there are several excellent studies on how Hegel appropriates Kant's transcendental deduction, most notably: Klaus Düsing, *Das Problem der Subjektivität in Hegels Logik*. Hegel-Studien Beiheft 15 (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1995), pp. 109 ff., 233ff. And: Düsing: *Subjektivität und Freiheit*, p.162. This is, however, my own interpretation.

independent from the subject. The differences between many thought objects also derive from them being distinguished from one another by the subject. But Hegel does not presuppose a subject that does the distinguishing and identifying, nor, in fact, does he understand subjectivity as an epistemological category. Subjectivity is, for Hegel, nothing but the whole, the complex relation of all things, which can nevertheless be distinguished from them, just as the subject is identical to and yet distinguished from the complete content of its thought. There is thus not only a relation of identity and difference between finite things, but also between the whole and finite things.

Nobody has yet offered or systematically expounded my proposed interpretation, namely, that the *Logic* presents a series of versions of “being with oneself in the other”, each of which characterises a specific relation between things and between them and the absolute. There are many individual studies interpreting specific categories or parts of Hegel’s *Logic* in a relation-ontological manner. Such works are those conducted by scholars such as Iber, Schick, Arndt, Horstmann, and Henrich, which I consult where possible.⁴⁵ Some scholars, most notably Henrich but also Günther and Flach, have even made the general proposition that the entire *Logic* discusses one and the same relational topic.⁴⁶ Henrich calls it “self-referential double negation”,⁴⁷ or the “doubling of the self-relation of negation”,⁴⁸ while Flach and Günther both speak of “the immanent reflection of the reflection into oneself and the reflection into another”.⁴⁹ This second formulation in particular clearly acknowledges what I have pointed out, namely, that there is not only a relation of identity

⁴⁵ Interestingly, also George di Giovanni in his recent translation of the *Science of Logic* remarks upon the key importance of relations in the *Logic* and the changing character they acquire over the course of the book. DiGiovanni uses different English words to express the different character of the relations discussed. I follow the opposite route, always using the same word, namely relations, and adding an explanation as to how exactly things and the absolute are thought to be related in each passage. See: George di Giovanni, ‘Translator’s Note’, in Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Science of Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. lxiii-lxiv, (p.lxviii).

⁴⁶ Also Horstmann’s article implies that there is one relational topic of the entire *Logic*, namely self-relation, which contains the “sublation of otherness” (p.196), see: Rolf-Peter Horstmann, ‘Hegel über Unendlichkeit, Substanz und Subjekt. Eine Fallstudie zur Rolle der Logik in Hegels System’, *Internationales Jahrbuch des Deutschen Idealismus. Konzepte der Rationalität*, 1 (2003), pp. 183-200.

⁴⁷ Henrich, ‘Hegels Grundoperation’, p.216.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.222.

⁴⁹ This formulation stems from: Flach, *Negation und Andersheit*, p.73. On p. 75 he says this is the “basic topic of Hegel’s philosophy“, containing the “whole complexity of Hegel’s absolute idealism”.

and difference (between finite things), but also another relation overreaching this first, a relation to this relation (the relation of the absolute to all things). Günther points to this triadic structure, when he says: “The reflection into itself of the reflection into oneself and another describes the basic systematic relation between Being-different (Anderessein) and Being-within-Oneself (Insichsein) which is overreached by a second form of Being-within-onese (Insichsein)”.⁵⁰ The structure described by these scholars is the same one I intend to pursue with the help of the formula “being with oneself in the other”. It is the relation of difference and identity between two entities and their difference and identity to a third, namely, the complete structure or whole of which they are both parts.⁵¹

These scholars do not, however, expound in detail how all different stages of the *Logic* present versions of this basic form, nor do they reformulate this relational topic of the *Logic* as referring to relations between things, and between them and the absolute that have the form of “being with oneself in the other”. Following Hegel’s usage in some passages, they tend to speak of relations without anything that is being related. But Hegel himself speaks of relations between entities, which can clearly be identified as either a specific conception of the absolute or of finite things. He even employs the formula “being with oneself in the other” to describe their relation in the last book of the *Logic*. He writes that the absolute, conceived as an organic whole, “overreaches its other, but not as something violent, but as something that is in the other calm and with itself” (WL2 277/603). That Hegel uses the formula “being with oneself in the other” only at the end of the *Logic* is not surprising and does not disprove my claim. It is typical for Hegel’s way of presentation that the structure he analyses is only fully grasped at the end of his exposition. In preceding parts, Hegel analyses more limited and inconsistent forms of the same relation, which he describes in a way that clearly denotes a similar circumstance. In the *Logic of Being*, for example, Hegel

⁵⁰ Günther, *Grundzüge einer neuen Theorie des Denkens in Hegels Logik*, p. ix.

⁵¹ In my view, this is basically the structure of dialectics. To prove this claim I would, however, need to make a more detailed analysis of the function and ontological status of dialectics in Hegel’s system, which I am unable to do here.

speaks of “the identical relation of the One in the other One to itself” (VLM 96). In the *Logic of Essence*, Hegel says about the absolute conceived as Essence: “Essence [...] is relation to itself only by being relation to another” (E1 §112). And about finite things he writes that they are related to other things and yet “return into themselves” (WL2 150/500). Finite things “shine into another” and at the same time “reflect into themselves” (VL 148). These formulations also suggest a relation of identity and difference between finite things, as well as between them and the absolute. I therefore read them as primitive forms of “being with oneself in the other”.

II. An overview of Hegel’s *Science of Logic*

In this overview I present the *Logic* in four sections that reflect what I take to be the key steps in Hegel’s discussion of “being with oneself in the other”. In the first section (section 1), I show how self- and other-relation, identity and difference, are introduced as topics of the *Logic*, and why Hegel proposes that both must be integrated. The integration of self- and other-relation is the basic idea expressed in the formula “being with oneself in the other”, meaning that the relation to something other is also a relation to oneself. Hegel develops this line of reasoning in the first section of the *Logic of Being*, namely, Quality, up to Being-for-Oneself. In the second section (section 2), I present the “One and the Many”, which I take to be the first time Hegel elaborates on “being with oneself in the other” as a relation between things, and between them and the absolute. The One and the Many is a conception presented at the transition to the middle section of the *Logic of Being*, namely, Quantity, and encapsulates many of the key aspects of that section. In the third section (section 3), I present how “being with oneself in the other” is present in the *Logic of Essence*, namely, as a relation to an independent other whose independence is also denied. In this section, I will focus on the chapters “Essence as reflection into itself”,

describing the structure of the absolute conceived as Essence, and on the middle section entitled Appearance where finite things are described as Appearances. In the last section (section 4), I present the Logic of the Concept and how the absolute conceived as the Concept must be understood similarly to an organism. Hegel thinks the absolute as a whole within which finite things are affirmed in their own nature by relating to other things – similarly, each organ is only truly this organ because of its connection to the other organs. Finite things are therefore with themselves in the other things, and also in the absolute which is nothing but the organic relation between them. In this last section, I will primarily analyse the Concept, as described in the first section of the Logic of the Concept, parts of the preceding and succeeding sections where necessary and Hegel's conception of the Idea, the last and complete structure of the absolute.

The beginning of the Logic: integrating self- and other-relation

The beginning of the *Logic* can be read as answering the fundamental ontological question of the first ground of everything being either one or many. Put another way, could the basic ontological reality be either purely the absolute or purely finite things? Since Hegel does not analyse material entities in the *Logic*, but merely formal structures, the question takes the form of whether identity or difference is prior. In fact, I will show, when Hegel introduces Being, he not only describes it as a specific conception of the absolute, but also as pure identity or self-relation; for their definition as Something, Determinate Beings, the Finite, Hegel proposes that finite things consist in nothing but their difference to other things or other-relations.⁵² As already mentioned above, Hegel will subsequently reach the conclusion that both the absolute and finite things must contain identity and difference, be related to

⁵² Henrich also remarks that Hegel proposes a finite thing, as a something, *is* a negation, i.e. a relation of difference. See: Henrich, 'Formen der Negation in Hegels Logik', p.247.

both themselves and to something other than them, which leads to the idea of “being with oneself in the other”, as I will show.

Hegel’s famous first proposition in the *Logic* is that the basic reality and root of everything is Being. As proposed by Parmenides,⁵³ Being certainly means *that* something is, you could say, pure *that*-ness or pure presence, which Hegel considers as the presence (of something) in thought, as well as its presence in the world. When Hegel describes Being as “pure immediacy” (E1 §86), he also means the bare idea of givenness, that something is simply there, without any history of where it came from or context within which it must be understood, or relations to other things. Hegel’s main interest is not, however, this idea of pure presence – he will indeed argue that pure presence without anything that is present is pure absence or Nothing. Rather, Hegel wants to describe this pure presence and find its defining characteristics. He proposes, for one thing, that presence is absolute. Presence is one and the same presence throughout, and there is supposed to be nothing else but presence. Hegel says: “Being [...] has no difference within itself nor outwardly” (WL1 82/82). If Being is the ultimate reality and contains no differences, this means that there are no distinct finite things and Being is absolute, since all that there is is Being. Hegel says: “The absolute is Being” (E1 §86). Notably, he does not distinguish between it being absolute, having the characteristic of being absolute, and the absolute being it. He does not distinguish between “absolute” as an adjective and “the absolute” as a noun. This is certainly difficult for, or at least unfamiliar to, the modern reader. However, it is typical for Hegel, primarily because he does not analyse material entities in the *Logic*, but rather basic structures, and he regards those structures as constitutive of what things are. Additionally, it is the particularity of the first section of the Logic of Being in that Hegel supposes there to be no distinction between things and their properties. If Being displays the structural

⁵³ In his lecture on the History of Philosophy, Hegel cites Parmenides saying: “But the truth is only the IS” (VGPI 288).

characteristic of being one and undifferentiated, then it is one undifferentiated absolute entity. Hegel also describes Being as “pure indeterminacy and emptiness” (WL1 82/82).

The crux of Hegel’s analysis of the absolute conceived as Being is that he turns what Being lacks into a positive quality. This is important for two reasons. Firstly, because otherwise Being would only be the negative of something else – difference, determinacy, content – and thus not the first and simplest category – i.e. it being derived from its opposite. Secondly, because Being would lack any positive characteristic that can be preserved in later categories. How Hegel turns what Being *is not* into a positive quality is most clearly pronounced in the terms “undifferentiatedness” and “immediacy”. Undifferentiatedness put positively means identity. Since, at this stage, there are not several entities that could be claimed identical, Being is identical to itself. Hegel says Being is “equal to itself”, but he also calls it “the thoroughly identical and affirmative” (E1 §88A), “what is identical to itself” (E1 §88A). Immediacy is another characteristic of Being, and means literally non-mediatedness. Being is not mediated by or related to anything else, since there is supposed to be nothing but pure Being. It has “no relation to another” (WL1 98/94) as Hegel puts it. That Being is not related to anything else turns into it being only related to itself. Hegel compares Being to the Fichtian “I=I” (E1 §86) and remarks in a lecture: “Pure Being is the pure relation to itself” (VLM 73). Retrospectively, describing how Being is present in a later conception of finite things, he also calls Being “the simple relation to itself” (E1 §96A).⁵⁴

Hegel’s problem with Being is that it is completely empty, either because there is nothing that is, or because Being is a pure self-relation without any distinguishable aspects that are being related. While we expect Being to be “absolute riches”, it is instead “absolute poverty” (E1 §87A), i.e. nothing positive. In order to be something positive, “fullness” (E1

⁵⁴ Immediacy and Being in the sense of something simply being given, without any internal differentiation or relation to other things retains this meaning of self-relation through the entire *Logic*: things have an independent Being, are simply given, unrelated and “indifferent” to other things, because they are self-related.

§87A) – the whole of everything, rather than Nothing – the absolute needs finite things of which it can later be the whole,⁵⁵ or whose identity it can be.

2. Hegel introduces a first conception of finite things in the chapter entitled *Determinate Being*. *Determinate Being* means a *specific* being. At first, Hegel defines it as *Something* that is distinct from *Another*, and then explicitly as the *Finite*. Analysing singular things, Hegel implicitly proposes that the plurality of distinct finite things is the fundamental ontological reality – i.e. things cannot be reduced to one and the same absolute. Hegel introduces finite things by making two basic assumptions about them. First, he supposes in the whole first section of the *Logic* called *Quality* that there is no distinction between a thing and its quality: “Something is what it is by virtue of its quality, and if it loses its quality it ceases to be what it is” (E1 §90A). What makes something this specific thing is its quality; it is individuated by it. If the quality is lost, it stops being this specific thing and turns into something else. Finite things conceived as *Determinate Beings* are nothing but being-this-specific-way, a specific something, not something that has specific qualities. The second proposition Hegel makes is that a thing can only be this specific way by not being another way, using a thought he believes to come from Spinoza: “The basis of all determination is negation (*omnis determinatio est negatio*)” (E1 §91). Since each thing is taken to be identical to its quality, each thing is necessarily differentiated from or negatively related to other things that are different from it. Hegel says this most explicitly in the 1817 version of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*: “Quality is therefore in itself relation to another” (E1,17 §42). Each thing is this specific way that defines it – say, a fluid being liquid – only in so far as it is distinguished from another thing that has another quality. A fluid is nothing but a non-solid.

This definition is problematic for Hegel.⁵⁶ He set out to define, as Guyer puts it, “originally distinct, finite singulars”,⁵⁷ but it turns out that things are in fact not independent singulars,

⁵⁵ Cf. Henrich, ‘*Andersheit und Absolutheit des Geistes*’, p.147.

but that they are what they are only because of their relation to other things. If a finite thing is what it is because of its quality, and this quality is the negation of another thing, then the singular, supposedly unrelated thing only consists in not being the other thing. It is completely defined by what it is not. Hegel discusses this problem, noting that something is defined by its “limit”, by what it is not. “Its quality is its limit” (WL1 139/129). “The limit is on the one hand the reality of determinate being and on the other hand its negation” (E1 §92A). What makes the thing what it is, is not it, but rather its opposite, the other thing. In an earlier passage Hegel claims that the thing has “its existence not in itself”, but in “its own limits, its relation to another” (WL1 121/114). For Hegel, this is the hallmark of Finitude, namely, that finite things are, contradictorily, nothing but their own limit or end (WL2 139/129).

3. As a solution to the problem of Finitude, Hegel proposes that finite things must be more than their qualities and differences to other things. This “more” is normally conceived as a substrate, independent from and prior to the qualities, to which they are externally added. This is implicit in expressions such as: the thing has qualities. Hegel’s first proposition is, on the contrary, that the thing must be understood as nothing but the negation of the qualities; the thing is what is supposed to be beyond the qualities, it not being them. The thing that has the properties only emerges because we suppose that the properties cannot be all there is to this thing. As Hegel puts it, “[Something] must in its own self be related to the limit as something which is not” (WL1 143/132). The limit, as mentioned above, refers

⁵⁶ Paul Guyer proposes that the contradiction in Determinate Being is one between the referential character of concepts and our implicit presupposition that our concepts apply to things as “originally distinct, finite singulars (ursprünglich unterschiedene endliche Einzelne)”, p.232, see reference below. Even though I agree with the basic structural problem he detects, the epistemological way of putting this problem – as one between our concepts and our objects of thought – is certainly inappropriate for the *Logic*, which Hegel believes to be preceding epistemology, and it understates the starkness of the contradiction for Hegel: It is not the case that in one respect, namely, as far as our concepts are concerned, things must be described with relational terms, while in another respect we suppose they are not related. Hegel rather proposes that things are at the same time completely simple and independently given, while also necessarily related. The contradiction emerges because the entire Logic of Being is presupposing “immediacy” or “Being” as the basic nature of all entities, and this means, for Hegel, that they are simply given, unrelated and simple. Yet, Hegel proposes that a thing can only be a singular one if it is related and thus distinguished from others. As Friederike Schick puts it, the other both belongs and does not belong to the thing (p.237). See: Paul Guyer, ‘Hegel, Leibniz und der Widerspruch im Endlichen’, in *Dialektik in der Philosophie Hegels*, ed. by R.-P. Horstmann (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp: 1989), pp. 230-260 (p.232). See: Friederike Schick, ‘Absolutes und gleichgültiges Bestimmtheitsein – Das Fürsichsein in Hegels Logik’ in *Hegels Seinslogik. Interpretationen und Perspektiven*, ed. by A. Arndt und C. Iber (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000), pp.235-251, (p.237).

⁵⁷ Paul Guyer, ‘Hegel, Leibniz und der Widerspruch im Endlichen’, p.232.

to the properties of the thing, and that which constitutes a relation to something else, something other than the thing. Now, finite things are defined as something that is not the properties. Hegel calls finite things conceived in this way the “Ought” and their properties the “Barrier”. “The Ought is being beyond the Barrier” (WL2 144/133). Finite things ought, or rather are supposed, to be more than their properties. Their properties do not count as a limit that defines things, but as a Barrier, that is, something to be overcome, something beyond which the thing exists.

This description of a thing as the negative of its own properties, remains, however, problematic and incomplete for Hegel, because things are supposed to be something other than and beyond their properties, and yet defined as nothing but their negative. The qualities and differences to other things remain a precondition of the thing, since it is only defined as not-them, and yet the thing is supposed to have a prior and independent existence. In Hegel’s words, “the in-itself is fixed as against the limited” (WL1 147/135). The thing itself is only defined as against its limited properties and is therefore bound up with them.

It is interesting that Hegel turns his criticism of this particular conception of finite things, namely, as a thing that has properties, into a point about the absoluteness of things and their connection to the absolute. He does so in the next subchapter, entitled Infinity. A thing as the negative of its properties is, Hegel proposes, a “bad infinity”.⁵⁸ In German, infinity literally means without an end or limit, not being limited by something else. If you abstract away all properties of something, what is left is infinite, in the sense that it is not at all defined or limited as against anything else. It is again pure emptiness, like Being. And infinity, like Being, is for Hegel a “new definition of the absolute” (WL1 149/137). He thus proposes that when finite things are conceived as the thing beyond its properties, they are

⁵⁸ As Hegel explicitly says, this is exactly the same problem discussed in the category Ought: “This bad infinity is in itself the same thing as the perennial Ought” (WL1 155/142).

implicitly conceived as something absolute. “The finite itself [is] raised to the infinite” (WL1 150/138). The reasoning behind this seems intentionally ambiguous: either Hegel supposes that in abstracting from all properties all things are in fact identical, just one absolute thing, *or* that each thing only displays the structure of an absolute in as much as it is unrelated to other things, even though there are in fact other things around it. In any case, the problem with this infinite thing is that it is indeed something completely undefined and unlimited, but only because all properties or differences to other things are abstracted from the thing. This is why Hegel calls this “bad infinity” (WL2 152/139) or “finitized” infinity (WL1 149/137). It is supposed to be infinite in the sense of not defined or related to anything else, and yet is in fact defined against something else, namely, the negated properties, and is thus finite. “The infinite is only as something with reference to its other, namely the finite”. (WL1 155/142). In fact, Hegel supposes that if you want to ultimately define the thing beyond its properties, you end up with an infinite progression, because, as he puts it, “the finite constantly resurfaces in the infinite as its other” (WL1 155/142). What Hegel means is that if you define the infinite thing by what it is not, you define it as something finite, something defined as against an other. Trying to overcome this finitude you again re-define it, saying that it is not the negative of this other, or not something else, but you never cease defining it as against what it is not and therefore never as something absolute: The thing is not this property, not that property, nor its present finite and specific shape, nor its future properties. But the thing also cannot be the negative of the properties, and so on.

Hegel therefore concludes that the thing cannot be a “beyond” of the properties, something other than them. Rather, the properties must be both it and not it, nothing but moments of the thing itself. Hegel says, comparing this conception of a thing to the monad: “The diversity is only ideal or inner and in it the monad is only related to itself, alterations develop within the monad and there are no relations to an other” (WL1

180/162). As Schick puts it, its current properties only count as one specific case of the thing,⁵⁹ the same thing in another form. The difference between properties and thing is thus internal to the thing itself.⁶⁰ In this conception, things are truly infinite for Hegel and truly absolute, since things are only related to themselves and thus not limited by anything else. Hegel calls this truly infinite thing Being-for-oneself, and says it is the “infinite relation purely to itself” (WL1 178/160). In Horstmann’s words, Hegel thus proposes that self-relation is an integral part of “the thought of thingness in general (Gegenständlichkeit überhaupt)”.⁶¹ And since self-relation or self-identity was defined as the first and defining characteristic of the absolute, this means that the structure of the absolute is at the very heart of what finite things are.⁶² In fact, I believe that Hegel’s whole discussion of Infinity is intentionally ambivalent: first, his reasoning means that finite things are completely self-related and thus display the structure of the absolute – Hegel uses self-consciousness and monads to illustrate this;⁶³ and second, it means that the absolute itself, in the sense of the whole, is also infinite and self-related, when relating to finite things – Hegel mentions spirit (WL1 178/160), love and friendship as having this structure (VL 118f).⁶⁴ If you suppose that things beyond their properties are in fact one and the same absolute thing, then Hegel’s argument about true infinity means that this one thing relates to itself in the many distinct things with their specific properties.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Cf. Schick, 2000: ‘Absolutes und gleichgültiges Bestimmtheit’, p. 243f.

⁶⁰ Cf. “The movement of determinate Being consists in transferring this limit from its externality into itself. In Being-for-oneself this inversion is complete” (WL1, 12 98).

⁶¹ Rolf-Peter Horstmann, ‘Hegel über Unendlichkeit, Substanz und Subjekt’, p.193. In the English translation “Gegenständlichkeit überhaupt” is translated as “objectivity in general”. The point Horstmann makes is that the idea of an independent object (or thing) contains the idea of self-relation for Hegel. See for the English translation: Rolf-Peter Horstmann, ‘Substance, Subject and Infinity. A Case Study of the Role of Logic in Hegel’s system’, in *Hegel. New Directions*, ed. by Katerina Deligiorgi (Chesham, Bucks: Acumen, 2006), pp.69-84, p. 78.

⁶² See for example: Dieter Henrich, ‘Andersheit und Absolutheit des Geistes’, p.157f.

⁶³ See: “I is for the I, both are the same” (WdL1 178/160) “in consciousness, I am finite, the object is my limit, but already by representing it [to me], the content is mine, pertains to me, and in this sense its independence is negated and I relate only to myself [...]” (VL 118).

⁶⁴ While Horstmann, as mentioned above, points out the first aspect, namely that finite things themselves are infinite, Houlgate emphasizes the second aspect, that the absolute is infinite and finite things only its moments. See: Houlgate: *The Opening of Hegel’s Logic*, p. 428.

⁶⁵ When Hegel says, for example, that “both, the finite and the infinite, are this movement to return into themselves through their negation” (WL1 162/147), that each one contains the other (WL1 163/148), this also clearly means that finite things are in themselves infinite – i.e., as shown above, self-related – and as such they are all the same and identical to the one whole or absolute. The absolute is nothing but this identity between things, and thus contains them too.

Already at this point, Hegel calls this relation of difference and identity to oneself, to one's own aspects or instances "self-determination". He says, for example, "As a relation to itself it is infinite self-determining" (WL1 183/164). That this relation of self-determination requires the relation to another that is also identical to the first will only become thematic in the next section. At this point, Hegel only defines self-determining as a relation to oneself that also contains an element of otherness, difference or determinacy. Hegel writes in this vein, in another passage:

(1)⁶⁶ As *Being* Being-for-oneself is simply self-relation, as *determinate being* it is determined; but this determinacy is no longer the finite determinacy of something in its distinction from the other; but the infinite determinacy that contains distinction within it as sublated. (E1 §96A)

Rather than being distinguished from another thing, as are finite things, the thing is distinguished from itself, the thing from its qualities that count only as itself in another form. Hegel supposes that the thing is not determined as against a distinct other thing, but internally differentiated, and is in this sense defined by and through itself rather than something else. As Henrich points out, this self-determination is not only a characteristic of the absolute, but also one of finite things for Hegel, and this is exactly what enables Hegel to say that things are structurally similar to and contained within the absolute.⁶⁷

"Being with oneself in the Other" in the Logic of Being: The One and the Many

⁶⁶ I have numbered all indented quotations and given the German original in the appendix.

⁶⁷ "The finite, that is contained in the Absolute, thus also has to contain in itself the core characteristics of the absolute. If the absolute is the last and independent entity, within which different things arise, then these different things themselves also have to display the same independence and the same differentiation, which also they produce out of themselves (aus sich). Therefore finite things have to be likewise the ground (Erzeugungsgrund) which produces their own determinations." See: Henrich: 'Erkundung im Zugzwang', p. 18.

Hegel gives his first account of “being with oneself in the other” in the subchapters on the “One and the Many” at the transition to Quantity, the middle section of the *Logic of Being*. The overall argument in the One and the Many contains 3 parts: 1. a thing as Being-for-onself is in fact a One, something like an atom; 2. each One is necessarily related to other qualitatively identical and numerically different Ones; 3. the many Ones are just as much one One, numerically identical. The second statement is interesting because Hegel proposes that things “relate to themselves in the other Ones”, and, according to my interpretation, are thus “with themselves in the other” in a specific way. The third statement clearly presents a new conception of the absolute, namely, as the one One, which is supposedly present in all finite things conceived as the many Ones. I also interpret this constellation as a deficient form of “being with oneself in the other”.

1. Hegel proposes that a thing defined as Being-for-onself is in fact a “One” (WL1 182/164), like an “atom” (E1 §98A). A thing as Being-for-onself was defined as purely self-related, thus unrelated to others, independent of them. Being-for-onself is the thing as something identical in its qualities, the qualities being only “for it”, an internal difference in the thing, one specific and limited state of it. The key point to note, however, is that the case and the thing, the determination and what is determined, are not distinguishable at this stage. Hegel says, “The moments of Being-for-onself have collapsed into undifferentiatedness, which is immediacy or Being” (WL1 182/163). If you define a quality neither against other qualities of other things – as in finitude – nor against other qualities of this thing – as will happen later in the organism – then the idea of a quality is completely empty and undefined. Consequently, the proposition that a thing has its own quality that is also different from the thing itself remains vacuous. There is no nameable difference in terms of content⁶⁸ between the thing and its quality, itself and its limited state, since both

⁶⁸ For a very good exposition of this point, see: Schick, ‘Absolutes und gleichgültiges Bestimmtheit – Das Fürsichsein in Hegels *Logik*’, p.245f.

are completely undefined. This is what prompts Hegel to redefine finite things as Ones or “atoms”. An atom is a completely simple entity, something that has no distinguishable qualities or internal differences.

2. Hegel introduces other Ones because of this particularity of Being-for-oneself, namely, that it is supposed to have an internal difference, yet no distinction can be found – it being simply a One or atom. Hegel writes about Being-for-oneself in the *Logic*: “its negative relation to itself is at the same time the relation to something existing (Seiendes) [...] [T]hat to which it is related remains determined as an existent and other” (WL1 187/167). In a lecture, he says:

(2) The One relates to itself. Relating is, however, negation; the One is itself the negative relating of itself to itself, this is the repulsion of the One, the positing of many Ones. (VL 123)

Given the point made previously, namely, that the One is completely simple and empty, not having any distinguishable aspects or moments,⁶⁹ it can only relate to itself as not itself if there are other Ones that are qualitatively identical and numerically distinct. As Hegel puts it, the One “excludes itself from itself” (E1 §97), or repels itself. Only now can the two aspects of the One be distinguished. In so far as the Ones are different, one One is limited and defined as against the other One. This is its limited present state, itself in a limited and particular condition. In so far as the Ones are identical, however, one One is not in fact limited, but is unlimited by an external other, thus only self-related and infinite. Hegel writes, “The repulsion of the One is the explication of what the One is in itself; but thus laid out as one-outside-the-other, infinity is here an infinity that has come outside

⁶⁹ In another passage, Hegel says: “through this immediacy each moment is posited as a separate, existing determination; but nevertheless they are just as much inseparable” (WL2 182/164).

itself. This is so because of the immediacy of the infinite, the One” (WL1 188/169). Because the thing is completely undifferentiated and simple – this is what Hegel means here by the term immediate – its self-relation, i.e. the relation of difference and identity to itself, takes the form of many identical and separate Ones to which it is related. Only in this way does the thing relate to itself and thus the unlimited or infinite in Hegel’s definition. This last aspect implies, of course, that finite things are considered not only as qualitatively identical, but also as numerically identical, one and the same thing. This remains implicit at this point, and will be discussed later.

It is interesting to also note the following passage in which Hegel says:

(3) What shows itself to be *present* distinct from the One is its own self-determining; its unity with itself, as thus distinct from itself, is degraded to a relation [to an external other]. (WL1 183/137)

Hegel had defined Being-for-oneself because of its self-relation as “infinite self-determining” (WL1 183/164). Now, Hegel has proposed that this self-relation or self-determination is only possible as a relation of one finite thing to identical others – at least in the case of completely simple singular entities, which is the one discussed here. Indeed, in a lecture Hegel mentions the “identical relation of the One in the other One to itself” (VLM 96), which clearly recalls the notion of “being with oneself in the other”, that is, Hegel’s formula for freedom.

It is important to note, however, the very abstract and limited sense in which self-determination and the form of freedom is thematic here. Being-for-oneself refers to, and the One and the Many can only concretise, the very abstract form of self-determination, merely the idea that the other that determines the first is nothing but itself. You can also say that the other to which something relates and is thus limited by and dependent upon, is

nothing but itself. For Hegel, the other One is literally the first. He says the infinity of the One is both “the simple relation of One to One and no less also the absolute unrelatedness of the One” (WL1 188/169). The One is not related to other Ones as genuine others, as different entities, but instead as nothing but itself, its own “infinity” or self-relation that has “come outside itself” (WL1 188/169) in the form of separate things. Self-determination in the sense of something expressing its internal concrete nature in its specific relations to other entities is not, as yet, the topic here. The One and Many are simply and contradictorily claimed to be one and not one, simultaneously the numerically identical and numerically different entities.

3. As is implied in the last point, Hegel proposes that the many Ones are just one One; they are numerically identical. He says: “There are many Ones, but they are only this, that their multiplicity is an untruth” (VL 124). “Repulsion turns into attraction, the many Ones into one One” (WL1 194/173). The one One is clearly a new conception of the absolute. Hegel explicitly says this in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*: “the absolute determines itself as Being-for-onself, as One, and as many Ones (E1 §198A). The many Ones are the absolute, because they are one and the same, units of one absolute. The basic explanation for this idea is simple: whether the many qualitatively identical Ones are in fact different entities, or only one entity that is dispersed into many units, is impossible to determine. In a lecture, Hegel claims that all atoms are qualitatively identical, and that “there is absolutely no determination to establish a concrete manifoldness” (VL 124). He also mentions matter (E1 §97A) as an example of an entity that is dispersed into many units, just like the One and the Many could be understood. In fact, since Hegel has proposed that the One “repels itself” from itself, it is for him in fact only one One, and the manifoldness consists only of units of the same. Since the one One or absolute is the many Ones, you cannot exactly say that the absolute is “with itself” in finite things conceived as many Ones. It is not related to and differentiated from the many finite things, but is simply “in them”, or rather *is* them.

The absolute is what finite things are as many identical atoms, things without any properties. The formula at this point would thus have to hold that the absolute “is itself the other”, namely, finite things. However, in my view, this must be understood as being still a very simple precursor of “being with oneself in the other”.

In the remainder of the Logic of Being, Hegel will develop in the section Quantity the idea that finite things are indifferent to their concrete qualities or differences to other things, which is implicit in conceiving them as identical Ones or pure self-relations. Hegel writes: “Magnitude is the determinateness which is no longer one with being but is already differentiated from it, sublated quality which has become indifferent” (WL1 80f/79f). In the section Quantity, Hegel proposes the idea that the “being” of a thing, i.e. the thing as such, is what it is independently of its determinateness or qualities. The section is called Quantity because qualities are considered quantitatively: qualities are supposed to change only quantitatively, there being more or less of what defines this thing, but this change is not supposed to affect the nature of a thing, turn it into something else: Whether one acre or five acres, a field remains a field.⁷⁰ The last section of the Logic of Being, entitled Measure, questions this conception. His main criticism is that even though some properties may change without the thing turning into something else, there is nevertheless a minimal measure or condition that something must meet in order to still count as this thing rather than another. If a field is reduced to the size of a square metre or square centimetre, the question arises if it can still be called a field.

“Being-with-oneself in the Other” in the Logic of Essence

⁷⁰ As Hartmann notes, Hegel discusses different quantitative phenomena in this section, such as continuous and discrete numbers. Yet, Hartmann also agrees that the quantitative is something “dependent” for Hegel, something which has “a being as something permanent at its basis”. Quantity is a determination of an entity, a thing, that remains the same (is “permanent”) independently of the quantitative determination. See: Klaus Hartmann, *Hegels Logik* (New York: de Gruyter, 1999), p.91.

In my view, you can present key aspects of the Logic of Essence in three propositions: 1. Essence is the absolute conceived as the source of all finite things; 2. Essence constitutes things as independent from itself. Essence is thus related to an independent other, namely, finite things, whose independence is, however, immediately negated – they being only posited by it, and even, as I will show, only it in another form. Essence therefore “returns into itself” from finite things, negating their independence; 3. things display a similar contradiction in relation to other things as Essence exhibits in relation to things. They also “shine into” another and “return into” themselves, which, I propose, is the form of “being with oneself in the other” particular to the Logic of Essence.

It is, furthermore, helpful to note that these three statements are connected for Hegel on the basis of a specific conception of why and how the absolute as Essence is the source of finite things. Hegel conceives Essence as the pure relation of identity and difference, or the idea of identity and difference underlying all differences between things as well as their identities. Finite things are different, for Hegel, because they are differentiated and each one is one and the same thing in all its aspects because those aspects are identified as belonging to one thing. The pure relation of difference and the one of identity thus logically and ontologically precede the differences between, and self-identity of, things, and this is the absolute as Essence. Essence is the source of things because it is the pure relation of identity and difference at the basis of their self-identity and differences. Hegel develops this basic idea gradually towards the end of the Logic of Being and at the beginning of the Logic of Essence. In the following, I will present the first aspect, namely, that Essence is the source of the differences between things, in point 1, sketching out an argument of the end of the Logic of Being. The second aspect, namely, that Essence is the source of the self-identity of things, will be discussed in the second point, as an implicit part of the contradictory structure of Essence itself. This is the main topic of the first section of the Logic of Essence, entitled “Essence as reflection into itself”. In a third point,

I will present the contradictory relation between things, as Hegel analyses it in the middle section of the Logic of Essence called Appearance.

1. “The absolute is Essence” (E1 §122). Hegel presents the new proposed structure of the absolute at the beginning of the Logic of Essence. However, it is prior to the Logic of Essence, in the category Indifference, at the end of the Logic of Being, that we get an explanation of why the absolute is being redefined and how it is now the source of both the differences between things. Even though Indifference is a specific category and conception of the absolute, it is also simply a general characteristic of Being. Things are supposed to be what they are independently of their properties; finite things are indifferent to their properties. The thing’s ‘being’ is independent of distinct properties, and all things therefore have the same Being. When discussing Indifference, Hegel says very generally that in the “the sphere of Being”, thought “sticks with the conception that specific things are in themselves or in the absolute one and the same, and that their difference is indifferent, no difference in itself” (WL1 456/383).⁷¹ The differences between things, their different properties, are indifferent, that is to say, irrelevant. In fact they are all self-identical Ones, or instances of Being.

The problem Hegel has with this conception of the absolute is that the absolute must by definition be all-encompassing, and yet it is defined as the abstraction from all the distinct properties of things. If you abstract from all differences between things, then those differences remain outside the absolute and the absolute turns out to be not absolute after all.

(4) The *absolute* as Indifference has [...] the defect that the determinateness of difference is not determined by the absolute itself [...] The differences simply

⁷¹ There seems to be a mistake in Miller’s translation of the *Logic* in this passage: He translates “stehenbleiben bei” saying that reflection “stops short at...”, which means that reflection does not endorse what follows. Hegel, however, means to say that, in the Logic of Being, reflection still “sticks with...” a bad conception that later shall be overcome.

emerge in it, i.e. the positing of the difference is something immediate, not the absolute's mediation with itself. (WL1 449/378)

The many distinct properties of things do not stem from the absolute, nor are they part of it, its own expression. Comparing indifference to Spinoza's substance, Hegel critically remarks that the differences are just "empirically added" (WL1 455/383) to the one substance, rather than it being "what differentiates itself" (WL1 455/383). The differences between things, as Hegel has established already, derive from their differentiating relations to one another, i.e. the determinate negation. If the absolute shall "determine" these differences, if the latter shall derive from the former, then the absolute must not only be pure self-sameness or Being, but it must contain the relation of difference, or self-otherness, if you will. Essence must be "the totality of the process of determining" (WL1 451/379), and, since determination is negation, this means that Essence must contain a negative relation or a relation of difference. In Hegel's words, it is not "the unity which is merely indifferent, but that immediately negative and absolute unity which is called Essence" (WL1 451/379). Later, he says, "determining and being determined" is Essence's own "relation to itself, which is the negativity of itself" (WL1 457/384).⁷² It is the negative relation within Essence, the relation of difference contained in its structure, from which all determinations or distinctions issue. In my view, Essence cannot be understood as the total differentiating relation between all determinate things, making them determinate and distinct from one another.⁷³ It must rather be read merely as the pure principle of difference – and identity, as shall be seen below – which enables all concrete differences

⁷² In fact, Hegel makes this remark still with regard to Indifference, but Indifference in its improved form, which he already identifies with Essence.

⁷³ I thus disagree with what Henrich seems to suggest, as he seems to suppose that Essence is the concrete reciprocal relation between all determinations or determinate things. Henrich remarks: "the difference between the basis in itself of the determinations on the one hand and their reciprocal relation to one another on the other has proven untenable" at the end of the *Logic of Being*, i.e. in *Indifference*. I agree that differentiation becomes integrated into the self-sameness of Being, but I disagree that all concrete differences between things are integrated, if this is what he has in mind. See: Dieter Henrich, 'Hegels Logik der Reflektion', in his *Hegel im Kontext* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1971), pp.95-156 (p.105).

between things, all their distinct determinations. Only in this way can you explain why Essence is only conceived of as the source or ground of those differences and different things, but *not* the differences themselves. Different finite things and their relations only exist outside the absolute, as Appearances, and not within it.

2. The new definition of the absolute outlined so far holds that the absolute as Essence consists in a relation of difference. In fact, Hegel defines Essence as reflection (WL2 24/399) and describes reflection as “pure mediation”, “*pure relation* without any related terms” (WL2 81/445). However, he also repeats the point in a way he deems easier to understand for the reader, when he states that Essence is the relation of difference to itself or the “negative relation to itself” (WL1 456/384). There is, thus, in fact a relation of identity and difference within the absolute conceived as Essence, it being related to itself as something different and also identical. What Hegel does in the complete first section of the Logic of Essence, entitled “Essence as reflection into itself”, is to bracket the topic of differences and relations between finite things. Instead he only analyses the proposed structure of the absolute. His main argument is that the absolute can only be identical and different to itself if things are and are not Essence. Essence is the relation to finite things that count as Essence; in this way, Essence is the relation of identity and difference to itself. Hegel starts by showing that Essence cannot be something behind things, existing independently of them. He then explains how things can simultaneously be and not be Essence. The first argument is relatively straightforward: Essence can only be Essence by relating to something of which it is the Essence.⁷⁴ “Essence must appear” (WL2 124/479); it cannot be Essence without there being an appearance – God cannot be God without a creation. Furthermore, if Essence is absolute, i.e. all-encompassing, then the appearances, the world of finite things, must be part of Essence itself. Hegel describes his position with a

⁷⁴ Hegel writes: “It should not be overlooked that Essence, and inwardness as well only prove to be what they are by acquiring an external appearance” (E1 §112A).

play on words: If you propose, as Spinoza does, according to Hegel, that things are in fact all one and the same, that is, instances of the one Essence, then you suppose that their distinct independent existence is a mere “illusion” and not what they in fact and essentially are, namely, one Essence. Since the word illusion also means “shine” in German, Hegel proposes that the many distinct existing things are in fact the “shining of Essence”, a part of Essence itself. Hegel therefore says:

(5) But Essence is being-within-itself, is *essential* only insofar as it has the negative of itself, [i.e.] the relation-to-another, or mediation, within itself. It has the inessential, therefore, as its own shine within itself. (E1 §114)

“As a result, Essence is [...] shining into itself” (E1 §112). Hegel also uses the expression: “Essence is reflection” (WL2 24/399), “reflection into itself” (WL2 17/393). Essence thus features twice, once as the ground or source of things, and again as the total relation between ground and grounded, Essence and Appearances.

The second more difficult task is to show how things can both be and not be Essence, how they can be other to Essence and yet also Essence. Only this argument will truly establish that things are not only a necessary corollary of Essence, but actually Essence *itself*. This is the point Hegel needs to make in order to establish that Essence is absolute and the first ground, rather than secondary and dependent on a corollary that is not itself. The argument Hegel proposes derives from the relational structure of Essence: I have described Essence so far as a relation of identity and difference, or as identical and different to itself. This description is certainly correct,⁷⁵ but Hegel also uses another, more dynamic way of putting it: As a negative relation (to itself), Essence makes a difference, counterposing something to

⁷⁵ Hegel discusses identity and difference as the “determinations of reflection”, i.e. the characteristics of the reflection, which is the relation Essence consists in (WL2 35ff/408ff).

itself, and then re-identifies both related elements such that the two elements are only one and the same, namely, Essence.⁷⁶ It is Henrich in particular,⁷⁷ but also other scholars like Iber,⁷⁸ who have expounded that the negation of difference, apart from establishing Essence as a negative self-relation, has also the effect for Hegel that something completely undifferentiated and immediate comes about – something that as immediate does not appear to be mediated by, or stem from, Essence.⁷⁹ Essence having the form of the negation of difference has, as its result, the absence of difference, namely, a self-identical, simple and undifferentiated something.

In this way, Hegel integrates Being (E1 §114), as simple immediate givenness, the immediate independent existence of things, into the absolute conceived as Essence.⁸⁰ Hegel claims that “what is distinct does itself acquire the form of identity, in distinction from the identity from which it emerges [...] Hence what is distinct is itself in the mode of self-relating immediacy or of Being” (E1 §114). Distinct things are supposed to have their own identity independently of the identity from which they emerged, namely, Essence. Finite things have their own Being or immediate givenness. This is so because Being is defined as a “simple self-relation” (E1 §122) or self-identity, without any relation to, or dependence on, anything else. Since Essence posits things as self-related they are posited as something that exists independently of Essence, something that simply “is”, is simply there, given and unrelated. By negating difference, simple self-identity thus emerges, i.e. self-identical,

⁷⁶ This situation is typically described in terms of the negation of the negation: Essence posits a negation, i.e. relation of difference, and then negates this negation, re-identifying the differentiated elements.

⁷⁷ Dieter Henrich, ‘Hegels Logik der Reflektion’, pp.114f.

⁷⁸ Iber, *Metaphysik absoluter Relationalität*, pp. 225, 230.

⁷⁹ This is called “voraussetzen”, pre-positing or presupposing. Something is posited as not posited, as if it were simply there, given, and did not stem from reflection, which is here described as Essence.

⁸⁰ I agree with Houlgate (p. 140) that the immediacy, i.e. unrelated givenness, typical of Being is overcome in Essence also in the sense that the Logic of Essence discusses always relative concepts and conceives them as necessarily related opposites (the positive and negative, ground and grounded, Essence and Appearances, active and passive substance can be mentioned as examples). There is, however, another additional and more important way, in which immediacy is re-conceived and maintained, and this is the one I present here: immediacy or unrelated, simple givenness is re-established as what you can call a ‘collapsed self-relation’, the negation of difference which leads to a simple undifferentiated immediate (entity). Houlgate also mentions this topic under the very fitting title “reflective and non-reflective immediacy” (p.153). I agree with the general view that the “self-negating negative” (p.154) turns into immediacy, but I would stress the point that reflection or negativity and immediacy are only two perspectives on one and the same relation, this is what Hegel means by the “unity of absolute negativity and immediacy” (WL2 22/missing in English). Reflection focuses on the relation of differentiation (of the same) and immediacy on the identity between what is related. See for Houlgate’s view: Stephen Houlgate, ‘Essence, Reflection and Immediacy in Hegel’s Science of Logic’, in *A Companion to Hegel*, ed. by Stephen Houlgate and Michael Baur (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 139-158.

independent things. More precisely Hegel supposes, that the self-relation of Essence collapses so to say, i.e. turns into a simple, undifferentiated and unrelated thing, which as such is an other or opposite of Essence itself.⁸¹ Hegel clearly makes this point when he says: “Negativity is a relation to itself and as such immediacy; but it is the negative relating to itself, repelling negation of itself, and as such the immediacy is the negative or determinate as against it” (WL2 22/398). Essence, which is pure mediation or negativity, i.e. differentiating relation, (by negating its own internal difference) turns into something undifferentiated, immediately and independently existing, which is its own opposite. Essence posits its own opposite, unrelated, independent things.

This leads to the contradictory result whereby there is an independent other opposed to the absolute as Essence, namely, finite things, which has nevertheless been posited by Essence. Finite things are only posited as independent by Essence itself, and are thus not truly independent from Essence; in fact, finite things are nothing but Essence in another form, its own self-relation that has collapsed, now exists as a simple given finite thing. In so far as finite things are thus Essence itself and posited by it, Essence relates to itself when relating to them. Hegel says:

(6) Essence [...] is the relation to itself only by being relation to another, but this other is immediately, not something that is [i.e. has an independent Being], but as *something posited and mediated*. (E1 §112)

The absolute as Essence can thus not be said to be exactly “with itself in the other”, namely, finite things. Rather than being “with itself *in* them”, it is “with itself” or “within itself”, as Hegel says, by negating the otherness of the other, making it its own aspect or

⁸¹ As Dieter Henrich puts it: “reflection posits its own self-relation as what is opposite to it.” See: Henrich, ‘Hegels Logik der Reflektion’, p.121.

“shine”. In Hegel’s metaphorical language, this means that rather than genuinely relating to something other, Essence leaves this other behind, “returning” into itself. Since the other, namely, finite things with their immediate existence and particular shape, only counts as Essence itself and is posited by it, Essence relates to nothing but itself. In the Logic of Essence, these two ideas – i.e. that things are independently existing entities and yet also nothing but Essence and posited by it – are not reconciled and remain in contradiction. Hegel therefore calls Essence the “sphere of the posited contradiction” (E1 §114), where “immediacy” and “mediation”, immediate, independent things and Essence as the total mediation or relation are “only incompletely connected” (E1 §114). The key features of Essence (WL2 38ff./411ff.) are Identity – namely the identity between Essence and finite things, they being it – and Difference – finite things being independent of Essence – and Contradiction – namely the contradiction that they are supposed to be identical and also not to be identical.

3. The remaining question concerns what this conception of the absolute as Essence means for finite things and their relations to one another. This is the topic of the middle section of the Logic of Essence, called Appearance, where things are defined as Appearances and also as independent Existents. Two insights about finite things can already be deduced from the two sections above. First, in so far as Essence is a relation of identity it posits finite things as self-related and independent. Second, in so far as Essence is the relation of difference it enables the differentiating relation between things that make things distinct from one another. Things are thus both self-related and other-related. “[Existence] is the indeterminate multitude of existents, which are reflected into themselves and at the same time and just as much, shining-into-another, or relational” (E1 §123). Hegel says that finite things, in so far as they are “relational”, are completely “interdependent” (E1 §123). What Hegel refers to is the idea already developed in Finitude, namely that each thing has its distinct properties only because it is distinguished from other

things. In order to have distinct properties, finite things are dependent on other things. Additionally and contradictorily, Hegel says, in so far as finite things are self-related, they are “independent” (WL2 150/500) from other things. They have their own self-identity, being and remaining the same thing independently of other things.

It is worth exploring, more precisely, the manner in which finite things as existents are supposed to be both dependent on other things *and* independent from them, self- and other-related. Hegel says: “The existent is accordingly the return of itself into itself through its negation” (WL2 150/500). Finite things as existence are self-related by relating to their negation, i.e. an other opposite thing, and, Hegel goes on saying by “negating” their negation (WL2 150/500). Finite things as Appearances are the “still imperfect union of the reflection-into-otherness and reflection-into-self” (WL2 125/480). The exact meaning of this is explicated in a lecture, in which he says of existing things the following:

(7) Something is, it shines into another, but this relation to something other pertains to itself, it is reflected into itself as ground. (VL 148)

This passage, together with the other formulation, suggests that the thing is the ground for its specific relations to other things. The finite thing has its specific properties because of its differences to other things, but these differences are taken to be grounded in the thing itself. The basic idea seems to be that the other thing from which the first is distinguished must be considered part of that first thing, a means for the first thing to manifest its properties. The thing can thus be said to be “with itself” in its relation to others. However, the problem with this conception of things grounding their own other-relation, as I see it, is that the “relation to something other” pertains not only to this thing but also just as much to the other. And things are not yet posited as mutually constitutive elements of an organic whole, but instead as independently existing things. The independent self-determination of

one thing in relation to another is thus something like a claim, an imposition, which the other thing does not support. The existing thing “returns into itself” only by negating its other, reducing it to an element of itself, a means for its expression – yet, inversely, the other thing does the same. Hegel will later speak of “violence” (WL2 235/567) as a key characteristic of the Logic of Essence, without, however, directly mentioning existing things. The independence of existing things and their complete dependence – things being defined by other things and only by themselves – are two unreconciled claims in this understanding of finite things. Hegel summarises as follows: “[W]hen further it was also said, ‘Whatever exists has a ground and is conditioned’, then equally it must also be said that it has no ground and is unconditioned” (WL1 125/481).

The remainder of the Logic of Essence, namely, the last section entitled Actuality, discusses the question of how the absolute as Essence can come to be “actualized” or manifest in finite things and their relations. The aim is to overcome the contradiction of Essence, that is, the view that things both stem from Essence and yet appear not to.⁸² This requires that Essence is not only the hidden, transcendent source of finite things, outside of which they exist seemingly independently, but rather something present in them and their relations. Finite things shall belong to Essence and display this condition in their own natures and relations. Hegel starts by analysing what he calls the Absolute in the *Science of Logic*, or the relation of Substantiality in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, actualising itself in finite things. Since Hegel explicitly says that the Absolute is his take on Spinoza’s substance (WL2 195ff./536ff.),⁸³ I will use the term the Substance here and in subsequent chapters, because

⁸² At the end of the middle section I have just presented, namely Appearance, Hegel only reaches the conclusion that the two aspects of things their dependency and relation (through which they form a whole, which will be the re-established absolute or Essence) and their independent, separate existence must be understood as a mere difference in form. Things as related and dependent and things as independent existences are one and the same, only viewed from two different perspectives. This is, I take it, Hegel’s idea of the two identical and yet separate worlds, one of law-like dependency and thus unity between things and one of separate and independent things. In the section last section of the Logic of Essence, namely Actuality, Hegel then seeks to integrate both aspects, so that they cease to be contradictory.

⁸³ Interpreters agree that the Absolute must be read as Hegel’s take on Spinoza’s substance. See for example: Eugène J. Fleischmann, ‘Die Wirklichkeit in Hegels Logik. Ideengeschichtliche Beziehung zu Spinoza’, in *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, 8 (1964), 3-29; Klaus Düsing, ‘Von der Substanz zum Subjekt. Hegels spekulative Spinoza-Deutung’, in *Spinoza und der deutsche Idealismus* ed. by Manfred Walther (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1992), pp. 163-180 (p. 174).

I am using the term absolute as a general expression for all conceptions of a whole that are discussed in the *Logic*. Substance in fact falls back behind the conception of Essence developed at the beginning of the Logic of Essence, in so far as substance means something purely self-identical, “absolute identity” (189/531) without a relation of difference (E1 §151A). The absolute Substance shall be present in its accidents, which are finite things. In Hegel’s reading, this means that all things are at basis identical, nothing but the one substance (WL2 190/532). Their distinct shapes and separate existence is not real; in fact they are not distinct, separate finite things but the one and the same substance. Hegel says “In so far as the finite perishes, it demonstrates that its nature is to be connected with the absolute, or to contain the absolute within itself” (WL2 189/532). The problem is if finite things are taken to be completely identical, one and the same substance, they may indeed display their identity with the absolute, but they are not distinct finite things anymore, they “perish” as Hegel says above. And if finite things are taken not to exist, they also can’t serve to actualise the one substance.⁸⁴ Rather than actualising itself, the absolute as substance is only, as Hegel puts it, a “universal negative force [...] a shapeless abyss, so to speak, in which all determinate content is swallowed up [...] and which produces nothing out of itself” (E1 §151A). To sum up: Substance is supposed to be actualised and present in its accidents, which are finite things; and yet as pure self-identity fails to be expressed in finite things and their relations, because things are not identical, but different and Substance only negates rather than produces their “determinacy” or differences.⁸⁵ In the subsequent subchapters, Actuality and the Absolute Relation, Hegel

⁸⁴ Also Iber makes this point, see: Christian Iber, ‘Übergang zum Begriff. Rekonstruktion der Überführung von Substantialität, Kausalität und Wechselwirkung in die Verhältnisse des Begriffs’, in *Der Begriff als die Wahrheit. Zum Anspruch der Hegelschen subjektiven Logik*, ed. by A.F. Koch, A. Oberauer and K. Utz (Paderborn/München: Schöningh, 2003), pp.49-68 (p.53).

⁸⁵ In the first subchapter of the section entitled the Absolute Relation, Hegel presents a possible improvement of what he takes to be Spinoza’s substance (WL2 219ff./555), which I am leaving out in my presentation. As Houlgate points out (p.235), Hegel proposes in this later passage that the movement of accidents, i.e. of finite things, their change into one another, could be seen as substance itself, substance being nothing but this movement. However, even in this case, Hegel goes on saying the substance is only “internal” to the accidents, only the hidden identity between them or the “formal power” (WL2 222/557) denying their differences. The differences of things are not the manifestation of the substance; only that they change into one another, that the differences don’t matter is the manifestation of substance. Differences only happen to the substance, rather than being its own self-differentiation. See for Houlgate’s point: Stephen Houlgate, ‘Substance, Causality, and the Question of Method in Hegel’s

reaches the conclusion that the absolute unity can only be expressed in finite things and their relations if the absolute is redefined as nothing but the relations between things. It is their distinguishing relation that both constitutes them as distinct and expresses their distinct characters. This is what Hegel will call subjectivity. Since this point is central to the next conception of the absolute, namely, the Concept, I will examine it in the following section.

“Being with oneself in the other” in the Logic of the Concept

In this section, I will summarise the key propositions of the Logic of the Concept as follows: 1. The absolute conceived as the Concept is a structured whole containing all finite things. Rather than having contradictory aspects like Essence, the absolute as the Concept is completely integrated. There are three perspectives on one and the same, which Hegel respectively calls universality, particularity, and singularity. This topic is discussed in the Concept chapter, in the first section of the Logic of the Concept, entitled Subjectivity. 2. The absolute conceived as the Concept both constitutes things as distinct from each other and is nothing but the relation between things and expressive of their differences. This is akin to the process of an organism whereby the organs are what they are only within this whole and yet the organism is nothing but the total relation of the organs. Since Hegel supposes that each organ expresses its own internal nature in its relation to other organs, finite things are “with themselves in each other” and in the whole. Furthermore, the absolute is “with itself in the other”, its other being finite things, since the specific organs and their relation are nothing but the absolute. Since Hegel brackets the topic of finite things in the chapter on the Concept, my interpretation is based on passages preceding the

Logic of the Concept, namely, Actuality, and the subsequent development after the Concept in the middle section called Objectivity. 3. Over the course of the Logic of the Concept, Hegel introduces the idea that the organic whole and the organs, though identical in content, must be distinguished in terms of form. Hegel conceives of a whole containing this difference in form as a self-reflective system; he employs the terms self-consciousness and self-willing to describe this structure. This last element and the complete conception of the absolute are presented in the last section of the *Logic*, namely, the Idea.

1. “The absolute is the Concept” (E1 §160A). The Concept is the new proposed structure of the absolute or whole. What is particular about the absolute as the Concept, I shall argue, is that Hegel believes to have finally managed to conceive the absolute in such a way that it is truly absolute, i.e. all-encompassing, containing all distinctions and finite things. For example, in this vein Hegel says that it is “most rich within itself”, “the principle of all life”, “utterly concrete” (E1 §160). The absolute as the Concept is not a matter of excluding all differences – as in Being – nor their source which is, however, separate from them – as in Essence – but rather an internally differentiated or rather self-differentiating whole. Hegel says the absolute as the Concept does not “repel itself from itself” like Essence, positing itself as finite things that are distinct from the one Essence, but that it “differentiates itself” (WL2 240/571). The Concept is “what particularizes itself” (E1 §163A). Elsewhere he says:

(8) The Concept must be considered as a form, but it is a form that is infinite and creative, one that both encloses the plenitude of all content within itself, and at the same time releases it from itself. (E1 §160)

Despite the metaphorical language deployed, this formulation makes two things clear: 1. Hegel believes that the absolute as the Concept contains all content. 2. It does not do so

like a receptacle containing the mass of all entities, but rather it is on account of its specific form that all content is contained in and issues from it. The form of the absolute conceived as the Concept somehow gives rise to the content for Hegel. The form here clearly refers to the self-differentiating structure of the absolute as the Concept. The term “form” was first introduced in the *Logic of Essence*. Hegel also often uses the expression “form-relation” (WL2 89/451) and he defines this as “distinguishing” (WL2 87/450), “the determination of the form, that is, the relation of elements as distinguished” (WL2 89/451), “essential difference or negativity as the determining form” (WL2 90/452). The form is the distinguishing relation between different aspects of something. This distinguishing of its aspects “determines” the thing in the sense that the aspects of this thing become visible and distinct, the thing’s characteristics are being displayed. It thus becomes something determinate with specific aspects, rather than something undefined, a formless bulk that is indistinguishable from other bulks. When Hegel presents the Concept, he describes concrete universality, the key characteristic of the absolute as follows:

(9) The Concept is a totality, and therefore in its universality or pure identical self-relation is essentially a determining and a distinguishing [...] this form of identity with itself, pervading and embracing all the moments. (WL2 273/600)

The absolute in the form of the Concept is a totality, and it is purely self-related because it is self-differentiating. All differences are internal to it. In another passage, Hegel says that the Concept as a concrete universal is “the pure relation of the Concept to itself” because it “posits itself through the negativity” (WL2 274f./601), which is to say that it posits its own differences and therefore relates in them to itself. Düsing commenting on this passage notes that the Concept is a “self-relation”, “in the positing and subsuming of the manifold of

its own determinations it only relates to itself’.⁸⁶ This is why, according to Düsing, Hegel says that the whole is “overreaching” its other, namely, the manifold, or is “with itself in it” as in “love”.⁸⁷ In my reading, this term “love” (which Hegel opposes to violence) also denotes that the whole as the Concept not only posits differences, but is also expressive of them, i.e. nothing but the relation between distinct entities. Also love is nothing but the relation between the lovers, while also establishing the reciprocal distinction between lover and beloved. And individuals are united out of their own accord, not violently subsumed by the whole, the love relation. I will discuss the exact relation between the whole and its related parts in more detail below. For now, it will suffice to say that the universality of the Concept consists in the whole being identical to its manifold parts or distinctions.

Hegel explicates the three aspects of the Concept – its universality, particularity and singularity – as relational aspects of one whole, and he does so by comparing them to the aspects of Essence. Hegel writes: “Taken abstractly, universality, particularity and singularity are the same as identity, difference and ground. But the universal is what is identical with itself explicitly in the sense that it contains the particular and the singular [...]” (E1 §164). One should add that the two other aspects also contain the respective others. As Hegel repeatedly points out, the three moments of the Concept are basically the same as the key characteristics of Essence (VLM 145) – identity, difference and ground or “opposition”, as he puts it (WL2 292f./616).⁸⁸ In Essence, things are both identical and different to the absolute as Essence, and the third moment is the opposition between these two claims, the contradiction that they are supposed to be identical to Essence, and each other, and yet also not. When conceiving the absolute as the Concept, this contradiction is avoided because Hegel proposes that the identity of things already contains their difference and systematic connection; their difference contains their identity and the third moment

⁸⁶ Düsing: *Das Problem der Subjektivität in Hegels Logik*, p. 244.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.244.

⁸⁸ See also: “In the Concept, identity has developed into universality, difference into particularity and opposition, which withdraws into ground, into singularity” (WL2 292f./616).

only refers to this complex system within which the whole and the elements are identical and yet distinguished.⁸⁹ All three aspects are themselves “essentially the totality of all determinations” (WL2 295/618). Universality, particularity and singularity are only different formal aspects of one and the same, or three perspectives on one whole. Hegel says of universality, particularity and singularity: “These three totalities are therefore one and the same reflection [...], a perfectly transparent difference, [...] one and the same identity” (WL2 240/571).

Universality thus refers to the self-identical “simple whole” (WL2 240/571), “the simple, which is at the same time what is most rich within itself” (WL2 275/602). Since Hegel uses the organism as an example, one might think here of an organic whole. Particularity, for Hegel, refers to “the distinct or determination” (E1 §164), and yet containing the other two aspects. What was before called the internal “richness” of the whole is considered in particularity as a manifold of distinct and determinate entities, each of which, however, displays its necessary connection with the others.⁹⁰ That different organs gain their specificity only together with others is a good example. Singularity “is likewise the whole, but posited as the self-identical negativity: the singular” (WL2 240/571). Singularity also refers to the whole, but while universality presents it as a simple whole in which the manifold distinctions are hidden or enclosed, singularity presents this whole as a differentiated system. The complex, differentiated system of organs is the fitting example.

The question must be asked as to why Hegel calls this structure the Concept, and the three aspects universality, particularity and singularity. It is tempting, but mistaken to think of actual concepts or norms that mutually imply one another. Expanding on Brandom’s work, American scholars such as Pinkard and Pippin have appropriated Hegel’s Concept in this

⁸⁹ See also: “The universal has proven itself to be not only the identical, but at the same time the different or contrary [...]; in this opposition however it is identical with them and is their true ground. The same holds true for particularity and singularity” (WL2 292f./616).

⁹⁰ Schick citing Hegel writes: “‘Their determinations as against one another’ – what differentiates them from one another – ‘is at the same time essentially only one determination’ – constitutes the specific identity of each one of them”. See: Friederike Schick, *Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik – Metaphysische Letztbegründung oder Theorie logischer Formen?* (Freiburg: Karl Alber, 1994), p.206.

sense, but it is clearly not what Hegel himself is saying.⁹¹ Hegel's expression "the Concept" must be linked not to language and concepts, but rather to subjectivity. The first section of the *Logic of the Concept* is entitled Subjectivity and the whole *Logic of the Concept* is the subjective logic for Hegel. The first connection between subjectivity and the Concept is that the Concept is an internally self-differentiated whole – and internal differentiation requires thinking for Hegel. A stone may have many aspects, but they don't exist as distinct aspects within it, nor can you say that the stone itself establishes the distinctions between them. A physical organism does, in Hegel's eyes, yet he says: "you may say there is something spirit-like in it" (VL 178). The organism is a precursor of a thinking subject for Hegel. The second and most important clue is certainly Kant's transcendental subject. In key sections in the *Logic of the Concept*, Hegel discusses Kant's transcendental deduction (WL2 254ff./584) and he claims that it was a key predecessor for his conception of the Concept; interpreters, particularly Düsing,⁹² have clearly established this link. The transcendental subject contains all thoughts objects, establishes the difference between them, and only by doing so exist as the "I think" that accompanies all objects of thought and is still distinct from them. Broadly speaking you can say, that universality is similar to the I or self which is identical to all thoughts, contains all thought objects yet not in an explicit way,⁹³ particularity is similar to all distinct objects of thought, all pertaining to the I, and singularity is similar to the whole structure of subjectivity in which the I and thought objects are both identical and distinguished. The terms universality, particularity and

⁹¹ Neither is the Concept linked to the use of language, nor is mutual implication of elements enough to define something as conceptual in Hegel's sense. Hegel explicitly mentions that entities that have the form of the Concept may nevertheless be conceived in terms that don't capture that structure (WL2 285/). This shows: conceptual structures are not primarily a phenomenon of language – they may be expressed in language, but may also fail to be expressed. Second, many things, norms or concepts imply one another. To use an example relatively close to Brandom's arguments: wanting to read a book implies wanting scripture to exist. Hegel does not discuss any example like this, but it can be supposed that the relation book-scripture would not count as a whole with the form of the Concept. The relation book-scripture is not a whole (since there are many other external elements playing into it) nor does this relation establish the difference between the book and the scripture. Arguably, even if you think of the totality of all concepts together this totality is much too diffuse and unstructured to be considered an example of a whole that has the form of the Concept. For the interpretation of these American scholars see for example: Terry Pinkard, 'Hegel's analysis of mind and world: the Science of Logic', in his *German Philosophy. 1760-1860. The Legacy of Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 246-265; Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*, pp. 232ff.

⁹² See: Düsing: *Das Problem der Subjektivität in Hegels Logik*, pp. 109 ff., 233ff.

⁹³ Düsing points out universality refers to the "structure of unity of the subject or I with itself in its own manifold", see: *ibid.*, p.245.

singularity are useful for Hegel because all three denote aspects of one and the same entity, and each one makes reference to the others.⁹⁴ Hegel refrains from calling the Concept simply the subject, because he wants to avoid the association with a human or divine mind. From a Kantian viewpoint, the Concept would be similar to the intuitive understanding, as Longuenesse mentions,⁹⁵ but Hegel only wants to denote a very abstract general structure, which he takes to be the ontological basis of all reality. At the level of the Logic, this structure is not supposed to be instantiated in anything yet. Hegel describes only this structure itself, which is supposed to be more fundamental than any possible instantiation.

2. So far, describing the structure of the Concept, Hegel has not explicitly analysed what this means for finite things. It was said that the absolute conceived as the Concept is only a “form” and has a relational structure and contains all “content”. But on what basis does Hegel make this claim? The basic question is whether the absolute form, the complex relational structure of the Concept, constitutes all things – they being nothing but elements of its internal self-differentiation – or whether, on the contrary, the absolute form is only the expression of the distinctions between given things – it being nothing but their concrete relation. Arndt poses a similar question, asking whether the Concept must be understood as an “act of creation”, as Schelling and Marx critically interpret it, or whether it means the “reproduction of reality”.⁹⁶ The passage quoted above, regarding the Concept “releasing all content” out of itself, seems to bolster Marx’s and Schelling’s interpretation. Yet I believe Hegel endorses both claims simultaneously. In fact, he wants to avoid the question of priority, and, just as in the case of an organism, claim that the total organism both makes each organ what it is *and* at the same time is also nothing but the concrete relation between those organs, expressing the distinct nature of each one. Neither the

⁹⁴ Universality – in contrast to identity – denotes that many particulars are subsumed or contained in it, a particular structured entity is also the instance of this universal and it is always also something singular, namely, one concrete individual thing.

⁹⁵ See: Béatrice Longuenesse, *Hegel’s Critique of Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. xviii and particularly her chapter: ‘Point of view of man or knowledge of God. Kant and Hegel on Concept, Judgment, and Reason’, pp. 165ff.

⁹⁶ Andreas Arndt, ‘Die Subjektivität des Begriffs’, in *Hegels Lehre vom Begriff, Urteil und Schluss*, ed. by A. Arndt, C. Iber and G. Kruck (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006), p. 19.

organism nor the organs, neither the relational whole nor the related elements, are prior. Hegel makes this point about the non-priority of the absolute abstractly in the chapter on Reciprocity at the transition to the Logic of the Concept. His reasoning is that the absolute cannot be the first cause because in this case it would be something distinct from things – and therefore not absolute – and it would be dependent upon something else, something that serves as an effect and therewith makes it a cause, – and it would thus not be first.⁹⁷ Rather than sticking with this point, however, I will look into Hegel’s relational reasoning behind this proposition, making the case that the absolute not only constitutes but also expresses the diversity of things.

At the transition to the Concept, namely, in the section on Actuality, at the end of the Logic of Essence, Hegel writes: “The essential moment of the becoming of the Concept is the relation of the internal to the external” (WL2 182/526). The deficiency of Essence, Hegel says, is that it is only the “internal” related to the “external” (WL2 182/526). Essence is the identical source of all things, yet this identity is hidden, internal, not manifest in things and their relations. As Hegel says, “The identity of the sides is not yet manifest in them; it is only internal and the sides therefore fall apart, have an immediate external subsistence” (WL2 183/527). Hegel calls Essence an “external, systemless communality” (WL2 183/527). The absolute unity can only be manifested in things and their relations if it consists of their own systematic relations, and not through the simple subsuming of them under some common denominator – for example, them all having the same source. Essence as the identity of all things remains internal and hidden, because it is external to things, that is, not an expression of their internal nature.

Hegel expands on this point, namely, that the absolute can manifest itself in finite things only if it expresses their own natures, in various passages throughout the *Logic*. It is first hinted at in Hegel’s idea of “formed matter” (WL2 93f./454), where he proposes that

⁹⁷ See for an great exposition of this passage: Iber, ‘Übergang zum Begriff’.

matter has its own form. The total relations of form thus need to express the matter's own form rather than imposing a form onto unformed matter. Henrich says, not explicitly with regards to this passage but rather in general about the *Logic*, the manifold of things must be "itself differentiated and also opposed to the whole [...] [O]nly thus can the unification with the whole be in correspondence with what it [the manifold] itself is".⁹⁸ The differentiation of things shall not be imposed on them. In this case, I believe, one would persist with a dualist and essentially subjectivist theory in which the whole of reason imposes its differentiations on things that are themselves only undefined matter. Hegel, on the contrary, being a monist, wants things to truly be contained in the whole, and for this reason they need to have their own distinct natures and these natures need to be expressed within the absolute. In fact, if Hegel did not make this presupposition any differentiation whatsoever could be imposed on things by the whole. Every whole makes up some distinction, and every whole would be a true and concrete one. A dictatorship establishing the distinction between ruler and subjected people would be just as true, concrete and rational as a republic letting individuals or interest groups have their say. This is, however, clearly not Hegel's position.

At the end of the *Logic of Essence* Hegel therefore argues that the whole must be actualized in finite things and it can only be so if it is nothing but the concrete relation between things. If the absolute was only a Necessity for example, a necessary law, subsuming all things, then it would precisely fail to be manifest in things, visible in their concrete natures and relations. Things themselves would have "no concern with one another" (E1 §147A). "Necessity is something internal, hidden, happens as something alien; the bond, the connection is something concealed" (VL 172). The absolute cannot be present in things by grouping them together and distinguishing them as an alien force. In this case, the role each thing played in the necessary development or whole would be

⁹⁸ Henrich, 'Hegels Grundoperation', p. 210.

completely accidental to the thing. Its “being-this-way-or-another is not grounded in it, but in something else” (E1 §145A). The problem is that if a finite thing is not defined and related to others out of its own nature, then the definition and relation remains external to it, rather than being manifest and visible in its nature and relations. The unity or whole remains hidden, unless it issues from the finite things’ own nature.

As a result of this move, Hegel proposes, in the transition to the Concept, that things must be in a relation of reciprocity, similar to organs (E1 §156A), the absolute being like the organism. Hegel anticipates this idea of reciprocity saying that “Each one is through its other what it is in itself” (WL2 185/528). “What something is, therefore, it is wholly in its externality [...] Its externality is, therefore, the expression or utterance of what it is in itself” (WL2 185/528).⁹⁹ The most emphatic formulation of this reasoning can be found in the middle section of the Logic of the Concept in the transition to the Organism, where Hegel says of finite things as objects the following: “external determinateness [of the object] has now further developed into self-determining” (WL2 444/740). What things are defined as in relation to others comes to be their own self-determination, the expression of what they are internally. It shall not be a “determination that is external to/for it” (WL2 457/750). Finite things can thus be said to be ‘with themselves in the other’, namely, other finite things, in the sense that their own internal nature is externally expressed, just as one organ only realises its own nature in conjunction with other organs. And finite things are ‘with themselves in the absolute’, the organic relation of the whole, which affirms them in their own character.

The absolute in the form of the Concept thus must be conceived as the total relation that expresses the particularity of distinct things just as much as it constitutes them as distinct.

In contrast to Essence, which I believe is merely the principle of difference and identity

⁹⁹ These phrases stem from the transition to Actuality, the last part of the Logic of Essence, but Hegel emphasises that the relation of the internal and external discussed here, the internal nature and its external expression, is key for his Concept (WL2 182/526), and he mentions finite entities as examples like a plant or a human being (WL2 184/527).

that enables all differences between things, the Concept must be understood as the concrete and complex differentiating relation between finite things. But it also explains why Hegel compares the absolute as the Concept to an organism and a love-unity (WL2 277/603).¹⁰⁰ It is nothing but the relation between lovers (or organs) and also makes each one into a lover (or organ). Also, when using the term subjectivity to describe the Concept, as Iber notes, Hegel refers to a complex system, which both constitutes (thought) objects and is nothing but their totality, i.e. also constituted by them.¹⁰¹ This is also what enables Hegel to conceive of the absolute as such a harmonic whole, that is, not “violently” subsuming or negating things, but “in the other calm and with itself” (WL2 277/603). In another passage, he says it “remains with itself in its other with unclouded clarity” (E1 §163A). A whole with the structure of the Concept, as Schick puts it, “when relating to its differences, remains completely related to itself. Its differences retain nothing presupposed and thus external.”¹⁰² A whole in the form of an organism or a unity in love thus is identical to its other, namely, the many organs or lovers and their relation, thus being “with itself in them” in Hegel’s language. This implies that each conceptual whole is a particular whole, a whole of particular entities.¹⁰³ Only a love-unity can express and constitute the relation between lovers. It may become part of a bigger whole, namely, the state, but the state cannot substitute the love-relation, i.e. constitute lovers, and can only integrate it.

3. In my view, the overall development of the Logic of the Concept can be sketched as follows: At the beginning, in the chapter on the Concept, Hegel proposes a specific structure as the new conception of the absolute. This structure already implies a specific relation between the absolute and finite things. But Hegel describes the absolute as the Concept by means of the types of relations that characterise it, without mentioning what is

¹⁰⁰ Cf. also: Westphal, ‘Hegel’s Theory of the Concept’, p. 39.

¹⁰¹ Iber, ‘Was will Hegel eigentlich mit seiner Logik?’, p.29.

¹⁰² Schick, *Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik*, p.191.

¹⁰³ Friederike Schick notes that each one is “particular universal” (Ibid., 197). Also Düsing makes this point, that the universal or whole is not only internally differentiated for Hegel, but also externally, and thus distinct from other wholes. Düsing: *Das Problem der Subjektivität in Hegels Logik*, p.245.

being related. The harmonic connection between the whole and the related elements expounded in section 2 above – that the whole is the relation between things and also constitutive of them – thus remains largely implicit. It is presupposed in Hegel’s concept of an “abstract universal”, namely, a whole that fails to express the differences between its elements and subsumes things rather than being the organic relation between them. However, Hegel does not expand on this claim. It is in the middle section, called Objectivity, where Hegel comes to consider the related elements, finite things conceived as objects, as distinct from their relations. Here, he considers the possibility that relations between finite things may also fail to express their particularity, that the relation between whole and elements may fail to be harmonic. In the Idea, the last section of the *Logic*, Hegel then develops the conception of a whole that is constitutive and expressive of its related elements (like the Concept), and yet also distinguished from it (as in Objectivity). He now conceives of the absolute as an organic whole that is identical to the totality of organs in terms of content, and yet distinguished from them in terms of form. He describes this structure with the term “self-consciousness” and conceives of the absolute as an absolute subjectivity. Hegel’s basic idea, I believe, is that a harmonic connection between whole and parts cannot simply be taken as given, but that it is only by means of reflection that it can be reached and this reflection must somehow be part of the whole itself. Reflection must be understood here not as the thinking of someone about himself, but as something like a feedback mechanism, through which the structure of the whole and the distinct nature of the parts are being checked against each other and made to fit. In the following, I will look into Hegel’s Idea in general and this aspect of it in particular.

Hegel starts the last section of the *Logic*, entitled the Idea, with a discussion of the organism or Life. Hegel used the example of an organism already to explicate what structure would meet the formal descriptive aspects characteristic of the Concept (E1 §156A). As said above, Hegel does not yet analyse related elements or finite things in the chapter on the

Concept, but only very general relational characteristics displayed by the absolute with the structure of the Concept. It is therefore only in the Idea, after he has discussed finite things as distinct from the absolute in Objectivity, that Hegel can finally expound the re-established structure of the Concept in a more concrete way, namely, as the organism. In relation to the organism, Hegel says: “All of the body’s members are reciprocally momentary means and momentary ends for one another” (E1 §216). Conceiving the absolute as an organism means that the finite things in relation to one another mutually affirm each other’s internal nature – since each one can only truly be this organ if related to the others – and it also means that the absolute is nothing but the total relation between the organs. This idea was already implicit in the Concept, and I have presented this in section 2. The interesting and novel development is, however, that Hegel proposes that the organic whole and the totality of organs must be related and distinguished by means of reflection. Hegel writes:

(10) The Idea [...] possesses in its subjectivity also the moment of an object, consequently it enters into the shape of self-consciousness. (WL2 545/820)

Hegel employs the term subjectivity already at the beginning of the *Logic of the Concept* to describe the Concept, particularly the singular whole (E1 §164; VL 180). In these passages, the term refers to a self-differentiating whole, which is both constituted by and constitutes its many elements. In the last section of the *Logic*, however, Hegel introduces an additional sense of subjectivity. It is an absolute subjectivity, the Idea being the “subject-object” (VL 178) that overreaches objectivity. The “shape of self-consciousness” to which Hegel refers in the above quoted passage should not be misunderstood as an actual human or divine mind. Rather, Hegel means the pure structure of self-consciousness, which he conceives of as a specific form of the absolute or rather as a specific relation between the absolute and

finite things.¹⁰⁴ Self-consciousness and indeed self-willing are introduced, I believe, in order to think a whole that is nothing but the interrelation of all its parts and yet also distinct from them, or rather, as Hegel might put it, distinguishes itself from them. The human self, in analogy, is nothing but the entirety of all thoughts of this person and yet it also distinguishes itself from itself, makes its own thoughts the object of thought.

The true and last conception of the absolute is thus that it must be a self-reflective and organic system. Hegel calls this the “Idea that thinks itself” (VLM 191). “The logical Idea has itself as the infinite form as its content” (WL2 550/825). The infinite form to which Hegel refers is the complex structure proposed as the absolute. Why Hegel makes the proposition that the absolute must also be reflective is not explicit. I believe Hegel’s basic idea is that the harmonic connection between whole and parts proposed implicitly in the Concept – it being constitutive and expressive of their differences – cannot simply be presupposed. That finite things are “with themselves in the other” – affirmed in their own natures by the relation to other things and the whole and that the relational whole is identical to its elements – is not simply given. It is rather something that is reached only by means of reflection and this reflection must somehow be part of the whole itself, a feedback mechanism contained in it. The absolute in its last and complete conception is thus the entire complex systematic relation Hegel has developed up to this point, and this whole is supposed to establish and maintain its own specific structure. It is a whole that displays the basic form of self-consciousness and self-willing for Hegel, of one whole that opposes itself to itself and identifies this other as itself. At the end of the *Logic*, Hegel also calls this self-reflective form “dialectics”. As Düsing remarks, “the logical structure of pure subjectivity thinking itself is the method for Hegel”,¹⁰⁵ this method being dialectics. I am unable to offer a detailed discussion of dialectics in Hegel, but it may be said that dialectics

¹⁰⁴ Hegel describes Willing, one element of the absolute Idea, as: “the absolute afflicted with the determinateness of subjectivity” (WL2 544/820), for example. Later on, Hegel also describes the absolute Idea as the “self-knowing Concept that has itself as the absolute, subjective and objective, for its subject matter” (WL2 551/826).

¹⁰⁵ Düsing: *Das Problem der Subjektivität in Hegels Logik*, p.313.

is supposed to be a method that unveils the actual structure of things. The term dialectics thus also refers to a basic structure of something that opposes itself to itself and re-identifies it. And it is in this sense that Hegel refers to the term at the end of the *Logic*.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I argue that Hegel's *Science of Logic* develops a series of possible relations between the absolute and finite things, each of which displays the form of "being with oneself in the other". Over the course of the *Logic*, this way of relating is realised more fully. In the Logic of Being, finite things as Ones are seen as totally separate entities that are yet also numerically identical, units of an absolute One. In the Logic of Essence, which is the sphere of relationality, finite things and the absolute are seen as corollaries of each other. Yet the absolute "returns into itself" negating the independence of finite things, and they do so in relation to other finite things. Only in the Logic of the Concept, the absolute and finite things are truly "with themselves in the other". The point is that the organic whole is *in* the other, namely, the organs, and with itself, not by violently negating them, metaphorically speaking: leaving them behind and returning into itself, as in Essence. In other words, the other in its very otherness is also the first, the organs as both distinct and multiple are also the organic whole. The organs in relation to one another are affirmed in their own particular character. As a last addition to this conception, Hegel notes that there must be a reflective relation between the whole and its parts, the organism and the totality of the organs.

Chapter 2

Finitude and Infinity of the free will.

The Introduction of the *Philosophy of Right*

In the first chapter, I outlined my general interpretation of Hegel's *Science of Logic*. My proposition is that the entire *Logic* describes different possible relations between finite things, and between them and the absolute, all of which have form of "being with oneself in the other" at least in an inchoate manner. My general thesis as regards the *Philosophy of Right* is that these different spheres within Hegel's state represent different forms of freedom defined as "being with oneself in the other" that must be understood in parallel to the *Logic* as both relations between individuals, and between those individuals and the social whole. In the following four chapters, I will show how the successive versions of "being with oneself in the other" reappear in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. The four subsequent chapters deal with the Introduction to the *Philosophy of Right*, Abstract Right, Morality and Ethical Life, respectively. I read them in parallel to the four sections into which I divided the *Logic* in the opening chapter: the beginning of the *Logic*, where "being with oneself in the other" is first developed, corresponds to the Introduction of the *Philosophy of Right*, where Hegel introduces "being with oneself in the other" as the structure of free willing. The rest of the Logic of Being, particularly the One and the Many, displays similarities to Hegel's conception of persons in Abstract Right, while the Logic of Essence parallels Morality, and the Logic of the Concept parallels Hegel's description of Ethical Life. In the sixth and final chapter, I will analyse how freedom and "being with oneself in the other" is presented in Hegel's *Philosophy of History* and what connections to the logical discussion of this topic can be drawn.

That the *Philosophy of Right* deals with freedom in the form of “being with oneself in the other” will come as no surprise. Hegel begins his *Philosophy of Right* with an exposition of the structure of the free will, which he says is the “point of departure” of his system of right. “The will is free, so that freedom constitutes its substance and determination and the system of right is the realm of actualized freedom” (PR §4). As Maletz notes, the structure of the free will is also the structure of freedom for Hegel; they are the same.¹⁰⁶ The social system Hegel will develop in his *Philosophy of Right* is meant to be something like a solution to an inherent problem of free willing, a problem arising when you try to conceptualise freedom. Many interpreters, such as Franco, have argued that freedom is the key topic of the *Philosophy of Right* and that Hegel defines freedom as “being with oneself in the other”,¹⁰⁷ or, as Robert Pippin puts it: freedom means that “my relation to myself is mediated by my relation to others”.¹⁰⁸ However, interpreters have not explicated in detail why this formula emerges – particularly in parallel to Hegel’s argument in the *Logic* – and what different forms and meanings it acquires over the course of the *Philosophy of Right*.

The task of the present chapter is to show that Hegel introduces the formula “being with oneself in the other” in a way that directly parallels, and even draws on, the beginning of the *Logic*. The free will contains a contradiction between an infinite and finite will, similar to the one between the absolute and finite things at the beginning of the *Logic*: on the one hand, the will is absolute, the I=I or reflexive identity, purely self-related, empty and undefined, while on the other hand, it is completely finite, the direction towards something that is wanted, something outside the will that limits it and defines this act of willing. Just as in the *Logic*, Hegel then proposes that each one requires the respective other: self- and other-relation, the absoluteness and the finitude must be integrated and only count as different aspects of the same. This is how one reaches the idea of “being with oneself in the

¹⁰⁶ Donald Maletz, ‘The Meaning of ‘Will’ in Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*’, in *Interpretation*, 13.2 (1985), pp. 195-212 (p.198).

¹⁰⁷ Franco, *Hegel’s Philosophy of Freedom*, pp.159ff.

¹⁰⁸ Robert Pippin, *Hegel’s Practical Philosophy. Rational Agency as Ethical Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 149; see also: p.144.

other”, which in this case refers to the relation of identity and difference between the will and what is wanted. In the main text of the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel will then develop different versions of this basic thought, different attempts at concretising it – in the same way, as he presents different forms of “being with oneself in the other” over the course of his *Science of Logic*.

The elements of the will: Being and Finitude, self- and other-relation

The will is often described in terms of a human subject. Hegel himself does so, as for instance in the *Philosophy of Right* where he writes:

(11) As for those elements of the concept of the will which are mentioned in this and the following paragraphs of the Introduction and which result from this premise referred to above [subjective spirit], it is possible to form an image of them by consulting the self-consciousness of any individual. Anyone can find within himself the ability to abstract from anything whatsoever, and likewise to determine himself, to posit any content in himself by his own agency (PR §4A).

It is thus legitimate to use the human being as an example for explaining the will. However, that Hegel distinguishes between what he actually means by the “will” and how we can picture it, namely, as an individual, implies that the will is not (primarily) the will of the individual. Our minds abstracting from everything and fabricating anything in our own fantasy thus only serve to exemplify the structure of the will. But the will is primarily and simply a conception, a logical structure, which at this point has not been attributed to any specific entity. One problem when using the human will as an example is that one tends to think of the will as something given, unproblematic and unified. Very much to the contrary,

the concept of the will is more like a task. The two elements of the will are opposites, and it is an achievement that the will can “endure this contradiction” (PR §35A), as Hegel writes about the person. Hegel makes this very clear:

(12) First, that I can free myself from any determination and, second, that I can posit any determination. Every man will find these two determinations within his self-consciousness; it is freedom. Man thus appears as a being full of contradictions, he is the contradiction itself (VRP4 118).

Since the will is a contradiction, it is slightly misleading to speak of its “elements” right from the outset. It is better to say, first, that there are two opposing entities or conceptions of the will, and, second, that the will proper is the unity of both and therefore a contradiction. The future elements of the will proper are in fact opposite definitions of the will, which at first compete to provide the full definition of what constitutes the will. Only subsequently are they reduced to elements of the correct conception of the will.

The first definition of the will is: “1. The will is pure thinking, I” (VPR21 43). Describing it as the future element of the will proper, Hegel says:

(13) The will contains α) the element of pure indeterminacy or the I’s pure reflection into itself, in which every limitation, every content [...] is dissolved; this is the limitless infinity of *absolute abstraction* or *universality*, the pure thinking of oneself (PR §5).

The first definition or element of the will is “pure thinking of itself”, reflexive identity. This idea can certainly be approached taking the empirical human self-consciousness and willing as an example: All I ever think are my thoughts, all I ever will are my acts; thus, there is a

self-relation between me and mine. Some modern scholars, like Russell¹⁰⁹ and Ryle,¹¹⁰ deny there is an “I” that thinks or acts, supposing that all that exists is a succession of thoughts and acts. It is, however, certainly the way human individuals intuitively think of themselves, namely, as one who *has* different thoughts and *performs* different acts, and thus someone who is also different from them. For Hegel, this everyday self-conception is correct. He supposes that in the performance of thinking and acting there is actually a difference and relation between the subject of willing or thinking and its acts or thoughts. In the above quoted passage, Hegel distils from this relation just one basic element, namely, self-relation or self-identity, which he proposes as the (at present, *only*) fundamental principle of subjectivity, the basic structure of pure willing.

Noticeable and characteristic for Hegel and other German idealists is the view that when one abstracts from all “given content” one does not simply end up with an “I”, a given simple, indeterminate substrate as in Descartes. Rather, one ends up with the “reflection of the I into itself”, “the pure thinking of itself”. The distinction Hegel draws within the pure form of willing is not the one between the given I and the thoughts or acts that are added to it. It is rather the one between the identity of the I in its acts and thoughts, them being its own, and the difference between the I and acts or thoughts. The difference consists in the idea that the I is “given” a “content” from without, i.e. by something other than the I. Hegel names “needs, desires” above, but he could also mention the external reality that provides the I with things to want or to want to act upon.

Hegel’s first element of the structure of the will is certainly akin to Fichte’s absolute I, the I=I, to which Hegel also compares it (PR §6). It is also similar to Kant’s transcendental subject, the “I think”. The key point to note is, as Düsing points out,¹¹¹ that Fichte and

¹⁰⁹ Russell proposes, for example, that you can also say “it thinks in me” in analogy to “it rains here”. As such, for Russell, one does not so much think something, but rather thinking happens as an empirical process in the form of the succession of different thoughts. See: Bertrand Russell, *The Analysis of the Mind* (Sioux Falls, USA: NuVision Publications, 2008), p.16.

¹¹⁰ See Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson, 1968), pp.186ff.

¹¹¹ Klaus Düsing, *Subjektivität und Freiheit. Untersuchungen zum Idealismus von Kant bis Hegel* (Stuttgart: frommann-holzboog, 2002), p.174.

Hegel arrive at the idea of self-relatedness as a basic element of subjectivity by expanding on the idea implicit in Kant, namely, that the I is self-related when relating to thought objects that are structured by the categories.¹¹² The “I think” accompanies representations and thought objects that have the form of the categories. Since the categories are the basic structures of thinking, and the categorical form is given to intuitions by the subject, the thinking subject relates to itself when relating to this aspect of its representations. The “pure reflection of the I into itself” thus should not be understood as some simple entity called I thinking about or willing itself, but rather as the aspect of reflectivity or self-identity in all concrete thoughts and acts that is proposed, at this point, as the defining principle of willing. Hegel only puts this in the most abstract and simple form, saying that the I reflects into itself, with the object and subject of willing or thinking being identical. Hegel thus proposes, to start with, that the will only consists in reflexive identity, that is, in a relation to itself.

The present definition of will, as pure self-relation or self-identity, implies that it is not an individual. It could be said that this self-related will is identical in all individuals, but one should put this differently and more correctly: if the claim is true that the will is completely self-related, then there are no individuals. Hegel explains this with a religious example:

(14) ... renouncing every activity of life, every end, and every representation. In this way the human being becomes Brahman. There is no longer any distinction between the finite human being and Brahman; instead every difference has disappeared in this universality (RPhil52,§5A;EN39).

¹¹² On Hegel’s appropriation of Kant’s and Fichte’s conception of subjectivity, see also: Rolf-Peter Horstmann, ‘The Metaphysics of the Self. Hegel’s Metaphysical Conception of Self-Consciousness’, in *The Transcendental Turn*, ed. Sebastian Gardner and Matthew Grist (forthcoming 2011).

“Finite human beings”, like finite things, must be, by definition, distinct from one another. This is what makes them individual in the first place. Only as such distinct individuals are they also different from the absolute oneness, Brahman. Since individuals are only individuals on account of their distinctions, abstracting from all differences – in needs, thoughts, acts, and so on – means abstracting away individuality. Then there is only the self-relation of thinking, or the self-related I. Hegel also defines this first moment as “pure indeterminacy” (VRP3 111), “the colourless light in pure intuition” (PR §5A).

Hegel’s description of the self-relation of the I clearly resembles Being at the beginning of the *Logic*. Being is absolute and it is indeterminate. Hegel compares it to “pure light” (WL1 96/93), “empty intuition” (WL1 82/82), “pure thought” (E1 §86). Hegel also uses an example from Indian philosophy, namely, Buddhism (WL1 84/83). Moreover, as was pointed out in the preceding chapter, while Hegel starts with this definition of Being as merely the undefined, a lack of determinations, he goes on to define it positively as pure self-identity. This is clearly echoed in the above quoted passage, where he defines the will as “pure indeterminacy or the I’s pure reflection into itself” (PR §5).

The parallel is, of course, not a coincidence, but deeply ingrained in Hegel’s conception both of the *Logic* and subjectivity. Hegel writes in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*: “Being can be determined as I=I [...] When I=I, or even intellectual intuition, is truly taken just as the first, then in this pure immediacy it is nothing other than Being” (E1 §86). The self-relation of the I, in this pure abstraction means something like self-identity, self-sameness, and this is precisely the definition of Being. Since Hegel presents the will as a structure in general and not (primarily) as something that exists within the minds of human beings, he does not distinguish between pure being and pure thinking, self-related being and thought. Indeed, in the *Logic*, Hegel defines Being as both “pure thought” (E1 §86; WL1 83/82) and pure being. It is a key proposition of Hegel’s metaphysics that being and thinking, the objective world and subjective reasoning, have the same structure, which is laid down in the *Logic*.

They are, of course, distinct, and Hegel will concede that the structure of the will can only exist in individual or collective human beings. Yet, for him, there is a pre-established harmony, an inbuilt expectation that the world can be congruent to human thinking and willing.

Hegel's critiques of the self-related I and Being are the same: both are totally empty. He critically remarks that the absolute I is "the freedom of the void, that, fixed in this abstraction, only posits its Being" (PR §5R). All that can be said is that the absolute I is that it is. This is so because there is nothing it is; it contains no distinct properties or elements that characterise it – just like Being. And, again like Being, it is therefore nothing.

(15) A will which, as described in the previous paragraph, wants only the abstract universal wants nothing and is therefore not a will at all (PR §6A).

It is not clear to what abstract universal Hegel refers here, but he probably means the pure I or will. Understood in this way, the phrase reads that the subject of willing only wills itself. Since the pure logical I has by and of itself no properties or content, in willing itself the I wants nothing specific and is therefore not a will at all, since a will must necessarily will something. This way of putting it – the empty will willing itself – is, however, slightly misleading. It is more precise to say that the will in its first definition is merely pure self-relation, without any differentiation, and is therefore empty. In the *Logic*, Hegel makes the analogous point that Being is nothing. He does not explicate, however, whether this is so because Being is completely indeterminate – and thereby nothing positive – or whether it is so because Being is a totally empty self-relation, the self-identity of nothing determinate. Both readings can also be applied to the first element of the will, that is, it being completely indeterminate and also self-related. The parallel to the emptiness of the infinite will is thus apparent.

Since the self-related I is completely empty and not a will at all, the will needs to be redefined. Hegel presents this second definition or element as follows:

(16) β) In the same way, 'I' is the transition from undifferentiated indeterminacy to difference, determination and the positing of a determinacy as a content or object (PR §6).

The second element of the will is clearly the opposite of the first: difference instead of the pure self-sameness, determinacy instead of emptiness. But this is highly abstract. Hegel explicates the second element of the will by comparing it to the human being wanting something: "I also want something [ich will etwas],¹¹³ i.e. something particular; it is my will to determine myself, to particularize myself" (PRV21 44). The will wanting this is determinate, since it wants this specific thing or this specific goal, this specific change in the world, and it is also different from other acts of willing (i.e. the acts of wanting something else). However, it is again important not to be misled by the example of the human being. Directly after the quoted passage Hegel therefore introduces the following disclaimer:

(17) Here, in this paragraph, it is not yet resolving [that is being discussed], but only the direction of the will towards something particular. If we compare this moment with the preceding one, this is the moment of the finitization of the I (PRV21 44).

In another version he remarks: "Here not yet: I want something – but the direction of the will toward something" (PR §6R). An individual resolving to want or do this is certainly "directed toward something particular": this specific desire or need for this specific thing

¹¹³ In German, there is no distinction between the terms willing and wanting. When Hegel says: "Ich will etwas", you would first think of wanting something, a goal or thing, which then secondarily also requires the willing of the act to attain it.

towards or upon which I act. But an individual is also a pure I, a universal will, distinct from this specific will to this specific thing. However, what Hegel examines here is not yet the individual human will, which necessarily also includes a pure I, but rather is only the opposite of the first element, namely, intentionality, the relation away from the I to one specific thing. The second element of the will is the wish for, and the act towards, a specific thing, without there yet being a subject that could also resolve to do otherwise¹¹⁴ or recognise itself in this act.

The second element of the will can thus best be characterised by what it is not: It is not self-related and not universal, but only one specific relation to something else, something other than the I. On that basis, Hegel contrasts it with the absolute I:

(18) 'I' as such is primarily pure activity, the universal which is with itself [bei sich]; but this universal determines itself, and to that extent is no longer with itself but posits itself as an other and ceases to be universal (PR §7A).

The universal, when becoming determinate, turns into something else, something that is not “with itself” and self-related. This is the particular finite willing of something, the enacted desire for this specific thing. “All finite is relative to an other. Infinity [...] relates to itself” (PRV21 54). Willing something specific consists precisely in the “direction towards something” other than the will itself. The will is per se universal and empty. As Hegel says in the above quote, only by wanting “something particular” does the will particularise itself. The particular thing, or the change to this particular thing, that the will wants makes the will particular; it is not so in and of itself. One might want to object here that the particular thing that the will wants could stem from the will, like a rational aim the

¹¹⁴ It is only in § 13, p.64, that Hegel discusses resolving, and he points out that resolving is what makes human beings distinct individuals. This level of concretion is not yet reached in § 7.

will wants to realise, for example. But even in this instance, the second element of the will would be only and exclusively other-related when relating to it. This is so, first, because the I is at this point defined as completely empty – thus not containing any content, be it aims or wishes – and, second, because Hegel is analysing only the relation to this specific something in abstraction – without the “return into itself”, as Hegel would put it, the reflection that what is wanted belongs to me, at least in the sense that it is part of my willing. Additionally, any aim must be realised within an external world towards which the will is directed and which at least partly determines the particular way the will can act.

This “finitization of the I” clearly parallels Hegel’s discussion of Finitude and finite things at the beginning of the *Logic*. In “determinate being” Hegel introduces the basic and first conception of finite things. “Determinate beings” are many singular things; they are specific and, as Hegel argues, only defined by the distinguishing relation to what they are not, i.e. to other finite things. In addition, the willing of something is particular. In contrast to the first element of the will, the self-identity of the I, which is only one and absolute, each particular will for something is different from others and in this respect similar to finite things. And, Hegel says, the willing of something is not “with itself”, i.e. self-related; the finite is rather “relative to an other”, it is defined by something that is not itself. Hegel explains this second definition of the will and its finitude with a concept he uses to characterise finite things at the beginning of the *Logic of Being*: “barrier” or “limitation”. In its conjugated and declined forms, the term occurs at least thirty times in the introduction, always with reference to the particular element of the will. The self-related I has to “limit itself”, the particular act of willing is “the limited”, the particular thing it wants is its “barrier” (all in PR §6A).

(19) The particular thing which the will wants is a barrier, and the will, to be will, has to limit itself. That the will wants something is the barrier or negation. The particularization is what you normally call finitude (PR §6A).

What I want limits me, not only in the sense that I limit myself to wanting only this, but also in the logical sense of the word “barrier” and finitude. For Hegel, finite things are characterised by the contradiction that each one is this specific thing only because of its limit or “negation”, i.e. because of what it is not. When Hegel says that the particular which the will wants limits the will and makes it finite, he clearly means the particular entity or change wanted and not a particular resolve. This is clear on two counts. Firstly, the resolve of a subject is not yet the topic here; it is only the mere direction of the will toward something that is wanted. Secondly, the will in relation to its own resolve, if this resolve is taken as its own expression, would precisely not be finite in Hegel’s sense but rather infinite, i.e. self-related. In contrast to this, Hegel means to say that the second aspect of the will is finitude, because it is only the relation of the will to something else, something it is not – its barrier or negation – and this other completely defines it. Hegel explicitly explains the word in this logical sense: “The determination is the barrier” (VRP3 116).¹¹⁵ The specific thing, or change to a thing, I want defines my wanting of it. My wanting as such is totally empty, only wanting *it* or *it* to be different defines or “determines” *this* particular wish and distinguishes it from another wish for something else.

The particular entity or change wanted is also a Barrier in the logical sense because it is something I want to overcome: It is typical of willing to want to be more than this specific wish for this specific thing or change – just as finite things are supposed to be more than their determinate present state. If there were just a single particular wish present in one’s mind, it would not be possible to consider this person as expressing a free will. Yet,

¹¹⁵ This is part of a comment on §6 of the *Philosophy of Right*, section heading: §6.2 Finitization.

according to Hegel's argument, it is the thing or change I want that "particularizes" me, defining this specific act of willing and making it distinct from other wills to something else. It is thus the other-relation, the relation of the will to something that it is not, that defines the willing of something. This bears a striking similarity to Hegel's definition of Finitude in the *Logic*, and indeed he explicitly uses the corresponding terminology. Yet, it must be admitted that one finite thing is what it is by not being the other finite thing. In the case of one particular act of willing, on the contrary, it is defined primarily as a relation to something it is not, namely, what is wanted, and only secondarily as against other acts of willing, that is, wanting *this* rather than *that*.

It is worth considering what this implies for the freedom of the will. Explaining the second element of the will in terms of finitude, Hegel implies that not the will but the thing wanted determines the willing of something – just as finite things are determined by and completely dependent on what they are not. Anyone will disagree with this thought since it is the subject who chooses what to want. But Hegel is looking purely at the relation of the will to something outside itself, that is, without the element of reflection into the will. And he supposes that this element by itself would be complete unfreedom. If you do not know yourself as "I" and only know the thing toward which your mind is directed, you are not free. An example would be a drug experience or the mind of a baby. The baby cannot distinguish itself in its own mind from the hunger and the desire for food. It cannot say 'this is me, me feeling hunger and my desire to satisfy it'. The baby cannot choose between different possible reactions to the feeling of hunger. It cannot decide not to scream because the feeling of hunger exists in its mind without reflection on the I. Even though the second element of the will implies unfreedom, determinacy by something other than the will, it is also clear that the first element of the will, even though it would imply freedom, being self-related and not dependent on anything outside itself, nevertheless remains completely empty and meaningless, as the freedom to do nothing.

The two elements of the will – the self-related I and the willing of something specific – are in a contradiction similar to the one between the absolute and finite things at the beginning of the *Logic*. The *Philosophy of Right* proposes at first that the will is one absolute will, and then that it is many distinct acts of willing, wanting different things. Each of these definitions of the will is, however, by itself deficient: the absolute I is self-related and in this sense free, but by itself it is also totally empty and not a will at all. The particular willing of this or that is specific and has a determinate content, but it is dependent and is not defined or “determined” out of itself but by the thing or change to a thing that is wanted. The deficiencies echo exactly what was argued about the absolute and finite things at the beginning of the *Logic*, but they also make sense in this specific context. Here they imply that neither of the two definitions, taken in isolation, truly defines a will: An empty will wanting nothing is not a will, and an unfree will, totally absorbed by the thing it wants, is not a will either. All willing requires a certain distance between the one who wants (the subject), and what is wanted (the object). To have a will you have to know that you can will different things, and that your will is always more than any concrete act of willing and more than the sum total of them. You have to be able to abstract from all your concrete wishes and know that your will is something universal that can be enacted in many ways, applied to many things.

The minimal structure of free willing

It is therefore not surprising that Hegel makes the following claim: “What is properly called the will contains both preceding moments” (PR §7A). “It does not become will until it is this self-mediating activity and returns into itself” (PR §7).

(20) Freedom lies neither with indeterminacy, nor with determinacy, but is both at once. [...] Freedom is to will something determinate, yet to be with oneself [bei sich] in this determinacy and to return once more to the universal (PR §7A).

Hegel overcomes the deficiency of both definitions of the will by integrating them. Self- and other-relation, the infinity and finitude of the will, must be integrated. When wanting something specific the will must be “with itself”, self-related therein. Hegel’s own presentation of this point could be much clearer, and it is additionally blurred by the fact that after presenting what he takes to be the true structure of freedom and the free will, he describes other forms of willing that fail to be truly free by his account. Those forms of willing fail to unite infinite and finitude, self- and other-relation, in a consistent manner and therefore fall short of true freedom in Hegel’s view.¹¹⁶ He thus presents in §§9-21 forms of willing that systematically precede the free will, which Hegel presents in §7. Notably, also in his theory of subjective spirit in the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel analyses the same deficient forms of willing, and he does so prior to analysing the truly free will. Interestingly, in the *Logic* Hegel also presents one failed attempt at uniting infinity and finitude, namely, the Ought or bad infinity, before reaching their true integration in Being-with-onself or true infinity. Since I will propose that truly free willing is similar to Being-with-onself for Hegel, I will analyse those failed attempts at free willing in parallel to the logical conceptions that precede Being-with-onself.

The two deficient forms of willing Hegel presents are called the “natural will” and the “reflective will”, respectively. I propose that the natural will is an intermediate form partly similar to Finitude in the *Logic*. The reflective will is similar to bad Infinity and the Ought in

¹¹⁶ In §8 Hegel says by means of anticipation that the deficient forms of willing are distinguished in terms of particularity, referring back to §6, i.e. the particular content that is wanted. One could therefore also describe the relation between the truly free will and the deficient forms of willing as follows: §7 presents the basic structure that a free will would need to display, and §§9-21 look into what exact content is required that is compatible with the structure of willing, the only proper content being freedom itself.

the *Logic*, while true freedom displays the form of the logical category Being-for-Oneself. In the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel describes the natural will as follows: “The natural will is immediately identical with its determination, drive and inclination” (E3 §473). The natural will is a “within itself finite will” (PR §11). The finitude of the natural will consists in it being determined by drives and desires, which are at this point “external” (E3 §474) to the individual, as Hegel says. These drives and desires are “immediately present”, i.e. given to the will; it “finds itself as determined by nature” (PR §11). The natural will is thus determinate and relates to something other (namely, what it desires) but not to itself since the desire is given and not determined or formed by the will. However, already the natural will contains an element of infinity or self-relation, which Hegel calls its “rational” (E3 §474) aspect. This is the drive to appropriate an object, to satisfy one’s desire, which foreshadows the idea that the other must also be me, which is true freedom for Hegel. The “reflective will” or arbitrary will consists in the consciousness that the will is not “tied to this or that content” (PR §14), and can choose any content to will. The reflective will is completely formal. It consists in the idea that any given content can be willed or subsumed under the form of willing. The content, namely, what is willed, is simply an externally given option or thing; it thus does not stem *from* the will. The reflective will therefore necessarily presupposes that the content itself is unimportant, and what matters is only that the content is mine, that is, what I have chosen to want. In this way, by negating the specific content of willing – and thereby also the specific act of willing – the will is purely self-related and infinite in Hegel’s sense. The “reflective will” establishes a “self-reflecting infinite I which is with itself” (PR §14). It is infinite or purely self-related, “with itself”, by abstracting from everything concrete that is willed.

The “reflective will” clearly resembles the Ought and bad infinity in the *Logic*. The Ought describes the idea that things are beyond their determinations or properties. The properties are there, but they ought to not count as what the thing truly is. For Hegel, the thing in this

definition is nothing but the “being beyond”, the negative of the properties. The reflective will, in the same manner, “stands above” the content, the many determinate wishes and things that may be wanted and that could define this will. Recall that the will is not “tied to this or that content”. In other words, the content that is willed ought not to define this will. The will performs many particular acts of willing, and yet they also count as “nullity” (E3 §478), as something the will is not. The infinity of the reflective will is clearly “bad infinity” in the logical sense: the infinity or self-relation only consists in negating the finite specific acts of willing and things wanted. That the will is not defined by any specific acts of willing is only manifest in the infinite progression of many acts of willing, none of which truly define it. The reflective will wills something and then negates it, retrieves from it and turns to something, thus showing that it is not defined by it; and so on. Hegel therefore says that the reflective will consists in the “process of distraction, sublating one drive or enjoyment by another [...] to infinity” (E3 §478).

Hegel criticises bad infinity in the *Logic* by claiming that it is never actually infinite because it is only the negative of something else. He makes exactly the same point in the *Philosophy of Right*: the reflective will enacts and negates specific desires “ad infinitum”, but “it does not escape from finitude” (PR §16). This is so, Hegel explains, because the willed content is always something different from the will itself; the form that this content takes, namely, it being willed by this subject, is accidental. The free will itself remains the negative of the determinate content that is willed. Hegel therefore speaks of “indeterminacy, indecision, or abstraction” (PR §16): The reflective will only consists in not being bound up with the present decision, instead abstracting from it. The reflective will continually and infinitely negates what could define it, thus remaining completely abstract and only the negative of the finite concrete acts.

True infinity, on the contrary, for Hegel requires that something is related to itself *in* the other, not by negating it. And this is the true form of freedom Hegel proposes in §7 of the

introduction to the *Philosophy of Right*: “The I is with itself in its limitation, in this other” (PR §7A). The term limitation is typical for Finitude in the *Logic*, and it means that something is defined in relation to an other, to what it is not; this relation is a thing’s limit. Hegel was cited above saying: “Freedom is to will something determinate, yet to be with oneself [bei sich] in this determinacy” (PR §7A). The key point to note is that the will is free only if it is “with itself” in its determinacy. Hegel means to say that instead of an act belonging to me independently of its specificity – i.e. simply because I have chosen to will it – the very specificity of this act – i.e. what exactly I want and do – shall also be me or an expression of my free will. I don’t and cannot choose among given options or content, but the desired content, the very option and how it is enacted, must stem from me. It is also worth noting that the content which I want and enact will always contain an element of something other than me. The will is practical and relates to the world within which acts are performed. Therefore, already in this proposition, namely, that what I want shall be me, Hegel implicitly establishes the need of a social world that is congruent with my will.

To grasp the radicalness of Hegel’s conception of free willing or freedom, it is worth comparing it to his predecessors. Hegel clearly takes the two elements of the will – its infinity and finitude – from the philosophy of Kant and Fichte. Already in his early analyses of their understanding of theoretical and practical reason,¹¹⁷ Hegel criticises their “common foundational principle” which is the “opposition of finitude and infinity” (GW 295). Reason is, on the one hand, infinite, in the sense of purely self-related. This is the $I=I$, or reason in relation to its own representations and acts. But “ $I=I$, is nothing but the formal identity, the infinity, which has a finitude against it” (GW 407). On the other hand, reason is also completely finite, related to and defined by an external other: its representations are not identical to how things really exist, there are things in themselves opposed to reason

¹¹⁷ In a very interesting article, Schlösser analyses Hegel’s conception of selfness and self-determination and its direct link to the logical conception of finitude as a self-relation, as they appear in his early critique of Kant and Fichte, see: Ulrich Schlösser, ‘Selbstsein und Unendlichkeit. Archäologische Untersuchungen zu Hegels Darstellung der Idealistischen Philosophie im Naturrechtsaufsatz’, in *Kritische Jahrbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 7 (2002), pp.41-53.

that limit it, and, what is more, even those representations do not stem purely from reason itself. Rather, reason is given the manifold content of intuitions and things to act upon or will from outside reason, namely, by the thing-in-itself. In Fichte's philosophy, the absolute I requires an external "Anstoß", and performs an "act that is determined by matter" (GW 407), according to Hegel's understanding.

When Hegel demands that the self- and other-relation of the will must become identical, that is, only aspects of one and the same relation, he says nothing less than that the thing-in-itself, the world we intuit and act within, the object, must also be I, distinguishable and yet also the same as the subject. While intuiting – viz. in practical philosophy, willing something specific – the individual shall still be self-related, self-determining and not purely receptive, not filled by an externally given content. This is only possible if the entity that is wanted, and ultimately the world that is acted within, is identical to the I (me as a reasoning and willing subject). It is obvious that this requirement for freedom creates some problems, since it is simply a fact that the world is not me. In the main body of the text of the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel presents several attempts at fulfilling this demand. In Abstract Right, he proposes that individuals abstract from the physical existence of things and simply want their own ability to want and own anything, which is socially granted in the legal person. In Morality, Hegel proposes that your acts and the changes you effect in the world could count as an expression of your will, you thus being self-related in your acts, even though they are changes that exist in the world independently of whether you still will them or not. In Ethical life, Hegel finally concludes that the social world as a whole must be made by human beings, known to be made by them, and organised according to the very structure of freedom, which, as Hegel argues in the introduction, is inherent in the free will.

The basic formula of freedom or the free willing, which Hegel proposes in paragraph 7, thus remains very abstract. It is simply the idea that self- and other-relation must not truly

be distinct, but rather only aspects of one and the same relation. The relation to something else that I want must also be a self-relation. Only such a relation would constitute true freedom. In the *Logic*, Hegel presents this idea in “Being-for-oneself” and describes it as “self-determination”. I have argued in the first chapter that Hegel intentionally formulates this idea ambiguously: it can refer to the self-determination of a singular thing, or in this case an individual. From this viewpoint, the idea ultimately requires a whole, or at least others, that count as identical to this individual, in relation to which the singular thing or individual can thus be self-related. However, since the idea is so abstract at this point, I believe one can just as well read the structure of freedom as a requirement for and description of the absolute: the absolute, here described as the absolute I, $I=I$ or Being, must also contain an other-relation or difference. In the social sphere, the whole or absolute can only exist in and through an other, namely, individual human beings, that is, however, also distinguishable from the whole system. Hegel uses the terms “universal will” and “free, substantial will” (E3 §486) to denote that the social whole itself, spirit, must also have the form of willing, the form of identity with oneself in the other, this other, being the particular or subjective wills, i.e. individuals.

Conclusion

This chapter interprets the account of freedom and the free will in the introduction to the *Philosophy of Right* in parallel with the beginning of the *Logic of Being*. Hegel’s method in the *Philosophy of Right* is thus to first present a problem, namely, the contradiction within the will, that it is both self-related and other-related, free and foreign-determined, infinite and finite. This is developed in §§ 5-6 in the Introduction to the *Philosophy of Right*. Then, in § 7, Hegel presents the general sketch of a solution, namely, the integration of self- and other-relation in such a way that both are only aspects of one and the same relation. When

relating to something other which I want or act on, I must also be relating to myself. This is Hegel's famous definition of freedom: *being with oneself in the other*. The primary task of the main text of the book is to see how this requirement can actually be met, with each sphere of the system of right representing an attempt at concretising this general formula, and translating this formula into actual social practice. In the Introduction to the *Philosophy of Right*, §§ 9-21, Hegel still develops forms of the will which do not manage to truly integrate both elements of the willing and thus fail to present true freedom. The *Philosophy of Right* is, thus, on the one hand, structured more clearly than the *Science of Logic*, because the key problem and the general formula for its solution are presented separately from the main text, while in the *Logic* they are simply presented in the first section called Quality. On the other hand, Hegel describes failed conceptions of free willing, and failed attempts at uniting infinity and finitude, after presenting the real and correct solution, which is the inverse order of its logical development.

The question must be raised as to whether it is legitimate to read the initial account of the will in the *Philosophy of Right* in parallel with the first part of Logic of Being. Is the will not famously similar to the logical Concept, the human spirit even being the best example for what this structure means?¹¹⁸ It is indeed, and Hegel also uses terms from the analysis of the Concept – such as universality, particularity and singularity. Nevertheless, Hegel clearly also employs terminology and arguments from the Logic of Being in the introduction to the *Philosophy of Right*, as well as in his early analyses of the theories of subjectivity in Kant and Fichte. In some respects, the terminology from the Logic of Being is even more fitting: Universality, for example, is not “empty” (WL2 277/604); it is “what is richest in itself” (WL2 275/602). Being¹¹⁹ thus exhibits a far greater similarity to the absolute I than does universality in the complete logical sense of the word. The key characteristic of the so-

¹¹⁸ Franco, for example, notes that the will has the form of the logical Concept, see: Franco, *Hegel's Philosophy of Freedom*, p. 159. Hegel often uses spirit as an example for his Concept (WL2 279/605).

¹¹⁹ Hegel describes Being as “pure indeterminacy and emptiness” (WL1 82/82) and he explicitly compares it to the Fichtean I=I (EI §86).

called particular element of the will is its “limitedness” and “finitude”. Hegel even speaks of the “dualism of infinity and finitude” (PR §6) – all concepts that belong to the Logic of Being.

Is Hegel just inconsistent in his own terminology and reasoning? Or does a conception of the will in terms of the Logic of Being also have some justification? My view is that Hegel intentionally deploys the language of two different parts of his *Logic* simultaneously. In later passages of the *Logic*, he customarily uses terminology from earlier parts, particularly when they describe similar phenomena. For example, he speaks of the “true infinite universal” (WL2 279/605), thus letting the reader know that Universality and Infinity are denoting something similar, namely, in this case, self-identity or self-relation, which the term Universality, however, conceives in a much more elaborate manner. I have explicated in the preceding chapter that, for Hegel, simpler logical ways of expressing things also grasp complex phenomena, albeit in a simplistic manner. This means that, while true freedom may be completely realised only in terms of the Concept, it can nevertheless also be represented in a simplified version through the Logic of Being. Indeed, my interpretation of the *Logic* proposed in chapter 1 supposes that Hegel analyses the same relational topic in all three books of his *Logic*, only in simpler and more complex ways. My approach is to present the topic of the *Logic* (and the *Philosophy of Right*) at first in its simplest form, namely, as a problem to be solved and a general scheme for its solution. Hegel himself clearly uses the Logic of Being, that is, the simpler way of putting things, to describe the structure of the free will in the introduction to the *Philosophy of Right*. It may be supposed that he gives such a minimal account of freedom and the free will because it is applicable to all conceptions of the will presented in the *Philosophy of Right*, since not all of them display the complete structure of the logical Concept. Even Michael Quante, who argues that the will can only be fully understood as the logical Concept, admits that in Abstract Right key parts

of the Concept are missing.¹²⁰ In Abstract Right, the will and freedom are thus not fully developed, and not yet fully identical to the Concept. It would have been confusing to present the will in the beginning exclusively in a form which it only fully acquires at the end of the *Philosophy of Right*.

¹²⁰ In fact, Michael Quante can only detect the moment of universality in Abstract Right, see: Michael Quante, 'Die Personalität des Willens. Eine Analyse der begriffslogischen Struktur der §§34- 40 in Hegels Philosophie des Rechts', in *Klassiker Auslegen – Hegel: Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, ed. by Ludwig Siep (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997), pp. 82-91.

Chapter 3

Abstract Right and the Logic of Being

In the section Abstract Right, Hegel discusses positive law, particularly property ownership and the person. My primary interpretation of this chapter holds that the relation between persons is a form of “being with oneself in the other” that parallels the One and the Many in the Logic of Being. I will develop this claim along the following lines: (1) Hegel presents the person with property as a solution to a logical problem, namely the relation of Finitude and Infinity as it is presented in the beginning of the Logic of Being: The individual wants to be infinite (i.e. unrestricted by anything and free to define herself in any way she wants), yet the individual is finite. (2) In logical terms the solution is the infinite thing, Being-for-onself, the thing as a self-relation between it and its, whose limited states only count as it in a transient state that doesn’t define the thing. This category resembles the person with property as I shall argue. (3) However, Hegel argues, the self-relation of Being-for-onself and of the person can only truly be realized if the thing or person is related to identical yet distinct others. This implies, as I shall argue, that the persons must be considered numerically identical, one and the same person. In fact, I believe, this is the first, however deficient form of a universal will Hegel discusses in the *Philosophy of Right*. (3) This universal will or identity between persons becomes apparent in legal wrong where individuals act in a way that contradicts the identity of persons.

I. Preconditions of personality

The topic of Abstract Right is the free will in the form of the legal person. In this section of the chapter, I will, however, not yet analyse personality, but the problem it is meant to

solve, or in Hegel's words: the "contradiction" of the will personality is meant to make "supportable" (PR §35A). Hegel himself does not dedicate a separate section to this issue, but he does address it extensively and, I will show, it is only against this background that one can properly understand why and how personality is the first form of freedom for Hegel.

When introducing the structure of personality, Hegel once again takes up the contradiction of the will presented in the introduction to the *Philosophy of Right* (and analysed in the preceding chapter). Hegel writes:

(21) The person contains the unity of the infinite and the utterly finite, of the determinate limit and the completely unlimited. The supreme achievement of the person is to support this contradiction, which nothing in the natural realm contains or could endure (PR §35A).

There are two aspects that need to be distinguished here. First, there is the contradiction between the infinity and finitude of the will. This is a bad contradiction, a problem to be solved, and a tension that could also fail to be "supported". In general terms, this contradiction and a rough sketch for its solution is already present in Hegel's Introduction to the *Philosophy of Right*. Second, in Abstract Right this contradiction is taken up again in a specific form in which the person stands as its specific and concretised solution. The person integrates both contradictory elements. In other words, it still contains the contradiction, but in sublated form, that is, as elements combined in a systematic and non-contradictory way. As is typical of his dialectical method, Hegel will then go on to show that personality itself is also contradictory and necessarily implies aspects that contradict the very composition of personality. Before presenting the person and its shortcomings (in

section 2), I will briefly present the contradiction to which the person is held to be the solution.

Finitude and infinity of the will – the contradiction that personality is meant to solve

The contradiction between the infinity and finitude of the will has already been developed in chapter 2. In Abstract Right, the contradiction takes the form that the free will is in contradiction with its existence. The free will can only exist within individual human beings – and his or her particular body, wishes and acts. As Hegel says, “Particular willing constitutes the existence of freedom” (PRV21 59). Yet the free will and the individual are opposites. Hegel describes the free will as follows: “Only the will is the *infinite*, what is *absolute* as against everything else”, not “relative” (PR §44A). At this point, freedom means that what defines or determines the will shall be only the will itself. The will is thus absolute and infinite in the logical sense of purely self-related and not related to and defined by anything else. Hegel puts this in the following somewhat equivocal expression: “the will that only wants itself, abstractly” (PR §34N). But this demanded self-relation, or self-defining quality, is the only thing known about free willing at this point. Therefore, Hegel says: “The will is not yet filled, has not posited any determination” (PRV21 58). The idea of self-determination is, thus, at present completely empty. It basically means only that the will wants its own unlimited freedom, its own arbitrariness and lack of definition, to constantly define and redefine itself.

However, the individual within which the free will shall exist is neither unlimited nor undefined. “I am a this, something completely determinate: of such and such an age, height, in this room and what ever other particular things I happen to be” (PR §35A). I am an individual, “determined” or defined as the one who exists in *this* body, in *that* space. Furthermore, I also have desires for specific things and I take them where possible. “[A]s a

this, I am completely determined and finite (in terms of internal arbitrariness, drive, desire, as well as in terms of immediate external existence)” (PR §35). I am someone who, for example, desires to eat this specific thing. It is not entirely clear what Hegel means by the “immediate external existence”, but it may be suggested that he does not merely mean my body that defines me, but also the natural things that surround me or that I desire: the clothes I have on my body, the knife I carry, the apple I am trying to reach. As a natural individual, I am thus defined as the one who has this body, these desires, and acts towards these natural objects.

The problem is that everything Hegel names which “completely determines” my external existence is not my free will. This is already a necessary implication of the way in which free willing is conceived of at this point. The will is completely empty and only wants itself, its own unlimited freedom. There is nothing particular in the free will that could translate into a specific desire and express itself in an external action or thing.¹²¹ It is therefore not surprising that Hegel writes in the very first paragraph on Abstract Right: “it [the will] simultaneously encounters this content [consisting of determinate ends] as an external world immediately confronting it” (PR §34). The determinate content of the ends, what exactly the person wants, is also present as an externally given world. Hegel doesn’t say this explicitly, but this implies that the content the will wants or desires cannot be some general aim, like becoming rich for example, or even wanting something in the world to be different. If the specific content of the will’s desire also exists in the world, not only in the person’s head, then it must be an external object that is wanted. What I want does not stem from the will, but rather is an entity that is given to it. Additionally, the desire for it does not issue from my will, since the will is completely empty.

¹²¹ I therefore disagree with Patten who proposes that persons express their “purposes” in things, like “sculptors”. “Purpose” and something internal being expressed externally only feature in Morality. The free will, as it shall exist in the person, does not contain anything it could utter. See: Patten: *Hegel’s Idea of Freedom*, p.158. Cf. also on p.156: The person makes “alterations to the object [...] due to his will”.

That the will is “completely determined” in its existence should thus instead read: ‘completely foreign-determined’, ‘completely unfree’. I only exist externally and socially as the one who has this body, these desires and natural things – thus precisely not as a free will. In my existence, I am completely defined by something else, as opposed to being self-determining. I am dependent upon these external things to exist socially, rather than being independent. And I am limited by and to them. As Ritter notes, external natural things are “self-sufficient”,¹²² and present a form of resistance to the will. As a natural being, man is internally and externally subject to nature and defined by it.¹²³ And I am limited to enacting only a few desires, or having only a few things around me, in my always imperfect control.¹²⁴

The contradiction to be solved in Abstract Right is thus that my determinate existence is derived from things, drives and conditions that are external to my will; and yet I want to exist as a self-determining will. I want to be unconstrained by nature and socially undefined, yet I am defined by my relation to both internal and external nature, and the exercise of my free will is resisted by natural things and other people. One might propose that I could simply refrain from desiring and taking natural things, ignoring my body and the world around me. Hegel even says that one can “abstract from everything” (PR §35A). But this is not entirely correct. I can, indeed, abstract from everything. However, if I do so, I retreat into my thoughts and I do not exist externally as a free will whatsoever. In this case, everything just happens to me against my will or rather without my will having played any role in the process. It is, therefore, the presupposition of the entire *Philosophy of Right* that the will shall exist externally. And yet the first form of existence of the will is in a given

¹²² Joachim Ritter, ‘Person and Property in Hegel’s Philosophy of Right’, in *Hegel on Ethics and Politics*, eds Robert B. Pippin and Ottfried Höffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 101-123, (p.109).

¹²³ Ibid., p.110.

¹²⁴ Hegel writes: “I myself only relate to what is singular – in real, physical possession – I am limited therein” (PRV21 62). Since I am a singular individual, I only relate to singular entities.

body, with given desires for specific external things that I can never fully bring under my control – thus, a completely unfree existence.

Put in terms of the Logic of Being, the existence of the will is completely finite, but the will shall be infinite. Hegel was quoted above speaking of infinity and finitude within the will in Abstract Right. He also calls the will “infinite” and the individual “finite”, and defines the will in a lecture as “what is without a barrier”, pure “unlimitedness” (PRV21 59), again using terminology from the beginning of the Logic of Being. Finitude means, for Hegel, that a thing is completely defined as against other things of which it is not; it is defined by its “limit”. The individual will is completely limited and finite in the similar sense of foreign-determined: the individual will is defined by its relation to something else, something it is not. This is, in the first instance, the body, desires and natural things someone wants or has. Subsequently, the individual is also defined as against other individuals who have different bodies and desires. The will shall, however, be unlimited and infinite, unconstrained, free to do anything, and purely self-determining, defined out of and in relation to itself. In the terms of Hegel’s *Logic*, the task of personality is to overcome finitude, to pass from Finitude to Infinity.

II. The person as Being-with-Oneself and the quantitative thing

In the *Science of Logic*, Hegel describes the transition of finite things into Infinity at the end of Quality, the first section of the Logic of Being. He proposes the existence of an infinite – i.e. purely self-related – thing, which he calls “Being-for-oneself”. The entire middle section, entitled Quantity, goes on to discuss aspects of such infinite and self-related

things.¹²⁵ I propose here that the legal person is similar to the thing conceived of as a pure infinite self-relation, which Hegel calls “Being-for-oneself” (WL1 174/157).

As expounded in the first chapter, Hegel proposes in the *Logic* that true infinity and the infinite thing is reached when the specific present thing with its given present properties only count as one state of the thing in general. The thing in general is distinguished from its present qualities or specific state and the state is considered only one moment of the thing. The thing in general, rather than being an undefined substrate to which qualities or states are added, is defined as a self-relation between it and its, containing the states as its moment. Hegel had defined the specific qualities of something as its Limit, which define the thing as against something else it is not. In Being-for-Oneself, the infinite thing, Hegel says this limit is internalized:

(22) The movement of determinate Being consists in transferring this Limit from its externality into itself. In Being-for-oneself this inversion is complete (WL1,12 98).

The limit, the concrete state of this thing with its determinate qualities, is seen as internal to the thing itself. It is internally differentiated, rather than being differentiated from other things. “The one that is-for-itself as such is not unrelated like Being; however, it does not relate like something to another, but as the unity of something and another it is the relation to itself” (E1 §97). The thing is not related to and defined against other things – in this case it would be finite, limited and defined by something else. It is rather related to itself as identical and different. There are two ways of putting this same thought: you can say the thing is identified with and distinguished from its qualities or the thing with its specific qualities is identified with and distinguished from the thing in general. This is so, because Hegel defines Being-for-oneself as a self-relation. The thing having these specific qualities,

¹²⁵ “Quantity is the determinacy that is infinitely returned into itself” (WL1,12 130).

being in this specific state, is only one instance of the thing having qualities, it relating to *its*. The self-relation between the thing and its present qualities is one instance of the general self-relation of the thing, it being a relation to *itself*, its own aspects.

There is thus an internal distinction in the thing as Being-for-oneself that ensures that it is infinite and yet contains finitude, it is undetermined and yet contains determinacy: The thing in general and its specific state are considered as both identical and distinct. On the one hand there is the present determinate finite thing with its specific qualities, on the other hand it only counts as one state of the thing in general. The specific present state of the thing that was “for another”, the external difference from and presence to other things, is now only “for it”, internal to the thing or “ideal”, its own moment. The thing in general is a self-relation between it and its state, containing the state as an internal element. It having this state is only one instance of it having states in general. Put starkly, Hegel is making the hypothetical proposition that a thing that is in this moment a chair, can be in the next moment a table and still remain the same thing. It having a backrest is only one instance of it having qualities in general. This element of indifference to the qualities will be expounded more in detail in Quantity, the next section of the Logic of Being. In Being-for-oneself, Hegel focuses on the aspect that the qualities define a thing and yet only count as *its*, itself in a specific, transient form, thus do not define it.

The most fitting example for Being-for-oneself is certainly self-consciousness. Literally, Being-for-oneself refers to the idea that something exists “for itself”, in its own mind or consciousness. Hegel clearly takes (absolute) self-consciousness¹²⁶ and Leibniz’s self-representing monads¹²⁷ as a basis for the conception of Being-for-oneself. Yet, since Hegel only wants to detect a very general logical structure which all finite things could have, he does not speak in terms of self-consciousness, but simply says that beyond being this

¹²⁶ Hegel repeatedly uses the example of the “pure I” (WL1 192/172) and “self-consciousness” (WL1 175/158;178/160), “spirit and God” (WL1 178). “I is for I, both are the same” (WL1 178/160).

¹²⁷ References to monads (WL1 179/161). See also: “Representing is Being-for-oneself” (WL1 179/161).

specific present thing, each thing is also infinite. The specific present thing is only one limited state of this thing; the thing can have infinitely different states, each of which is only it in another guise. The parallel to self-consciousness is that also in self-consciousness my mental composition at the moment, my present thoughts, feelings, mental images, are distinguished from and identified with me in general. The present determination of my mind in this moment doesn't ultimately define me, but it is only one mental state among many. My present thoughts, feelings, intuitions are "for me", I consciously know them as a mental state I have, to which I am and I am not identical.

Hegel defined the legal person as that which "supports" the contradiction between finitude and infinity, between the determinate existence and the free self-relation of the will. At first, however, Hegel says the free will is only internal and in opposition to the world (PR §39). Free self-relation of the will is only manifest in that the will can abstract from its own determinate external existence (PR §35A), all natural things, desires and conditions that define this individual. In fact, in this hypothetical stage logically prior to the acquisition of property, the will exists externally as a natural will, completely defined by given desires, things and circumstances. Yet, internally, in her own mind the individual can abstract from all these external determinants and think of herself as infinitely free. In logical terms, you would call this the Ought or bad infinity,¹²⁸ because the will ought to be infinite and purely self-related, but it is not (since it is also related to the external world). It is infinite only by abstracting from the world, which implies that it is defined as against its opposite and therefore not truly infinite, i.e. self-related. In § 39 of the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel therefore says that the will's infinity contradicts its having nature as its barrier:

¹²⁸ Interestingly, also Schmidt am Busch links the freedom of the person to infinity. The infinity he describes is, however, bad infinity, the abstraction from finite needs, and he analyses property as the realization of this bad infinity, rather than another type of infinity. See: Hans-Christoph Schmidt am Busch, 'Personal Respect, Private Property, And Market Economy: What Critical Theory Can Learn From Hegel', *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice. An International Forum*, 11.5 (2011), pp. 573-586 (p.578, 580).

(23) The resolving immediate individuality of the person relates to a nature, which it encounters before it. Hence the personality of the will stands in opposition to nature as something subjective. But since personality within itself is infinite and universal, the limitation of being merely subjective is in contradiction with it and is null and void. Personality is that which acts to overcome this barrier and to give itself reality – or, what amounts to the same thing, to posit that existence as its own.
(PR §39)

The will has to sublate its barrier, which is nature – and this occurs when natural things are appropriated as property. In fact, the true infinity and real existence of the person comes about by the same process through which Being-for-oneself is reached in the *Logic*. Commenting on § 39, Hegel says in a lecture:

(24) I am only this active entity which [...] demolishes the barrier, and I do this only by making the barrier my own, taking the alienness away from it, and being in it with myself. This is exactly this, that I give myself reality, sublate my subjectivity; I make myself an object (VRP3 198).

The barrier Hegel mentions is, of course, the external world, more precisely the natural things that I turn into my property. But the barrier must also be linked to what Hegel has before called the “limit”, that is, what “completely determines” me (PR §35); the limit being my desires for specific natural things, my body and, presumably, the space and things which surround me. Through property ownership I turn natural things and my bodily abilities into my property and the desires of use into my right. Like in the *Logic of Being*, the Limit, i.e. the qualities and determinate state that defines things, turn into a Barrier, something that shall be overcome and it can only ultimately be overcome by “internalizing” the Barrier, as

Hegel said in the *Logic*; here he says making it my own. “The free will is thus the idealism, that does not believe that the things, as they are, are what is in and for itself” (PR §44A). The natural things I have on me, my desires and my body are the qualities that define me. But I do not believe that they are in fact what they seem to be, namely, given, external and natural things that limit and define me. They are rather “ideal”, only “for me”, to use the expression from Hegel’s *Logic*. “Particularity, reality is present, to be sure, but as something that does not count” (RPV21 58). “The substance of the thing is what it is for me” (RPV21 68). The step towards the true infinity of the person is thus that I take natural things to be something completely determined only by me. This is what Hegel called above “negating the barrier”, “taking the alienness away from it”. Hegel presents several forms of appropriating things. But the aim is to “annihilate” or “consume singularity” (PR §61N), to show that the concrete, singular appearance of this thing is irrelevant. Hegel therefore says: “The appropriation through signalling is the most complete of all [...] The concept of signal namely means that the thing does not count as what it is, but what it signifies” (PR §58A).

What the thing signifies or counts as for me and socially is ‘mine’, “what is abstractly mine” (PR §104). “Through my taking possession of it, the thing acquires the predicate of being mine, and the will has a positive relation to it” (PR §59). For me, the thing only counts as mine, something that pertains to and is yet distinguishable from me. Me carrying around that knife or banana is now only one instance of me owning mine. The person, rather than being an simple entity or substrate to which things and external relations are added – which are therefore alien to her and limit her –, is an infinite self-relation between her and hers, and her owning this banana is only one instance of this general relation. The person thus unites infinity and finitude, in the sense that the person is purely self-related – since things as property are part of her own self-relation, nothing but hers – and in this very relation the person is also other-related, related to a specific natural thing that defines her. This second

aspect of the relation is, however, taken to be less fundamental, only one specific instance of the first, more general one. There is a distinction between me in general as a property owner and self-relating will, and me in particular having this present piece of property. There is thus a limit – me as the one who owns this present and limited amount of property – but I am not limited by it; rather, it is only one limited state of me. This is precisely the move Hegel proposes in Being-for-oneself in the *Logic*, which he describes as “idealism” (WL1 178/160) turning all qualities and specific states of a thing into an “ideality” (WL1 178/160), mere moments of the thing itself.

Hegel thus clearly defines the person with her property in parallel to Being-for-oneself in the Logic of Being. Hegel also does speak of the person as a self-relation (PR §35) and Being-for-oneself (PR §35A)¹²⁹ and he supposes that it is in relation to property that this self-relation is realised: “I, as a free will, am an object to myself in what I possess” (PR §45). In the *Logic*, Hegel describes Being-for-oneself as “formal independency”, “abstract freedom” (WL1 192/172). Someone acting as a person is free because her property only counts as her in another guise. It is nothing other that defines her nor is it anything that could resist her will. This is certainly abstract and formal in that it is based on the abstraction from all concrete distinctions between things, but it does represent a form of freedom: for example, a mule I own, in so far as it is a concrete physical entity, can resist my will, but as property it cannot resist being sold. And my owning a mule, factory or merely my own labour power does not change my status as a person. I remain simply a property owning person, having something that legally counts as “mine”; me in the limited state of owning this mule is only an instance of me owning mine, my general self-relation.

¹²⁹ Hegel also uses the expression Being-for-oneself in Abstract Right, clearly in the sense of self-relation. However, he sometimes uses this expression for the first deficient form of the person, the person abstracting from the world (PR §35A). Hegel must be focussing on the psychological meaning of “for oneself”, in the sense of conscious, existing in one’s own mind, or else he has bad infinity in mind, a self-relation that fails to be purely self-related, because it abstracts from something else. As I have mentioned above, this psychological meaning is also a model for the logical category, but Hegel expands on it so as to think a truly absolute and all-encompassing phenomenon, not merely something that exists internally and separate from the world.

It is worth mentioning that Being-for-oneself is closely linked to Quantity and Hegel's conception of a quantitative thing. Finite things, or legal persons, are not defined by their specific qualities – i.e. for person: the specific things they own.¹³⁰ In Quantity,¹³¹ the “determination [...] has become indifferent to Being, a limit that is just as much not a limit” (WL1 209/185). The thing remains the same thing even if its qualities or determinations change, just as the person remains the same independently of what exactly she owns. While the concept of Infinity focuses on the fact that the thing is the same in all its qualities, Quantity points out that the thing is indifferent to its qualities. The thing can have more or less of its qualities, but this does not change the character of the thing. Even though Hegel does not present a coherent conception of value, he certainly recognised that the form of value is fitting for personality, as he understands it, since the thing only counts as a “sign” (PR §63A) of value, a quantitative determination of “what is abstractly mine” (PR §104). As Hegel remarks, clearly referencing the Logic of Being: “The progression of thought is here from the specific quality of the thing to a stage at which this determinate quality is indifferent, i.e. that of Quantity” (PR §63A).

III. Unintended consequences of personality: the One and Many persons

Why does Hegel introduce other persons, after describing the person and her property? Is it only to show the limits of my self-relation and strengthen its limits by the acceptance of others? Or is it in order to introduce the first form of a universal I, a shared personhood? Is my freedom as a person perhaps not limited by other persons, but rather unlimited because of my identity with them? Patten and Williams defend the first position. Patten

¹³⁰ I agree with Angerm that in Abstract Right property does not feature as “something qualitative and particular”, but as “property in general”. See: Angerm, *Freiheit und System bei Hegel*, p. 188.

¹³¹ I mention Quantity here already, even though it systematically succeeds the One and the Many, which I am discussing below. My conviction is that Being-for-Oneself presents the basic constitution of a quantitatively defined thing – and the One and the Many only expands upon what this means.

proposes that other persons, by not interfering with my things, provide assurance that it is in fact me who expresses herself in this thing.¹³² The other persons thus do not change the self-relation between me and what is mine; they only strengthen it. For Williams, “recognition justifies my possession”.¹³³ Since it becomes clear in the contract that I am one particular property owner and will among others,¹³⁴ my property is only secure when respected by others (and, conversely, when I respect theirs). Williams calls this “universal Anerkanntsein”, and he even speaks of a “universal will that wills its own freedom”.¹³⁵ But since he equates the above quoted “universal will” with individuals “restraining their particular subjective wills and desires”,¹³⁶ it is fair to suppose that he refers to the shared will of all persons to be free and therefore mutually respect each others’ property. Thus, even though Williams introduces a certain shared will, it mainly serves to strengthen and protect the self-relation between each particular property owner and her property.

In this section, I propose that there is a universal will in Abstract Right in a stronger sense. The point is not that others assure and limit the range of my self-relation – my free disposal of my particular property – and that I must in turn recognise theirs; on the contrary, the relation to other persons is a self-relation, and I am therefore completely unlimited and free. What Hegel develops in Abstract Right is the first and most abstract version of a universal I: all persons form one identity. Only as part of such an identity can each person truly have the characteristic qualities of personhood. This thesis may seem to contradict the point at which Hegel describes the person as an “atom” (PR §167; E3 §523), thus something separate and unrelated. In the *Science of Logic*, however, Hegel proposes an argument about atoms, which he calls “the One and the Many” (WL1 182/164). The One is a further description of the thing as a Being-for-itself, which Hegel offers at the

¹³² Patten, *Hegel’s Idea of Freedom*, p. 160.

¹³³ Robert R. Williams : *Hegel’s Ethics of Recognition* (Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1997), p. 142.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p.148

¹³⁵ Ibid., p.158.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p.158. He also defines this as the “rational structures inherent in recognition, namely lawfulness, equality and justice”. And he goes on to say: “An act is right if it does not restrict or infringe the freedom of others”. See: *ibid.*, p.152, 158 respectively.

transition to Quantity. And he proposes that one Being-for-oneself is like an atom and it necessarily creates identical copies of itself to which it is related as identical and different. The many atoms are one and the same, a numerically identical thing, and yet also many separate ones. I will argue here that the same is true of persons in Abstract Right: the persons are one person only and yet also many separate ones. The point appears first in Hegel's account of the contract before becoming the basis for Hegel's account of legal Wrong and the transition to Morality.

The One and the Many in the Logic of Being

As sketched in the first chapter, the key argument of the One and the Many in the Logic of Being is the following: things as Beings-for-themselves were defined as a self-relation between the thing in general, *and* the thing in a limited state. But Hegel argues in the One and the Many that even though things are supposed to be internally differentiated – into the thing in general and its present state – there is no real basis in terms of content for making this distinction. As all properties and differences to other things have been abstracted from, there is nothing to define the specific present state of things. The idea of a determinate present state of the thing is just as undefined as the idea of a thing in general; no real distinction can be found. Hegel therefore proposes that things are in fact internally completely simple and empty like “atoms” (E1 §97A) or “Ones”. And he concludes – and this is the key point of the One and the Many – that in order to still display their characteristic distinction between the thing and its present state, things must be distinguished and identified with other identical Ones. Hegel writes:

(25) [T]here is present first the own immanent relation of the One to itself; and secondly, since the relation is negative and the one is something that is, the One repels itself from itself (WL1 187/167f).

Hegel also says: “One is itself the negative relating of itself to itself, this is the repulsion of the One, the positing of many Ones” (VL 123). The thing displays the characteristic of Being, which means that it simply *is*, given and undifferentiated.¹³⁷ This is why the “negative relation to itself” or self-difference turns into the difference to identical and yet distinct other Ones. Hegel therefore says: “It lies in the thought of the One to posit itself as many” (E1 §97A). “The One [...] is the repulsion of itself from itself” (WL1 12/109). The thing as a One takes the form of many distinct Ones that it relates to as identical and different.

It is only in relation to other identical Ones that one thing as Being-for-oneself displays its characteristic distinction, between it as finite and infinite, the present limited case of the thing and the thing in general. The thing is only this specific, finite and present thing by virtue of its distinction to other things, its difference from them. Inversely, it is only infinite, unlimited and even absolute because it is identical to all other things. In other words, the thing can only be purely self-related if all other things are it, numerically identical. In this way, then, the thing is in fact the absolute, the “one One” (WL1 193/173), as Hegel calls it, one all-encompassing thing. All other things only count as different instances of this same infinite thing. Hegel therefore says, clearly echoing the language of “being with oneself in the other”: “In its passing into another, something only comes together *with itself*; and this relation to itself in the passing and in the other is genuine Infinity” (E1 §95). This One turning into another One only turns into itself, or rather remains itself, since both are identical.

¹³⁷ Hegel also says: “In its own self the One simply is; this its being is neither a determinate being, nor a determinateness as a relation to an other, nor is it a constitution” (WL1 183/164).

To sum up, you can thus say that the relation between the Ones has two aspects. On the one hand, they are completely separate, unconnected atoms. This is why Hegel says that “their relation to one another is a non-relation” (WL1 190/170). On the other hand, they are identical. As cited in the first chapter, Hegel says: “There are many Ones, but they are only this, that their multiplicity is an untruth” (VL 124). Each one does not count as a genuine other, but only as a copy of the first. This is why Hegel can claim that One can turn into the other One and yet still remain the same.

The many persons as a copy of the first, or: others as me and not me

In the *Logic*, Hegel proposes that the One and the Many are both completely separate like atoms, and yet also units of one and the same, the one One as he calls it. One thing’s relation of identity and difference to itself takes the form of a relation of identity and difference to other identical Ones. This is how infinity, pure self-relation, is realised. I propose that Hegel has a similar figure in mind when describing many persons. On the one hand, persons are completely separate like atoms – even when contracting, they only sporadically establish a contact, remaining separate units in the process. On the other hand, persons are one and the same, that is, one identical person. And this is actually the more fundamental truth for Hegel, as it enables the infinity, freedom and self-relation of the person.

A first hint that Hegel could have the argument of the One and the Many in mind here is the terminology. He insists that the legal person is infinite and then compares legal persons to atoms (PR §167; E3 §523) and Beings-for-themselves (PR §35A); inversely, he also compares atoms (cf. VGP 358) and Being-for-oneself to the singular will (E1 §98; VL 124). More specifically, Hegel also detects both characteristics of the One and the Many – their

total separateness and their identity – in legal persons and, as will be seen, he even occasionally describes them in the terminology of the *Logic of Being*. The first aspect – the separateness of persons – is mentioned, for example, when Hegel explains his famous statement about the relation between persons, namely, “be a person and respect others as persons” (PR §36). In one of his lectures he adds to this: “that is: let him be for himself [für sich sein]. As such the human being is the brittle atom, he has no breadth on basis of which a communality of one to the other, a positive relationship could come about” (VRP3 195). Persons, like Ones, are and remain separate atoms, basically unrelated and purely related to themselves, or “for themselves” as Hegel puts it.

But Hegel also makes other statements about the persons that directly parallel his discussion of the One and the Many and suggest an identity between persons. For example, in the *Encyclopaedia*, he writes I am the “repulsion of myself from myself” and have my existence in the “Being of other persons, my relation to and recognition by them” (E3 §490). Hegel puts this most succinctly in the earlier version of the *Encyclopaedia*:

(26) As I am a person, i.e. the infinite relation of myself to myself, I am the absolute repulsion of myself from myself. I have my realisation only in the Being of other persons; only therein am I a real person for myself (E1,17 §405).

Hegel thus proposes that due to the “infinite self-relation” of the person, one person “repels” herself from herself, and has her realisation as a person only in the “being of other persons”. ‘Repulsion’ is Hegel’s term for the relation between the Ones in the *Logic*, and his argument is precisely the same, namely, that the self-relation of the One can only be realised in relation to the repelled but identical other Ones. Hegel thus seems to say that I am self-related in relation to other persons because they are me, that is, me “repelled” from myself. It is only in relation to other persons that I can realise the self-relation or infinity

which has been defined as constitutive of personality. Also in §40, Hegel suggests that the person differentiates herself into many persons and that the many persons are therefore identical. He writes: “The person, differentiating herself from herself, is related to another person [...] Their identity that is in itself attains existence in the transfer of property” (PR §40).

Hegel does not explicate why a person repels herself into many persons, but the argument may be similar to the one in the *Logic*: my internal self-relation requires that I – my personhood in general – and me – the person who owns this specific property at this moment in time – are distinguishable. My infinite personality must be both distinguished from and identified with the specific case of my personality at hand, which is me as the one who owns this present properties. Or, as Hegel would rather put it, personality requires the identity and difference between the specific present instance of my personhood and my personhood in general, me owning this and me as a property owner.¹³⁸ But in my relation to my present property only, this distinction cannot really be made. It is purely declaratory, that I am supposed to be more than the one who owns these specific things, that my owning these things is only one specific case or instance of me being a person and property owner. If I only own my present property, I am not infinite, have no infinite personality. I am defined by and limited to this present piece of property. Inversely, since all specificity has been abstracted from the thing I own, my property does not really give a determinate social existence to my individuality as it is supposed to. Everyone else is also the owner of her present property.

It is therefore only in the relation to other persons that both the specificity of my present property ownership and the infinity of my personality truly exist. It is the difference to yours, his and hers that defines my property as an individual limited entity. I am an

¹³⁸ The identity of the specific case of me and me in general is what Hegel calls Infinity. The indifference of the legal category person as regards what particular state the person is in, the owner of this or that, is what Hegel presupposes in Quantity in the *Logic*.

individual person distinct from others because I own a specific individual piece of property, mine as against yours. And, Hegel seems to suppose, that I am an infinite, completely self-related person because I am identical to all other persons. You could understand this point as meaning that I am a person in general, that is, falling under the general category of 'person', because I am of the same kind as other persons, i.e. qualitatively identical to them. But to my mind, this is a too narrow interpretation. Hegel insists that the person is "infinite", i.e. purely self-related. If we take Hegel's definition of infinity in the *Logic* seriously, namely, infinity as pure self-relation, this means that the other persons are me. Moreover, the above quoted passages suggests as much, since Hegel says that, as a person, I "repel myself from myself", realising my personality in the "being of other persons". Hegel seems to say that the other persons are and are not me; they are instances of me, and yet not what I presently am; the other persons are ideal moments of me. At present, I am of course only this instance of my personality, me owning my present piece of property. But my personhood transcends this present determination, and I can just as well turn into the one who owns his or her piece of property.¹³⁹ The unlimited, infinite freedom of the person consists in the idea that all I relate to is my will, and that there is nothing against my will or resisting it. This freedom is realised in the relation between persons because the other persons do not represent an absolute limit and resistance to me. Their property is not mine to be sure, it is thus a limit to me; however, it is also potentially mine and thus not a limit. You can also express this thought in terms of Quantity in the *Logic*, where Hegel continues dwelling upon this logical topic. As a person I can own anything, just like finite things in Quantity can have any quality; it being totally arbitrary which quality the thing has. Due to the existence of other persons, everything I could want to own is property and could, in principle, be acquired by me. It cannot not resist my will and I am assured of the

¹³⁹ In the One and the Many in the *Logic*, the aspect of difference is less pronounced than in the case of persons. But the other Ones are also identical to the first at least in the sense of separate and in another place. The other Ones are thus different instances of the first.

possibility to arbitrarily determine myself, and turn into the one who owns what was his rather than mine.

If this interpretation is correct, the freedom of the person does not consist in my right to do anything that I choose to my current property, as against what Patten suggests. What exactly I do to things is only relevant in so far as I thereby turn them into my property and abstract from their concrete characters. My internal intention and its external expression is not a topic of Abstract Right what so ever, but of Morality. The self-relation of the person in her property is indeed important, but by itself not sufficient to establish the freedom of the person. If this self-relation was the only aspect then sale would be irrelevant, but what cannot be sold does not truly count as property for Hegel (PR §63A). Nor is Hegel only saying that I have to accept the limits of my property and ask others to respect them. Rather, Hegel makes the startling claim that only within society, or rather within a modern property regime, can an unlimited freedom become possible. Since all property is owned by a person and all persons are ideal instances of me, my own infinite personality, I can be any one of those persons owning their property, and this is why I am free in an unlimited sense in abstract right. The person is related to herself as identical and different by means of relating to other persons that only count as instances of her. Property by itself cannot fulfil this function since it is precisely not clearly distinct from the property owner, completely abstract and subsumed under her rule.

It must be admitted that my interpretation is based on relatively little direct textual evidence for now. Hegel clearly uses the terminology from the passages of the Logic of Being to which I am referring: “finitude”, “infinity”, “Being-for-onself”, “atom”, “repulsion”. Furthermore, in the passages I quoted Hegel does seem to make the point from the One and the Many that a self-relation requires repulsion of myself into many. But also in his conception of the contract and legal wrong, Hegel not only refers to the idea that persons are separate, but also that they are identical, one and the same person. In the legal contract,

two separate persons form “one identical will” (PR §72), even though they only unite for a particular purpose. In a lecture, he says: “In itself they are identical, but what they do as immediate persons in the contract is the common will mediated by the will of the other. – Common and universal will is very different” (PRV21 75). “In itself”, in truth, persons are identical, but the contract does not really express this. The contract is only a common will of separate persons. Hegel also puts this in the following way: “The agreement is the appearance of the universal will” (VNS §34). He goes on to say that the contract is only the appearance of and *not* the universal will itself because the contract depends on the arbitrary decision of the participants. I propose that it is therefore only in the next section (legal wrong) that the necessary identity of all persons becomes apparent.¹⁴⁰

IV. Legal wrong – the contradiction of personality and the universal will

In the last section, Legal Wrong, Hegel sets out to show that the personal will with its property is self-contradictory. After describing property (a) and the relation between persons (b), Hegel introduces legal wrong as follows.

(27) c) The will which as in (a) is differentiated within itself in its own self-relation rather than distinguished from another person as in (b), is, as a *particular* will, different from and opposed to itself as the will *which has being in and for itself*. This constitutes *wrong* and *crime* (PR §40).

¹⁴⁰ Interestingly, Chitty makes a claim about the difference between Fichte and Hegel that seems applicable in this case as well: While for Fichte human beings must recognise one another as separate and equal, Hegel proposes that the recognising parties become “numerically identical” – while also being distinct. (See: Andrew Chitty ‘Identity with the other in Hegel’s dialectic of recognition’, *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, forthcoming). Hegel criticises Fichte in the *Logic*, claiming that Fichte never reaches Being-for-Oneself, since the other, the limit, always remains an external Anstoß, something beyond and outside of me (WL1 181/163). Since in Abstract Right Hegel describes the person as a “Being-for-Oneself” and infinite, this implies that other persons are no longer external to me, and it suggests that Hegel might oppose Fichte along similar lines as those proposed by Chitty.

In this convoluted sentence, the key message gets easily lost. Hegel says that wrong or crime consists in the particular will being in opposition to itself as the will that is in and for itself. The particular will and the will in itself are one and the same and yet in a self-opposition. And, Hegel emphasizes, legal wrong occurs in the self-relation of the will, and not in relation to other persons. Hegel seems to be supposing that the legal offence is one against myself, my particular will coming into opposition with my will “*which has being in and for itself*”. Leaving aside the question of to what this expression might exactly refer, it is clear that any legal offence can only be committed against another person, not myself. As such, Hegel must be supposing that the crime or fraud committed against another is at the same time a crime against me, my own will. It is thus clear that Hegel’s approach to legal wrong is not that the other persons are independent others whom I need to respect; it is not primarily the idea of equality and reciprocity. Rather, the act against other persons is also somehow an act against myself. A criminal act is self-contradictory for Hegel, as interpreters have noted:¹⁴¹ “The criminal is this contradiction in himself” (PR §99N). “This existence [of the crime] is the opposite of itself” (PR §97A).

The question is how to interpret this idea that a criminal act against another is an offence against myself. In his book entitled *Hegel’s Ethical Thought*, Wood suggests that the intention of the criminal establishes a “universal law” under which she herself must also be subsumed.¹⁴² Put starkly, if I kill, I must want killing to be acceptable, and therefore sanction my own death. Hegel does indeed sometimes use formulations to this effect.¹⁴³ However, upon closer examination it becomes clear that this description is not really pertinent to Abstract Right and presents rather an undue anticipation of Hegel’s argument in Morality. That the legal person is also a rational subject which deliberates in universal terms about her particular (in this case, criminal) intentions is the viewpoint and argument

¹⁴¹ See for example: Michael Quante: *Hegel’s Concept of Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.18.

¹⁴² Allen Wood, *Hegel’s Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 113.

¹⁴³ “What the human being does has at the same time the determination of a universal in it [...] since he performs a universal, he has made a law which is valid against him [...] He has made the law that freedom can be violated” (PRV21 94).

analysed in Morality. Abstract Right only discusses separate property owning and exchanging persons. The subject is a topic that is only introduced in Morality. Internal intentions and reasoning is irrelevant in positive law or abstract Right (PR §37); a mismatch between internal intention and general rules thus cannot be a problem that pertains to Abstract Right.

If one person contradicts herself when acting towards another person, then this must be due to the other person somehow being part of her own legal personality. For example, Hegel says: “Personality as such is being violated, the will in itself” (PRV21 90). When Hegel makes the point that in legal wrong the “universal will” (PR §82A) is being violated, this universal will must not be understood as an abstract universal of the understanding, i.e. a universally applicable concept implicit in my own willing. Instead, the universal will refers to a will that contains all personal wills, the identical will of all persons, similar to what Hegel would call a concrete universal. It may be noted that “*allgemeiner Wille*” (universal will) is the German for Rousseau’s *volonté generale* (general will). Hegel does not mean to refer to Rousseau here, but the expression does suggest an identical will in many individuals and Hegel notes in this vein: “the contract is the positing of a universal will” (VNS §34), i.e. universal in the sense that it is shared and present in both contradicting parties. Hegel is a bit ambiguous on the point, whether the contract represents only a shared will or an identical, universal will. His basic idea seems to be that persons are per se, “in itself, identical and this identity is expressed, however imperfectly, in the contract (PR §40).

In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel says the “will in itself” is injured by the crime, and he explicates what the will in itself is saying it is “the will of the offender, just as much as the will of the injured and of everyone else” (PR §99). As I have argued above, Hegel supposes that other identical persons and my identity with them form an integral part of my own personality, which is why disrespecting other persons is a self-contradiction. As a criminal, I undertake particular acts – say, cheat, steal or attack someone – and by doing so I

contradict my own personality. My personality requires that there be other identical property owning persons; only if everything is the property of a person and exchange is possible am I infinitely free, with all property being possibly mine and everyone being an ideal instance of me. I therefore need to respect property ownership, the life and will of the other persons, and even fair exchange, since everyone shall remain a property owning person while also giving away their property.

To put it in logical terms, wrong and crime emerge because the supposed quantitative relation of the person to concrete things and other persons is erroneous. In the first definition of the person, it was supposed that the person is indifferent to concrete qualities, i.e. to what exactly she owns. Anything can count as mine and anything equally counts as nothing but “what is abstractly mine” (PR §104) when I own it. Now it becomes clear that this is only partly correct. The contract and the discussion of many persons have revealed there to be a minimal structure required for personality to exist. As I have argued above, this is the identity and difference between many persons. My freedom to acquire anything, to make things mine and discard them, only functions if there are identical other persons (from whom I can in principle acquire property). Underlying and conditioning the seemingly complete separateness and arbitrariness of my decisions as a person, there exists a fundamental relational structure constitutive of my personality that is not evident at first sight. In the *Logic*, Hegel makes a very similar point. In the section on Measure, he criticises the conception of finite things proposed in Quantity, saying that finite things are not in fact completely indifferent to their qualities. Things have an essential definition and are only these specific things if the minimum of defining qualities is present. Since each definition is a definition as against other things, Hegel concludes positively that finite things not only have defining qualities, but also require specific relations to other things. This is the basic

idea expressed in Illusory Being,¹⁴⁴ namely, that the separate, independent existence or “being” of finite things is an illusion. In fact, they all have a connection, which is their Essence and at the basis of what they are.

When describing legal wrong, Hegel consistently uses the logical concepts “Illusory Being” and “Essence” to explain it. For example, he says: “This *appearance* of right, [...] goes on, in the case of wrong, to become an *Illusory being* – an opposition between right in itself and the particular will (PR §82); “Wrong is the Illusory Being of Essence, that posits itself as independent” (PR §83A). “Illusory Being is the untruth which disappears because it wants to exist by itself [für sich]” (PR §82A). Wrong consists in a particular act of willing that contradicts its own Essence, namely, the structure of personality, which is the identity and difference between legal persons. Hegel claims that what he calls Essence is “right” (PR §82A). The particular act of willing – for example, when stealing something – is supposed to exist “by itself”, “independently”, but this is an illusion since no particular act of a free person is possible without personality, i.e. the identity and difference between persons. Since in the *Logic*, Essence refers to the constitutive relation between finite things, it is probable that Hegel has the constitutive relations between persons in mind here when he speaks of the Essence of personality. This is the relational and collective Essence of personhood which cannot be infringed upon without violating personality itself. The Essence of my particular legally granted act is personality, which implies a specific relation and identity between me and other persons, and it is illusory to think that I can be a free person without it.

Conclusion

¹⁴⁴ Illusory Being is the first concept discussed in the Logic of Essence, but many interpreters maintain that it still presents a result from the end of the Logic of Being. See: Henrich, ‘Hegels Logik der Reflexion’, p.105. And also: John McTaggart, *A Commentary on Hegel’s Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), p.99. And: Iber, *Metaphysik absoluter Relationalität*, p.34.

My account of Abstract Right establishes an identity and difference between the legal persons in a manner which differs from its usual understanding. I propose that individuals are different, with each one only being an individual property owning person because he or she is distinguished from others, mine from his, hers and theirs. Before the relation between persons exists the individuality of persons is not truly realised. This is so, since all concrete things that make me individual and different from others have been abstracted from and every person is someone owning her property. Following Habermas, many interpreters would propose that persons exist as separate individuals before their interaction. Patten certainly does so. Williams may possibly agree with my claim, although he remains equivocal.¹⁴⁵ The identity between persons, however, means, on my reading, that the other persons are me and yet not me. I therefore possibly own everything and am therefore free in an unlimited sense, that is, free to own anything. To my knowledge, this view has not been proffered as yet. Persons are rather seen as equals; their freedom is the limited freedom to decide about their present limited property.

The freedom of the person, I propose, does not consist in me restraining my particular desires, as Williams puts it.¹⁴⁶ Rather, it is the freedom to constantly redefine myself, and to be the one who owns this or that, his or hers, or theoretically everything. Everything is property, in the control of persons and available for sale. Hegel's argument is not that egoism must be restrained, but rather that the most extreme egoism can only be realised if I pretend I own everything. Since I am limited and cannot do so, I need others to step in for me and own things that can theoretically be mine. Paradoxically, Hegel thus reaches the conclusion that I must respect others as equals, not because the others around me are a fact that I need to accept. But instead, by developing my own egoism others duly come into play. In fact, the other as a human being who has interests, thoughts, acts of his own, and

¹⁴⁵ Williams, *Hegel's Ethics of Recognition*, p.148

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.158

so forth, is absent from Abstract Right until the end. The other is only a substitute me and I do not know anything more about him. I only relate to the other as a copy of myself, as an instance of what I could be, and not as a genuine other.

I am, thus, “with myself in the other” in the peculiar sense that she only counts as a possible me. In the One and the Many in the *Logic*, Hegel proposes that One turns into another One and still remains itself. Similarly, one person turns into the one who owns what was someone else’s, and thus somehow takes up the concrete instantiation of someone else’s personality, and yet also remains the same person. Hegel famously says that when exchanging, I “cease to be” and “remain” a property owning person (PR §74). From the perspective of right, you can also say that personhood is “with itself in me” and in the others, since we are all one and the same person. However, this social dimension appears to each one only as him being infinite, that is to say, as having the infinite possibility of turning into any other property owner, and yet also remaining the same one. I believe that Hegel’s description of abstract right is implicitly critical. The problem with the minimal universal will present in Abstract Right is precisely that it is not known to us. As persons, we neither know that we implicitly want right, nor in fact that others have the same will. What others want and think does not enter into the equation. Therefore, despite being identical, all persons remain unrelated atoms, and their infinite freedom is merely a possibility. The owned property of others can be mine in the future, but is not in fact mine, nor will all property ever in fact be mine.

Chapter 4

Morality and the Logic of Essence

In this chapter, I propose that Morality displays a form of “being with oneself in the other” similar to the one developed in the Logic of Essence. In my reading, Abstract Right and the Logic of Being present separate, independent units (or persons) that are nevertheless also identical, literally one and the same, and in this sense “with themselves” in the other. This is thus the form of “being with oneself in the other” analysed in the first section of the *Philosophy of Right* and the first book of the *Logic*. In the third section of the *Philosophy of Right* and the third book of the *Logic*, namely, Ethical Life and the Logic of the Concept, respectively, Hegel analyses integrated wholes within which finite things are related as parts. In those parallel sections, as I will show, finite things are “with themselves” and in the whole in a manner akin to organs, namely, where each organ is affirmed in its particular nature by its relation to the other organs, with the whole being nothing but the total relation between them. In the present chapter, then, I will analyse Morality and the Logic of Essence, which is the second section of the *Philosophy of Right* and the second book of the *Logic*, respectively. Here, the basic constellation is one situated between the other two, that is to say, neither separate singulars nor wholes, but rather a dualism or relation between the two. Hegel says that Essence is a sphere of “relativity” (E1,17 §64), which Iber interprets as “absolute relationality”.¹⁴⁷ Morality presents the “standpoint of difference” (PR §108A).

In general, you can say that the basic structure discussed in Morality and the Logic of Essence is a relation between two entities that are identified, but that also remain distinct. “Being with oneself in the other”, I will argue, takes the form of the following stark contradiction: that one entity relates to another that counts as completely identical, the one

¹⁴⁷ Iber, *Metaphysik absoluter Relationalität*.

thus “with itself” in it, and yet at the same time the other is completely distinct, simply an other. In contrast to the One and the Many in the *Logic of Being*, the contradiction is now made explicit and posited as a relation, and, most importantly, one related element is posited as the absolute ground or basis for the other. The second related element only counts as an expression of the first, which is in this respect absolute; and yet, the second element also retains a certain independence, challenging, as it were, the absoluteness of the first. In the *Logic of Essence*, and in *Morality*, Hegel uses the metaphor of one “returning into itself” (WL2 26/401; PR §141N) through an other. The metaphor takes the following form: at first, there is a relation outwards, towards another, but then the first returns into itself, since the other counts as nothing but it, namely the first.

In *Morality*, the relations discussed are, firstly, the one between the form of willing and the individual will, and, secondly, the one between the individual will and its objectivity (or the change it affects in the world). In both cases, the first element is supposed to be prior and ground the second, which is said to be identical to it, while also retaining an element of difference. In other words, the form of willing is supposed to be “with itself”, instantiated in the individual will, and the individual will is supposed to be “with itself” and expressing itself in the change brought about by its act. The implication that the form of willing is itself free and freely expresses itself in individuals is, I believe, intentional in Hegel. It should, however, not be taken in a voluntaristic fashion, but merely in the abstract sense that the form of free willing is not forced or necessitated to exist, but merely comes to exist by itself, and is distinguishable from and yet present in individual wills. It is my contention that the two relations characteristic of *Morality* parallel the relation between *Essence* and finite things as its *Shine* or *Appearances*, as well as the relation between the appearing finite things and their properties (which they have only in relation to other finite things). The explanation for this peculiar double structure is identical in the *Logic* and *Morality*: *Essence* posits finite things as itself, its own structure of self-relation posited outside itself. Similarly,

the form of free willing constitutes individual wills as free wills, and therefore also as self-related, “with themselves” in their acts.

My presentation will proceed as follows: (1) I present the relation between the form of the will and individual will in parallel to Essence and finite things. This logical topic is presented mainly in the first section of the Logic of Essence, entitled “Essence as the Reflection into itself”; (2) I analyse the relation of the individual moral subject to her acts, or rather, more precisely, the result of her acts as they exist in the world. This is discussed particularly in the subchapters on purpose and intention, and displays a similarity to Appearance (the middle section of the Logic of Essence); (3) lastly, I claim that Hegel’s argument about individual wills wanting the good is similar to his point about finite things instantiating the Substance, which he makes in the last section of the Logic of Essence, namely, Actuality.

I. The form of willing and the individual will, Essence and finite things

The form of willing as the essence and ought of the individual will

In a lecture on the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel states:

(28) One element of the ought is the relation of the subjective will to the concept, and the other is the relation of the subjective will to the objective external. (VRP3 339).

In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel makes a similar claim (PR §108A). In this section, I will analyse the first relation and address the question: What are the related elements of this relation? The subjective will means the individual will, or, more precisely, the will of the

individual moral subject. The concept Hegel mentions is the concept of the will. For example, Hegel says that the “identity of the subjective will and its concept” (VRP4 303) is present though not yet posited in Morality. In other parallel passages, he says the subjective will is related to the “universal will, which has being in itself” (PR §104), “the will in itself” (VRP3 330), or “what is in itself”, while elsewhere he calls the will in itself “the (infinite) form of the will” (PR §141A; VRP3 337). I will use the most precise and less extensive expression offered by Hegel, namely, the form of free willing.¹⁴⁸ While the phrase the “will in itself” only denotes its status in relation to the individual will, namely, that it is something prior or underlying, the form of free willing says something about what it is like. The term “universal will”, on the one hand, only refers to what is identical in all individuals,¹⁴⁹ while, on the other hand, it is explicitly defined as, what I will show to be, the form of willing, namely, self-relation. In this vein, Hegel speaks of “an infinite relation to oneself (universality of the will)” (VRP3 404).

Hegel writes:

(29) The good rests on the essence of the will. This is only formal and this accordance with oneself [...] The good is thus also this accordance with oneself (PRV21 139).

What does Hegel mean when he says that accordance with oneself is the essence of the will? In §111 of the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel says that the will of the individual human being is like the will in itself, which is like what I call the form of free willing. This is the case insofar as the will of the individual is “reflected into itself in its determinacy” and “herewith the self-identical and universal will” (PR §111). This is very logical terminology, but Hegel

¹⁴⁸ “Subjectivity is not only formal, but constitutes the infinite self-determining of the will, the formal of it” (PR §108).

¹⁴⁹ Hegel equates the universal will to “the will generally speaking” (VRP3 330).

explains that the determinacy refers to the content, that is, what is willed. So Hegel is saying that insofar as what is willed and enacted is mine, it is me willing it, I am “reflected into” myself or “self-identical” therein, and I instantiate the form of free willing. Or, again, put more crudely: the form of free willing is self-relation, my act being wanted by me, stemming from my will. In order to be a free will I need to display this form, since if what I enact is not wanted by me, then I am not a free will in this act but coerced. Self-coherence, self-identity, and reflection into myself, are only different terms for the basic idea of self-relation. In the above quoted passage, Hegel is thus claiming that the essence of the individual will is the form of free willing, which is self-relation. Self-relation is the essence of the individual will probably in the sense that the form of free willing is constitutive of it being a free moral subject. The individual is only a free will if she is self-related in her acts and displays the form of free willing. Since interpreters agree that Hegel presents his take on a Kantian morality here,¹⁵⁰ it is interesting to note that Kant indeed supposes that the form of willing is constitutive of individual wills, the form underlying their free willing. The first relation relevant in Morality is thus the one between the individual moral will and the pure form of free willing, which is self-relation and its essence or the in itself. This relation is one of identity and difference. The individual moral subject willing something is an instance of the form of free willing. And yet the identity with the form of free willing is also only a demand that may not be met (PR §111). As Hegel says:

(30) [I]nfinite self-determining [...] when it makes this first appearance in the individual will, [...] has not yet been posited as identical to the concept of the will, so that the standpoint of morality is consequently the standpoint of *relation*, of the *ought* or the *requirement* (PR §108).

¹⁵⁰ This is generally agreed upon. For example, Allen Wood points out that “Hegel’s attitude towards morality is associated with his [...] criticisms of Kant’s moral theory”. Allen Wood, ‘Hegel’s Critique of Morality’, in *Klassiker Auslegen. Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, ed. by Ludwig Siep (Berlin, Akademie Verlag: 1997).

Infinite self-determining, as Hegel notes before the previously quoted passage, is the “formal of the will” (PR §108), and infinite means self-related (as I have explicated in chapter 2). The concept of the will to which Hegel refers is clearly the same as self-determining, as the structure of the sentence shows. Therefore, Hegel is saying that the form of the free will, pure self-relation, is also only a demand as against the individual will, something it ought to, but does not necessarily, enact. Indeed, Hegel famously understands the moral ought in Kant’s theory as non-contradiction (PR §135A). As Nuzzo has pointed out,¹⁵¹ Hegel reformulates Kant’s imperative. For Hegel, it is about the “actualization of the act”.¹⁵² Indeed, Hegel repeatedly says that the required non-contradiction is the one between the act and the maxim, the subjective general ground for the act (PR §135; PRV19 105). The external action and the reasoning behind it shall be identical. The will shall be self-determining, self-related in the external existence of its act.

How can self-relation be both the basic form of all free willing, and yet also an ought, that is, a demand that may fail to be met? Hegel does not offer an explicit explanation, nor indeed does Kant at the point where the problem occurs in a similar form.¹⁵³ In Hegel’s understanding of morality, the reason is, I believe, that an act constitutes a relation to something or someone else. “Insofar as I act, I stand in a relation to something” (RPV21 108). When acting, I am thus also other-related whereupon my options of action and what my act actually entails are also determined by something or someone else, while the moral ought demands that the external act shall be completely identical to the individual will, only and exclusively the expression of it. In Morality, I shall be “with myself in the other”, namely, the change I affect in other human beings or things. But “being with oneself in the

¹⁵¹ Angelica Nuzzo, ‘Contradiction in the Ethical World. Hegel’s Challenge for Times of Crisis’, presentation at the International Hegel Congress (2011), <<http://www.stuttgart.de/img/mdb/item/435849/67077.mp3>> [accessed 18 August 2011].

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ See: Reinhard Hiltcher, ‘Zur systematischen Stellung des Bösen in Kants Moralphilosophie’, in: *Wahrheit und Geltung* ed. by Alexander Riebel and Reinhard Hiltcher (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1996).

other” is understood in a way that this other shall be nothing but me, only and exclusively the expression of my will, thereby denying that it also retains an element of otherness. To enact free willing, I have to act, and thereby relate to something other. Yet the act and this specific relation to another shall be only and completely determined by me.

As a final point on the relation between the individual will and the form of willing, I will consider what the structure analysed above means from the viewpoint of the form of willing. From the viewpoint of the individual will, it has an essence, which is also only a demand to be met. From the viewpoint of the form of free willing, there is the form of free willing that is related to and distinguished from the will of the individual moral subject. Hegel says that since there is still a difference between the good and the individual will, Morality represents the “standpoint of finitude, of the appearance of the will”. And he goes on to claim that the “will is finite, because it has another, the objective, opposed to it, the finite will is, however, the appearing will” (RPV21 103). The objective clearly refers to the good, the content of the moral ought. The will of the individual moral subject is thus the appearing will, in the sense of (only) being the (incomplete) appearance of the form of free willing, rather than its true realisation. The form of free willing can thus be said to have an appearance, or at least somehow be instantiated in the individual will.¹⁵⁴

The peculiar thing in this relation is that the form of willing is, on the one hand, one element, and, on the other, also the whole relation. The form of free willing is self-relation and, at least in one respect, it stands in a self-relation when related to the individual will, the individual will being an instance of it, namely the form of free willing. That Hegel sees it in this way is made clear from passages like the following: “[The will] first posits itself in the opposition between the universal will which has being in itself and the individual will which has being for itself [...]” (PR §104) and then overcomes this opposition. Also elsewhere,

¹⁵⁴ A page before this remark, Hegel says: “The subjective will is the existence of the concept of the universal will” (PRV21 102).

Hegel says something to the effect that the will splits itself into the individual will and the will in itself or the form of willing.¹⁵⁵ This will that differentiates itself into two, and then overcomes the differentiation, is presumably also the will in itself, the form of willing. The form of willing thus features twice: once as the in itself or essence of the individual will, and again as the entire relation between them. It is “with itself in the other”, namely, the individual will, and insofar as this individual counts as nothing but the instantiation of willing, this is a self-relation, thus displaying the form of willing, as it is defined in Morality.

Similarities between Essence and the form of willing

In the first chapter, I have shown that Essence is both the ground of finite things and yet also the relation between this ground and finite things. Essence must appear, and one of Hegel’s key propositions is that the finite things are a part of Essence itself, its own Shine. Finite things are Essence in another guise and therefore part of its own self-relation, which Hegel calls “reflection into itself” (WL2 17/393) or “shining of itself into itself” (WL2 23/398). And yet they are also distinct from Essence. This is so, Hegel argues, because Essence is the pure form of self-relation, and it posits finite things as self-related and therefore as independent. For Hegel, self-relation implies independence, that is, not requiring any connection to anything else. Since finite things are posited by Essence as self-related and independent, they are also posited as independent from Essence itself. This entails the contradiction that finite things are distinct and independent from Essence, and yet are posited by Essence and only an aspect of it. Finite things are thus neither independent nor truly distinct. Hegel summarises this conception in a passage already partly quoted in the first chapter:

¹⁵⁵ “In its [the will’s] self-determination [it is] the relation of itself to itself – the differentiation of itself into its extremes: the will in itself and the will for itself, and the movement of sublation of this opposition” (VRP3 330).

(31) But there is a distinguishing contained in the shining or mediation, and what is distinct does itself acquire the form of identity, in its distinction from the identity from which it emerges and in which [...] it [only]¹⁵⁶ lies as Shine hence what is distinct is itself in the mode of self-relating immediacy (E1 §114).

Within the “shining or mediation”, which is Essence, there is something distinct, namely, distinct finite things. They emerge from the relation of “identity” or self-relation of Essence – to which they pertain as Essence’s Shine – and they themselves are also self-related, a “self-relating immediacy”, and therefore have a certain independence from Essence.

This basic constellation is comparable to the relation between the form of willing and the individual will.¹⁵⁷ In addition, Quante remarks that the relation between “universal subjectivity” and “individual subjectivity” in the practical realm is similar to Essence.¹⁵⁸ Hegel certainly uses terms from the *Logic of Essence in Morality* – Essence and Appearance having already been mentioned. When he says that the will splits itself in two and overcomes it, Hegel calls this “the negation of the negation” and “a negativity that relates itself to itself” (PR §104). With this formula Hegel is claiming that two distinct things – the form of willing and the individual will – are related. They are negatives to one another in the sense of distinct or opposites, and connected by a negation or relation of difference. But the two distinct entities are also not distinct, but identical; so the difference – i.e. negation – is negated. “A negativity that relates to itself” is one of the central

¹⁵⁶ This word is added in Geraets’ translation and very fitting.

¹⁵⁷ Angela Requate links Morality to the Logic of Essence. See: Angela Requate, *Die Logik der Moralität in Hegels Philosophie des Rechts* (Cuxhaven: Junghans, 1995). Her analysis is, however, completely distinct from mine. Lu de Vos points out that reflection is the primordial characteristic of morality, but he does not conclude from that a parallel to Essence. (See: Lu de Vos, ‘Die Logik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Eine Vermutung’, p. 111). Rather, De Vos proposes a parallel to Objectivity in the Logic of the Concept. I do not think that this connection – particularly the parallel between the aim of moral subjects and Teleology in the *Logic* – is convincing. Teleology describes the way causal connections in the world seem to be happening according to a higher plan – and the plan is precisely not the aim of individuals.

¹⁵⁸ Quante, *Hegels Begriff der Handlung*, p.114.

definitions of Essence. For instance, Hegel gives a very neat definition of Essence as follows: “It [Essence] is its relation [Verhalten] to itself, but to itself as the negative of itself, only in this way is it a negativity that relates to itself” (WL2 27/401).¹⁵⁹ Essence is self-related by relating to its opposite, namely, finite things. However, as in Morality, this relation is contradictory (E1 §114). Hegel even refers to it as an “ought” (VLM 111) because things, on the one hand, are Essence and display its form of self-relation, while, on the other hand, they are also independent and distinct from it.

Another typical way of describing Essence is reflection. “Essence is reflection” (WL2 24/399) and finite things as Appearances are also “reflected” into themselves and others (WL2 150/501), “return into themselves through their negation”, that is to say, through their other (WL2 150/500). In Morality, too, reflection is an important concept. Hegel even calls Morality the “standpoint [...] of the reflection into oneself” (PRV21 103). Reflection is, of course, not only a logical term, but also refers to the activity of thinking in which the subject knows herself and distinguishes herself from the external world. The logical sense of reflection as a “return into oneself” (WL2 26/401) is, however, closely linked to this. The basic metaphor underlying both types of reflection is the light that is reflected back from an external object. And Hegel clearly proposes that moral subjects are not only reflecting in the sense of being self-conscious, but also in a practical sense, that is, reflecting into themselves in the sense that they recognise themselves in the changes they affect in the world. They are “with themselves in this other”, the act which is also externally existing. As Hegel puts it: “subjective will [...] infinite reflection into itself – [...] reflection in its externalization into itself” (PR §113N). Moreover, when he calls Morality the sphere of reflection, he seems to have this form of reflection in mind.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Miller’s translation offers a slightly different interpretation of this passage, namely, that “it [presupposing] is the manner in which” Essence relates to itself. Both translations are possible from the German, yet mine is more precise since Hegel does not use the term “manner” at all. In terms of content, this does not make any difference, since presupposing is only a specific form of Essence.

¹⁶⁰ “The moral standpoint is the one of the relation, of difference, reflection into itself, the positing of oneself as against another, it is necessarily related to all that it distinguishes from it” (RP21 103).

There is one crucial difference between Essence and the form of willing in Morality, however, which must be acknowledged. The difference, I believe, is due to the fact that Hegel presents a Kantian type of practical reflection in Morality, while in the *Logic* he also picks up on Kant's conception of reflection (WL2 30f./404f.), but supplements it in an important way. In Hegel's reading, Essence is reflection – the relation of identity and difference to itself – and posits finite things as self-related as well as their distinctions from one another. This differentiation is not present in the form of willing, which is why the form of willing needs an external content, namely, the relation to something else that is willed. As Hegel says, “the criterium that there should be no contradiction is non-productive” (PR §135A). This is the famous critique of the formalism of Kant's conception of morality (a critique, which, I believe, Hegel would also extend to Kant's theoretical philosophy, as the formalism of the categories lacks content). The form of willing and Essence is nevertheless very similar. They are thought of as the form of self-relation, which enables the self-relation of finite things or individual wills, respectively. They stand in a contradictory relation of complete identity and complete difference to them. Finite things and individual wills are, on the one hand, instantiations of Essence or the form of willing, while, on the other hand, they are completely independent from them. But the reason why they are independent differs in the accounts presented in the *Logic* of Essence and Morality, respectively. Finite things are independent from Essence, because they are posited by it as self-related (i.e. independent). This argument could also apply to Morality, namely, that individuals are free as against the form of free willing, that they can decide not to enact it and let themselves be governed by someone else. But the main problem in Morality lies elsewhere: specifically, the differentiation of motives, and the relation to other individuals that determines this individual will, does not stem from the form of willing and is therefore not part of her freedom, but is rather, ultimately, perceived as contradicting it.

II. The individual will and its acts, Appearances and their properties

Individual wills and Appearances

In the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Hegel referred to two relations that are central in Morality. The first one is that between the form of willing and the individual will. The second one is that between the individual and the “objective external” (VRP3 339), which Hegel also calls existence. The external existence to which Hegel refers is the world in which the individual acts, including other moral subjects. As already cited above, Hegel notes: “Insofar as I act, I stand in a relation to something” (PRV21 108), something other and external to myself. Similarly, as in the case of the relation between the form of willing and the individual will, this relation is also one of identity and difference: the change I affect on an external thing or other individual is an expression of my will, and as such I am self-related in it. At the same time, what I affect also exists independently of me, and is conditioned and influenced by circumstances and other individuals (PR §115). As Hegel writes: “The simple identity of the will with itself in this opposition is the content or end which remains the same in the two opposites and indifferent towards these differences of form” (PR §109). The opposition Hegel refers to here is the one between the individual will and its “objectivity” (PR §109) or “existence” (PR §109) in other individuals or things.¹⁶¹ Insofar as the world around me is my own “objectivity”, my “expression” (PR §113), I am self-related therein. Hegel is thus saying that if I had the aim to affect the world or others in this way and I did so, then I am “with myself” in this change and self-determining. My act constitutes the free action of a subject. The exact content of my aim is not important, only

¹⁶¹ In ethics, it is usually the acts that affect other human beings, which are of most relevance, but Morality does not only encompass ethics. More generally it refers to the sphere where the subject expresses internal intentions externally (PR §503).

that the aim, which was enacted and now exists externally, is the one I internally wanted. Nothing other than my aim should occur.

There are certain similarities with Appearance, the middle section of the Logic of Essence. In Appearance, Hegel describes finite things as being in a contradictory relation. Similarly to Essence, finite things as Existents, or Appearances, are self-related through another. Hegel says: “The Existing is as the Appearing reflected into another” (WL2 150/500). Reflection means that it is related to another and yet is also the “return into itself” (WL2 150/500). As Hegel was quoted as saying in the first chapter, this is so because the existing thing is conceived as grounding its relation to another (VL 148), whereby the other-relation somehow stems from the thing. The relation to another to which Hegel refers is the differentiation from other things that establishes the properties, making one thing distinguishable from another. Hegel therefore says that finite things as Appearances have “essential independence” (WL2 150/500), since they are not defined by anything else, but are instead self-grounding and self-defining. However, on the other hand, there is a “connection of reciprocally grounding existents” (WL2 150/500), a “world of reciprocal dependency” (E1 §123). This is so because the relations to other finite things, and the properties a thing has in distinction from another, also depend on there being other things. The other things thus in fact also determine the first, even though the first is supposed to be self-determining, expressing itself in its external relations. These two opposite claims remain unreconciled.

In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel remarks on the “subjective ground” (PR §115R) of an action. Later in the text, intention is claimed to be the “subjective essence of the action” (PR §119). The other individuals are certainly not also the ground of my acts, in the strict sense of being a reason for my act. But the fact that Hegel says intention is only *claimed* to be the subjective essence means that the essence of my act is somewhat contestable. There are other sides to my act that do not stem from my individual will (the subjective essence)

and could also be essential. Furthermore, Hegel says, in a lecture, clearly speaking in terms of the Logic of Essence: “It [the subjective will] presupposes something other, but it is also reflected into itself, in this other it presupposes” (PRV21 105). The fact that the individual will presupposes something else – before the quoted passage, Hegel says it is another subject – means that the individual is conditioned by this other. In the quoted sentence, Hegel connects both sub-clauses with the word “but”, because they denote opposites. The individual will is reflected into itself, self-related and free; and yet it is also presupposing and requiring something else which also determines it.

The development of Morality

The three subchapters of the Morality section discuss the following areas: actions on purpose, for which you therefore have to take responsibility; acting on an intention or for your personal welfare; and willing the good. All of these chapters describe different and progressively more successful ways in which the individual expresses herself in the act. They are more successful in the sense that more aspects of the change she affects in the world stem from her and are in accordance with her individual will. In a lecture, Hegel states:

(32) The aim is that this subjective will becomes identical to the concept of the will; in itself it is identical with it. [...] ¹⁶² [T]he subjective will is completely identical with itself, purely for itself, and by being so, it is this identity with itself, which is the concept. In itself, the concept of the subjective will and of the will in itself are <identical> ¹⁶³ (PRV21 105).

¹⁶² I have removed the word “but”, because it does not make sense in the context and must have been a mistake.

¹⁶³ This word was added in the published version of the text.

The aim of the development of Morality is that the will of the individual moral subject becomes identical to the form of willing, which is self-relation or self-identity (cf. PR §108A). The identity that is already “in itself”, per se given and presupposed, shall become complete and manifest. This means that over the course of the discussion of Morality, the aspect of self-relation in the individual’s practical interaction with the world can be expected to increase – ideally to a point whereby change brought about by the act is nothing but an expression of the individual will. In this case, the individual will would be only and completely self-related and self-determining, which would mean that it completely instantiates the form of free willing,¹⁶⁴ the form of free willing would cease to be an ought or demand, and instead would become a reality.

In a handwritten note, Hegel summarises the progression of Morality as follows: “Subjectivity – return into itself – α) knowledge of what is immediate – β) the universal of the deed γ) the universal nature in terms of the concept – the good” (PR §141N). If one acts on purpose, one wants the immediate movement and its effect. If I act on purpose, Hegel says, there is an “alteration to this given existence [Dasein]”, and this alteration is “mine”, that is to say, it is to some degree due to me (PR §115). Acting out an intention, one also wants the “universal of the deed”, that is, the universal meaning and typical consequences of this act. In wanting the good, one wants the “concept of the will” as such. Each time the individual will “returns into itself”, is self-related through another, one can say: “with itself in another” and, in this respect, self-determining. This other can be the immediate change in things or other human beings that the act entails, or this change and its social meaning, or the good willed by conscience. How and why the individual will is

¹⁶⁴ Also, Sedgwick notes that “the gap between the will as universal (an sich) and the will as particular subjectivity (für sich) narrows with each progressive step of *Moralität*”, without explaining how exactly this is so. See: Sally Sedgwick, ‘Hegel’s Critique of the Subjective Idealism of Kant’s Ethics’, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 26.1 (1988), pp. 89-105 (p.93).

self-related when willing the good is more difficult to discern and as such will be discussed further below.

Interestingly, Hegel distinguishes purpose, intention, and conscience, not only in terms of self-relation, but also in terms of what is left out of the self-relation, that is, the aspects of my action that do not stem from me, and the extent to which I am other-related in my act and not self-determined. Hegel writes:

(33) The first breach within the action is that between what is given and simply there and what is produced [by me], the second breach is between what is given externally as a universal will and the internal particular determination that I attribute to it; the third is finally that the intention is also the universal content. The good is the intention, raised to the concept of the will (PR §118).

If I act on purpose, I change something in the world. As Hegel puts it in the above quoted passage, there is something “given and simply there”, and something that I have “produced” or caused. I only recognise and take responsibility for this latter aspect, that is, my purpose (PR §117). The problem is that what was already given before my act conditions it. Hegel says my deed is at the mercy of “external forces” and it has “remote and alien consequences” (PR §118). The meaning of my act and its affect in the world does not stem from me and I am not self-related therein, nor freely expressing myself in this respect.

Hegel therefore proposes that I should take the universal social meaning and typical consequences into account. This is what he calls acting on an intention, rather than merely on purpose. Actions have a “universal predicate” (PR §119) – like arson and manslaughter – that I can anticipate. If I perform a particular act, I am taken to have been intending the universal meaning that goes along with it (PR §120). Yet Hegel says in the above quoted

passage that there is a breach between “what is given externally as a universal will and the particular determination I attribute to it”. The universal meaning of an act is externally given to me by social customs. What I particularly intended with this deed, in terms of my wellbeing or simply what I wanted my deed to mean, is not necessarily identical to the socially given meaning. Additionally, even if I had the desire to carry out precisely this act with its pre-established meaning and consequences, as Hegel remarks, the “will has some content, but not subjectivity itself as its content” (PR §120N).

(34) The good and the right are also a content – not just a natural content, but a content that is posited by my rationality itself; and to make my freedom the content of my will is a pure determination of my freedom itself (PR §121A)

My free will itself shall be the content of my willing. Only thus am I not only self-related in terms of form – insofar as it is me who has chosen this particular option among the accepted options of action given to me – but also in terms of content – insofar as I will my own freedom and want to realise it in my act. If I want the concept of the free will, Hegel says, I will the good. This is presumably the way in which I am most self-related. In the above quoted passage, Hegel no longer even mentions any breach when describing the willing of the good.

It is worth pausing and noticing that Hegel proceeds from intending the social meaning of actions to willing the good. This is notable in connection with the analytic-pragmatist reading of Hegel (proposed by Brandom and further developed by scholars such as Pinkard and Pippin). Morality is, I believe, the most pertinent passage for an analytic-pragmatist reading of Hegel, for Morality is the sphere in which given individual subjects confront a social and physical world wanting their acts to be valid therein. And Hegel explicitly makes

the point that Pippin,¹⁶⁵ Quante¹⁶⁶ and others¹⁶⁷ make, namely, that the “act-description” of my act is not in my control; or, in Hegel’s words, acts have a “universal predicate” and exist within “circumstances” that I must acknowledge. He even claims that if I want to act in the world, my action has to “conform to what is *recognized as valid* in the world” (PR §132). In this respect, analytic-pragmatist Hegel scholars¹⁶⁸ are thus congruent with Hegel’s own reasoning. Yet, Hegel continues his argument in a different direction, which shows that he is not a pragmatist, but at least also a rationalist looking for the true essence of freedom. The transition from Morality to Ethical Life does not consist in the pragmatic acknowledgment that we are de facto conditioned by social norms and meanings, which we have to accept, or at least pragmatically negotiate, if we want to act. Hegel does not criticise a Kantian belief in the metaphysical ground of morals by resorting to empirical social facts.¹⁶⁹ He does not and, indeed, *cannot* because it would mean that, for the most part, I simply have to accept what Hegel calls above an “externally given universal will”. The upshot of this position leads to social meanings and norms that simply happen to be there and which I have not internally scrutinised and approved of, and which might indeed be morally wrong, or not beneficial for me, or irrational, or contradict freedom. As Siep points out, “what he [man] recognizes as right, should not be found outside, neither in law nor in the ethical, but should be known as dependent on his Essenciality, the concept of his will”.¹⁷⁰ Hegel’s analysis of the good is, I believe, the place where individuals come to know and correct their conception of their own essence, the form of free willing, which, as Hegel

¹⁶⁵ Pippin, *Hegel’s Practical Philosophy*, p. 153.

¹⁶⁶ Michael Quante, *Hegels Begriff der Handlung* (Stuttgart: Frommann-holzboog, 1993), p.112.

¹⁶⁷ See also for example: Kenneth Baynes, ‘Freedom and Recognition in Hegel and Habermas’, *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 28.5 (2002), pp.1-17 (p. 4).

¹⁶⁸ Pragmatists – such as Brandom, for example – propose that I may or may not perform a certain act, but if I do so I implicitly accept certain norms, which in turn entail other norms, and as such I am therefore bound to all these respective norms. For a neat characterisation, see: Stephen Houlgate, ‘Hegel and Brandom on Norms, Concepts and Logical Categories’, in *German Idealism* ed. by Espen Hammer (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), pp. 137-152 (p.139ff.).

¹⁶⁹ I therefore agree with the basic thrust of Deligiorgi’s article on Hegel’s “early metaphysics of morals”, where she argues that Hegel interprets social “practices as ethical” because they are based on “freedom as a metaphysical condition” (p.38). However, her argument and conception of freedom in relation to nature are based on Hegel’s early writings. See: Katerina Deligiorgi, ‘Religion, Love and Law: Hegel’s Early Metaphysics of Morals’, in *A Companion to Hegel* ed. by Stephen Houlgate and Michael Baur (Oxford: Blackwell, 2011), pp. 23-44 (p.38).

¹⁷⁰ Ludwig Siep, ‘Was heißt “Aufhebung der Moralität in Sittlichkeit” in Hegels Rechtsphilosophie?’, in his *Praktische Philosophie im Deutschen Idealismus* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1992), pp.217-239 (p.224).

will claim in Ethical Life, is the underlying basis and the legitimising principle of the legal order of the state.¹⁷¹

III. The moral good and Substance

Hegel's ultimate solution to the problem of how I can be purely "with myself" in a change I affected in the external world, is not that I should include the world, its given structures and effects in my willing, as pragmatists would propose. At least within Morality, I will show, the last solution Hegel proposes is rather that I will the good, which is the form of free willing itself. In my reading, willing the good means for Hegel that I will to be purely self-related in the change I affect in the world. I will to be nothing but an instantiation of the form of free willing, only and completely self-determining and self-related. The element of otherness, the externally given world that conditions my act is thus bracketed. Furthermore, I will argue, Hegel then comes to propose that the other or differentiation, rather than stemming from an externally give world, must stem from inside the form of willing itself; free willing must be self-differentiating. The form of free willing must be understood as a self-relation containing differentiation, not only self-identity, but also self-difference. "Being with oneself in the other" cannot consist in denying the otherness of the other, the world and my diverse acts within it. The element of difference must be understood as part of free willing itself. The will must be reconceived in such a way that the distinction between acts, and the distinction between the subject and the world, can somehow count as part of the individual's own freedom, rather than contradicting it. Hegel makes this argument, I will claim, in a parallel fashion as the one on Substance in the Logic of Essence.

¹⁷¹ "The universal will is the concept of the will, and the laws are the particular determinations of the will as grounded in this concept" (E1 §163).

Hegel discusses Spinoza's Substance¹⁷² in the chapters entitled the Absolute (in the *Science of Logic*) and the Relation of Substantiality (in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*), which is the first chapter of Actuality, the last section of the Logic of Essence. As already noted, I use the term the Substance to avoid confusion. For Hegel, the Spinozan Substance is a further definition of Essence. Substance is the absolute as Essence that is supposed to be instantiated or actualised in finite things. However, Substance is in one respect a step backward from Essence, in so far as Hegel understands Substance as something purely self-identical, thus lacking any self-differentiation or relation of difference. In Hegel's words, a Spinozan substance is the "unmoved identity", and as such "the whole movement [that posits this distinction] goes on outside the absolute" (WL2 197/538). The distinction to which Hegel refers in this particular passage is the one between representations and finite things with their changing characters. But there is also the distinction between the substance and finite things and any other distinction that by necessity cannot stem from Substance, since the substance is not self-differentiating, but merely identical and "unmoved".¹⁷³ Hegel's argument about Spinoza's substance is therefore that it cannot be actualised in individual finite things, because the latter are necessarily different from one another while the substance is not self-differentiating. If all things were to be instantiations of one purely self-identical Substance, then they would all be identical – each one simply being an identical "copy of the absolute" (WL2 190/532).

The thrust throughout the last section of the Logic of Essence, namely, Actuality, is therefore that the differences between things must be integrated into the absolute and be part of its inner structure. The differences between things must be part of the absolute's own self-differentiation. This is, I believe, the basic meaning of Hegel's famous phrase that the substance must be a subject. Hegel writes about the transition from Substance into the

¹⁷² Hegel states explicitly that the chapter, the Absolute, discusses Spinoza's substance (WL2 195ff./536ff.).

¹⁷³ Wölfe also interprets Hegel in this way, claiming that the "laying out" (*Auslegung*) of the different attributes and modes of the absolute is not the "movement of the absolute itself". This is due to it lacking "self-related negativity", i.e. self-differentiation. See: Gerhard M. Wölfe, *Die Wesenslogik in Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik* (Suttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1994), p.449f.

Concept: “But this completion is not anymore substance itself, but something higher, the Concept, the Subject” (WL2 249/580). In a much earlier comment, also on Spinoza’s substance, Hegel says: “The substance is not determined as what differentiates itself, as a subject” (WL1 455/383). The transition from Spinoza’s Substance towards “Subjectivity” (WL2 272/599), which is the first section of the *Logic of the Concept*, thus requires that the absolute becomes self-differentiating. The identical substance of everything must turn into a subject, namely, into a self-differentiating, self-determining whole, of “what is most rich within itself” (E1 §160), containing all finite things as its moments.

In the subchapter on good and conscience in the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel makes a similar argument.¹⁷⁴ Hegel repeatedly speaks of the moral good as “what is essential for the subjective will” (PR §131, §133), the “essence of the will in its substantiality” (PR §132), and the will’s “substance” (PR §130), the “substantial” (PR §131). And he defines the good, like substance, as self-identity or self-relation. Hegel says in a lecture cited above: “The good is thus also this accordance with oneself” (RPV21 139). He also lauds Kant for linking moral duty to the “rational will”, which is “free and infinitely relating to itself”, “the identical relation to itself” (PRV19 104). If you will the good or you want to do your duty, accordingly, you want to be in a relation of identity to yourself. Self-determination is not only a de facto aspect of your act, but your intentional aim. Hegel says, in contrast to Kant, that it is the content of the will that must be identical to itself (PRV19 105). The content – what I will – must be identical, that is, in the external existence of my act and in my internal intention. Hegel is thus saying that if I will the moral good, I want to be purely self-related in the change I affect in the world.

I want to be nothing but an instantiation of the form of free willing, which is self-relation, just as finite things ought to be nothing but copies of the self-identical Substance. This

¹⁷⁴ Udo Rameil also notes the similarity between the end of Morality and Substance, his main point being that right/good and subjectivity turn into moments of ethical life understood as the Concept. I broadly agree with this view, but integrate it into a relationalist understanding of the *Logic* and freedom. See: Udo Rameil, ‘Sittliches Sein und Subjektivität’, *Hegel-Studien*, 16 (1981), pp. 123-162 (p.129ff).

would be so if the change I affect by my action were only an expression of my individual will, without me having to adapt to externally given circumstances or such circumstances distorting my action. Theoretically, if there were an objectively established moral good, and this good was identical to the form of my own will, then through willing it my action would indeed be both valid and legitimised as well as the expression of my freedom; me wanting my own freedom. The good is the ‘objective’ and it is also the essence of my own will. As Hegel says: “The truth of this standpoint is that I know myself as free and as the substance of everything that is valid” (VRP3 433). As in the chapter on the Substance in the *Logic*, conscience supposes there to be one absolute substance that is at the basis of everything. This substance is the form of free willing itself, pure self-relation, and in wanting it I am both free and in accordance with the objectively valid basis of all reality. Hegel therefore writes in the *Philosophy of Right*: “In doing my duty I am with myself and free” (PR §133A). “It is in the true sense my own objectivity that I bring to fulfilment in doing so” (PR §133A).

There remains, however, a fundamental problem. Hegel says in a lecture: “the will is evil only insofar as it is acting” (VRP3 438). I believe he means to say two things here. Firstly, I cannot only be self-related in my act, since acting is always a relation to something other than me that retains a certain degree of independence. The world is not in fact based on the abstract form of free willing, because the world is made up of distinct entities and not one simple, self-identical substance. Secondly, if I only willed to be self-related, I would not want anything specific, but actions require specific motives.¹⁷⁵ Neither a concrete good world nor concrete acts can be deduced from the good. It is thus up to the individual’s conscience – here meant in the negative sense of her own arbitrariness – to conjure up duties and to posit them as objectively valid, denying the validity of the actual world that is

¹⁷⁵ “The moral standpoint contains the subjective, particular, finite will, the universal is an other for it, an ought for it [...] The particular motives are supposed to bring the subjective will to submit to the universal will – to accept the universal as a maxim – This is contradictory as the motives are particular in terms of their content, which exist within the particular will, at the same time it is demanded that the particular will shall raise itself to the universal” (VRP1 282).

given to her. Hegel calls those two converging moves the “volatilization of what is objective” (VRP3 430) and the “subjectivization of all content” (VRP3 432).

In logical terms, the good is like substance, pure self-identity, and the world is supposed to be identical to this substance. Since the one Substance is also the substance of individual wills, they and the world, the individual free will and what is objectively valid, are supposed to be identical. The problem is that distinct acts and relations to others cannot be instances of something purely self-identical. This implies that there must be something beside the supposedly absolute substance, namely, differences and probably something or some principle out of which those differences have arisen. In Morality, Hegel thinks this source of differences is subjectivity, for the moment in the sense of the arbitrary differentiating activity of the individual’s mind. As in the *Logic*, the basic solution to this problematic split – i.e. the undifferentiated good, on the one hand, and the arbitrary, null distinct duties fabricated by the individual, on the other – is that both must be understood as aspects of the same. The substance must be subject, the self-identical ground must also be self-differentiating activity.

Hegel clearly intends to make this abstract point at the end of Morality: On conscience, Hegel claims that “subjectivity, in its universality reflected into itself [...] is what posits particularity and what determines and decides” (PR §136). Conscience is self-related, “reflected into itself” just like the good. Indeed, conscience displays the form of free willing, and the good is this pure form. However, while the good is empty and undefined for Hegel, conscience “determines and decides”. In another passage, he calls it “the purely abstract principle of determining” (PR §141). Since conscience is self-related and yet also producing determinations – and not “non-productive” (PR §135A) like the moral ought – it has to be seen as self-differentiating. For Hegel, any determination derives from a distinction, that is, a determinate negation. Conscience can only create determinations – i.e. define what is good, bad, what to do, and so on – by distinguishing. In its pure abstract

form, as the “purely abstract principle of determining”, conscience must be understood as the principle of self-differentiation. Conscience differentiates between acts, but also between the subject and the acts she reflects on, and the good she thinks about. This element of self-difference is lacking in the good. Yet, Hegel says: “this very subjectivity of pure self-certainty [...] is *identical* with the abstract universality of the good” (PR §141). “Each one is not supposed to contain, what is *in itself* already contained – the good lacking subjectivity and determination and the determinant, i.e. subjectivity, lacking what has being in itself” (PR §141).

Put abstractly, Hegel thus makes the point at the end of Morality that the self-identity of the good and the self-differentiation of subjectivity are identical, aspects of the same and each necessarily containing the respective other. Hegel does not explain this result, nor is it clear exactly what he means when he says that the identity of good and subjectivity is ethical life (PR §141). In the most abstract terms, the result seems to be simply that freedom and the substance of everything must be conceived as self-difference, just as much as self-identity.¹⁷⁶ The form of free willing is not only “being with oneself”, using the other as one’s means of expression, but “being with oneself in the other”, that is to say, relating to something genuinely distinct that is also oneself. Whether Hegel makes this point about the individual will or about the good also in the sense of the absolute substance of all valid objectivity is not entirely clear. “Being with oneself” in the very otherness of the other, in the social world and other distinct individuals with their different roles, will be the form of individual freedom discussed in Ethical Life, particularly in the family and the state.¹⁷⁷ Yet, Hegel may also be supposing that the correct form of free willing which he has now uncovered is also the basic form of a free state itself; that the basis of everything is not a self-identical substance. What exactly this means for individuals is hard to fathom at this

¹⁷⁶ When Hegel says the good and conscience are integrated to become “moments of the Concept” (PR §141), he probably means the relation of identity and difference, universality and particularity respectively.

¹⁷⁷ The mother, for example, is supposed to be “with herself” in the father and child, in that the father and child as different individuals enable her to be what she wants to be, namely, a mother.

stage. In a handwritten note in this paragraph on the transition to Ethical Life, Hegel notes that “subjectivity” refers to a “system” that is not “subsumptive” (PR §141N), i.e. a system that instead of subsuming all individuals under the same moral laws, relates individuals as distinct elements. Hegel thus already seems to suggest something that will only become explicit in Ethical Life, namely, that the state itself is also self-differentiating and self-identical, and displays the form of subjectivity. It is the substance that is subject.

Conclusion

In Morality, Hegel analyses how individuals can be “with themselves” in the external expression of their acts. Underlying this specifically moral problem is the conception that free willing consists in me being the only source of my acts, being purely self-related in them. Hegel makes the point that this conception of freedom is too abstract and bound to remain purely theoretical and unrealised. The formalism of Morality precisely consists in the fact that free willing is not supposed to contain an element of difference, while acts necessarily do. The demanded form of pure self-relation is therefore necessarily something that stands beside actual acts, as an unrealisable demand, rather than ever being completely enacted in them. But instead of giving up completely on the idea that individuals shall enact their essence, which is the form of free willing, Hegel only reconsiders this idea. He proposes that free willing must be understood as a real relation of identity and difference, as “being with oneself in an other” that is clearly distinguished and yet also identical. Reconceived in this way, free willing ceases to be (at least partly) a transcendent essence or ideal that can never be fully reached, and instead turns into something immanent to our own relations to the world, if the world is so constituted that it can also be identified with us.

Chapter 5

Ethical Life and The Logic of The Concept

In this chapter, I interpret Hegel's account of Ethical Life by way of his Logic of the Concept, the last book of the *Science of Logic*. The Logic of the Concept contains three sections: (1) Subjectivity; (2) Objectivity; and (3) the Idea. I propose that Hegel's conception of the Family parallels the Concept, which is the first topic of Subjectivity; civil society parallels Objectivity; and the state parallels the Idea. In his conception of a whole with the form of the Concept and in the family, Hegel presents, I believe, a new form of "being with oneself in the other". There is a concrete, internally differentiated whole that is "with itself" in its elements, in the sense that it is nothing but the differentiated relation of elements. Hegel uses the model of the organism. The elements, for their part, are "with themselves" in the whole, or in relation to all other elements, in the sense that their own particular character is expressed and affirmed in the differentiated relation to the others – similarly, an organ can only truly be this organ if related to other organs. In Civil Society and Objectivity, Hegel claims that the relation between individual things or persons – understood as objective or market laws, respectively – may also be alien to them. Individuals and finite things can fail to be "with themselves" in their law-like relations, not realising their characters or aims. In the very last part, namely, the State and the Idea, Hegel then re-establishes the idea of a harmonically integrated whole, while also maintaining the idea of difference, of conscious distinction between the (social) whole and the specific elements, in what he conceives of as absolute subjectivity.

At least since Schopenhauer's criticism and Rudolf Haym's influential book *Hegel and His Time*, published in 1857, many interpreters have proposed that Hegel deifies the state and reduces individuals to mere tools of this living God. Or, alternatively, some claim Hegel

conceives of the state as an organism attributing specific functions to individuals, who – similarly to organs – are supposed to be somehow made for these functions, finding their fulfilment in labouring for the state. Hegel does indeed speak of the state as an organism (PR §269) and as an absolute subject that knows and wills itself (PR §270). He even calls it the “Idea the actual God” (PR §258A). As Theunissen correctly points out, the origin of these problematic aspects is Hegel’s Concept, particularly its element of singularity,¹⁷⁸ which Hegel later expands in the logical category of Life, or the organism, and in the absolute Idea, as the absolute “subject-object” (WL2 466/758). Singularity refers to the complete differentiated whole that also has a certain priority as against its distinct elements. If Hegel indeed says that the singular organic whole differentiates itself into its organs, or consciously knows them as its limbs, then all this is an extension of singularity. The crucial question for this chapter is therefore the following one: How does Hegel conceive of the relation between the whole differentiated system and its elements, the family or state and its members? If the distinct roles are also established by the whole – just as the distinction between father and mother is established by the family relation – then how can Hegel be so sure that individuals freely express their characters in these roles, and are truly “with themselves” in them? Is Theunissen correct to say that Hegel in fact abandons his conception of freedom, switching instead to the mere idea of “being with oneself”,¹⁷⁹ the absolute subject relating to itself in individuals?

I will develop my answers to these questions in three parts. First, I analyse the family and the Concept (part 1), paying particular attention to the aspect of singularity, or the family as a structured whole, and how individuals are supposed to realise themselves in it. Second, I present civil society in parallel to Objectivity in the *Logic* (part 2). In this section, my interest is primarily in how and why social relations come to be alien to individuals. Third, I explore

¹⁷⁸ Theunissen, ‘Die verdrängte Intersubjektivität in Hegels Philosophie des Rechts’, p. 332.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p.333f.

and understand Hegel's state with the help of his Idea, particularly the Idea of Life, or the organism, and the Idea of Cognition where Hegel reaches the conception of a self-knowing and self-willing subject (part 3).

I. The Family and the Concept

In the section on the family, Hegel analyses marriage and the family, including family property, education and separation of children from the family. The key characteristic of the family, for Hegel, consists in it being an ethical unity through love. He introduces the family in §158, claiming it to be a “unity which feels itself, namely love” (PR §158); falling out of love, the couple is “in itself” already divorced (PR §165A). Hegel explains love as a form of “being with oneself in the other”. For example, he writes:

(35) Love means in general the consciousness of my unity with another, so that I am not isolated on my own [für mich], but gain my self-consciousness only through the renunciation of my separateness [meines Fürsichseins] and through knowing myself as the unity of myself with another and of the other with me (PR §158A).

In a love unity, I am not “for myself” and “isolated”, but rather am in a unity with the other. My separateness or “being for myself” is overcome; not in the sense that I become completely absorbed – two persons literally turning into one – but rather a unity with difference. I still “know myself” as an individual, but I also know that I am only a part of this whole – the love relation – and would not be me outside of this relation. Hegel therefore says I do not lose myself, but “gain myself in another person” (PR §158A).

Several scholars have remarked that Hegel's understanding of his Concept in the *Logic of the Concept* draws on his understanding of love as a unity in difference.¹⁸⁰ In the *Science of Logic*, Hegel writes about universality in the structure of the Concept, that it can be called "free love". "It is itself and embraces its other, but without doing violence; on the contrary the universal is in its other calm and with itself [...] [I]t relates to the distinct as to itself" (WL2 277/603). Universality denotes the simple whole – in this instance, the love unity – which is internally concrete and differentiated. Universality, like the love unity, is an identity that is "with itself" in what is distinct, namely, in the distinct lovers. The lovers and their relation are nothing different from the love unity, but are rather its own constitutive elements. As already expounded in the first chapter of this thesis, Hegel understands universality, particularity, and singularity, as identity, difference, and differentiated unity, that is to say, aspects of one and the same unified and yet differentiated whole. And since Hegel says that each of these aspects contains all others, it is clear that the identity contains the differences, just as the love unity contains the distinct lovers, and the difference in turn also contains the identity. When Hegel states that the universal does not violently subsume its other, he means precisely that the distinct lovers are already so constituted as to belong to this unity of love, that their own nature as lovers is affirmed in this unity, rather than being repressed by it. In the Concept, Hegel implicitly presupposes a mutual constitution of whole and finite things, each by the other, which is much clearer with reference to love. The whole love unity is nothing but the relation of lovers, and, inversely, constitutes them as lovers, establishing the reciprocal distinction between lover and beloved.

¹⁸⁰ See for example: Kimberly Hutchings, 'Hegel, Ethics and the Logic of Universality', in *Hegel. New Directions*, ed. by Katerina Deligiorgi (Chesham, Bucks, UK: Acumen, 2006), pp.105-123 (p.113); Westphal, 'Hegel's Theory of the Concept', p.35ff. Wright analyses the specific logical structure of identity in difference, which is implicit in love for Hegel without, however, expounding its link to the Concept, see: Kathleen Wright, 'Hegel: The Identity of Identity and Non-Identity', *Idealistic Studies*, 13 (1983), pp.11-32.

Because of the importance of love to Hegel's conception of the family and the Concept, the link between both is evident.¹⁸¹ Hegel refers to the Concept only once in the Family section. He writes that the natural difference of the sexes in marriage turns into "the difference into which the ethical substantiality, as the Concept in itself, divides itself up in order that its vitality may thereby achieve a concrete unity" (PR §165). Hegel's claim is thus that the couple or family is a self-differentiating whole, displaying the form of the Concept, since it posits the difference between wife and husband, or mother and father, and child. At one point he also compares the family to an organism¹⁸² (VRP3 508), which is, like love, another paradigmatic example of the Concept. Indeed, the family relation seems to display ideally the structure of the Concept, not only the identity in difference, but also the reciprocal constitution of whole and parts. Each family member is only what he or she is – mother, father, child – within and because of this relation, while the family, inversely, is nothing but the relation between the family members.

When Hegel sometimes uses the term 'substantiality' to describe the family, it is clear that he does not have in mind 'substance' in the strict logical sense. The family members are not the irrelevant accidents of the family; they are rather its constitutive parts. The family thus displays the structure of the Concept. The three aspects characteristic of a whole having the form of the Concept can be linked to family life as follows. Universality parallels the love or familial unity. Particularity is present, in the family both internally – in the distinction between the roles – and externally – in the differences between particular families. Singularity refers to the family as an internally differentiated whole, as well as externally to the family as a singular unit. In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel's order of presentation begins

¹⁸¹ Blasche makes this link in: Siegfried Blasche, 'Ethical Life and Civil Society: The Family', in *Hegel on Ethics and Politics* ed. by Robert Pippin and Otfried Höffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 183-207 (p. 185). Nicolacopoulos and Vassilacopoulos, however, compare love to the Syllogism, a category succeeding the Concept. In my opinion, however, the family does not display the degree of complexity and division analysed in the Syllogism, and Hegel clearly links love to the Concept. See: Toulia Nicolacopoulos and George Vassilacopoulos, *Hegel and the Logical Structure of Love* (Melbourne: re-press, 2011) <<http://re-press.org/books/hegel-and-the-logical-structure-of-love/>> [accessed 12 August 2011], p.125ff.

¹⁸² Neuhausser, speaking of social freedom, explains it in terms of an organism and its cells. This is also possible. The idea of the differentiation into distinct organs is, however, not as explicit in the picture of cells. See: Neuhausser, *Foundations of Hegel's Social Theory*, p.38f.

by focusing on the internal aspects, that is, the love unity and the internal differentiation of roles. Subsequently, in the subsection on family property, he speaks about the family as a singular unit, and in the subsection on education he presents the family as one beside others, thus externally particular.

Freedom in the family and the problem with singularity

Important for the present inquiry into freedom is the internal structure of the family and what belonging to a family means for the individual. The family members are clearly “with themselves in the other”, the loved one, because they feel loved and accepted, and, as Honneth points out, they reach self-fulfilment in their emotional needs being met.¹⁸³ But Hegel seems to have an even stronger sense of affirmation by the other in mind, whereby each particular family member expresses his or her very own nature or character in the relation to the others. For example, Hegel claims that living for the family is the “destiny” of the woman, since “piety” and “internality” are her characteristics (PR §166). Similarly, as I have argued with regard to the Concept in the first chapter, the family members are supposed to be “with themselves in the other”, affirmed in their own particularity by the family relation – while the family relation or love unity is also “with itself” in the spouses or family members. When Hegel says that the family is a “concrete unity” (PR §165) and that a whole with the form of the Concept “encloses the plenitude of all content” (E1 §160), he means to say, I believe, precisely the following: the relations within the whole establish distinctions between the elements, and yet those distinctions coincide with what those elements truly are – otherwise, the true distinct nature of those things would remain outside of the absolute, it thus being neither concrete nor containing all content. In terms of the

¹⁸³ Axel Honneth, *Leiden an Unbestimmtheit* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2001), p. 107; also: Axel Honneth, *Das Recht der Freiheit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2011), p.280.

family this means that the distinct roles of father and mother, for example, are indeed established by their respective positions in the family relation, the whole, and yet this assignment of different roles is at the same time supposed to affirm the internal character of each of the family members, expressing what they truly are and want to be, rather than being an imposition on them. Only by presupposing this can one truly claim that the individual is “with herself in the other”, affirmed in her particular social role; the other-relation also being a self-relation.

From a contemporary perspective, the idea that a woman realises her nature in a specific form of motherhood appears highly questionable. The questionable aspect lies not so much in the claim that an individual has a certain character (not necessarily ‘nature’), which he or she may want to express or realise in social relations to others. Rather, the problem is that Hegel’s conception of the family already presupposes a specific division of functions and roles that may not coincide with what individuals want to realise in their relationship. In logical terms, the problem revolves around the singular whole or, more precisely, the concept of *singularity*. As Theunissen proposes, universality and particularity can be understood as the identity and difference between individuals.¹⁸⁴ In singularity, on the contrary, the relation to the absolute becomes thematic. Singularity denominates the structure of the whole. In the *Logic of Essence*, the third aspect following identity and difference is *contradiction* – i.e. the contradiction that things are both identical and different. The absolute as Essence is nothing but the contradiction, to wit: things have the same source and yet are totally alien and independent. In other words, it does not add anything to the relation of identity and difference between them. In the *Logic of the Concept*, by contrast, singularity is something that has a certain structure and existence in its own right. It means a specific system that explains why things must be different in some aspects and

¹⁸⁴ More precisely, universality represents “communication” or “Mitteilung” for him. (See: Michael Theunissen: ‘Antwort’, in Hans Friedrich Fulda, Rolf-Peter Horstmann and Michael Theunissen, *Kritische Darstellung der Metaphysik* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1980, pp. 47-106 (p.99)). And communication is a “potentiality” that allows individuals to particularise themselves and “unites them with themselves”. See: Theunissen, *Sein und Schein*, p. 458f. and pp.453,455 respectively.

identical in others. Singularity, or the singular total system, is thus something that also precedes the related elements, giving them a specific meaning, and allocating them their respective positions.¹⁸⁵

Theunissen and Habermas famously criticised Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* for repressing intersubjectivity, and they did so on the basis of his *Logic*. Theunissen explicitly mentions the Concept¹⁸⁶ as the source of the problem, and more precisely its element of singularity.¹⁸⁷ According to Theunissen, through singularity Hegel comes to introduce a “supra-individual will that precedes individuals”¹⁸⁸ and exists in and through their distinctions and relations. Hegel turns the “relation of persons to one another” into “the relation of the substance to these persons”, and finally into “a relation of the substance to itself”.¹⁸⁹ “Being with oneself in the other” is substituted by mere “being with oneself” of the absolute, the absolute subject relating to itself.¹⁹⁰ Habermas does not offer such a detailed logical analysis, but he makes a similar point: “When the absolute is thought as infinite subjectivity [...] the moments of universality and singularity can only be thought within the framework of monological self-knowledge”.¹⁹¹ The solution seemingly endorsed by Theunissen and Habermas is to scrap singularity. The solution is direct inter-personal relations. Both authors offer love¹⁹² as an example (communication being another) of the direct “I-thou

¹⁸⁵ This is indeed what Adorno criticizes in passages like the following: “The conception of a totality harmonious through all its antagonisms compels him to assign to individuation, however much he may designate it a driving moment in the process, an inferior status in the construction of the whole. The knowledge that in pre-history the objective tendency asserts itself over the heads of human beings, indeed by virtue of annihilating individual qualities, without the reconciliation of general and particular – constructed in thought – ever yet being accomplished in history, is distorted in Hegel: with serene indifference he opts once again for liquidation of the particular” See: Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life* (London: Verso, 2005), p.17. Adorno is saying that because Hegel tries to construct a completely integrated whole, he reduces individuals to mere moments of this whole, elements of its internal self-differentiation, rather than taking individuals as separate and distinct entities in their own right (I thank Simon Mussell for pointing out this passage to me). On the question of the whole and finite individuals in Adorno and Hegel, see also my article: Charlotte Baumann, ‘Hegel, Adorno and the Concrete Universal’, *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 37.1 (2011), pp. 73-94.

¹⁸⁶ Theunissen, ‘Die verdrängte Intersubjektivität in Hegels Philosophie des Rechts’, p. 332.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 332.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 332.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 328.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p.334.

¹⁹¹ Jürgen Habermas, *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988), p. 53. Habermas also says: The labour, interaction and recognition between individuals are substituted by an “absolute ethicality conceived as the self-reflection of spirit”. See: Jürgen Habermas, ‘Arbeit und Interaktion. Bemerkungen zu Hegels Jenenser Philosophie des Geistes’, in *Technik und Wissenschaft als Ideologie* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1968), pp.9-47 (p. 43),

¹⁹² Theunissen, *Sein und Schein*, p.461; Jürgen Habermas, ‘Arbeit und Interaktion’, p. 17.

relation”.¹⁹³ As Hartmann notes, these scholars propose a structureless community of individuals.¹⁹⁴ Rather than the whole imposing its structure on individuals attributing different roles to them, realising itself through them – those individuals should simply interact directly as equals.

I agree with this basic interpretation of the Concept offered by Theunissen and presupposed by Habermas. And yet I do not agree with their critical social interpretation and the solution they propose. If there is a problem with the family (to take a concrete example), then it consists, logically speaking, in singularity being too little pronounced, with too little (collective) subjectivity present. The relation to the whole, the family unity, is not consciously established; the division of roles within the family seems natural and immediately right. The family almost appears as no social structure whatsoever, but merely the direct, free and spontaneous relation of individuals. But anybody knows from their own experience that any interpersonal relation develops a certain pattern of its own, one which neither of the actors intended. In the case of the family, it is even passed down by tradition. The singular whole of the family thus imposes a predetermined division of roles on family members, without there being any reflection on this fact. Indeed, even though Hegel does believe that in the case of the family the natural and habitual is good for everyone involved, he regards the family as deficient in comparison to the state for just these reasons. For Hegel, the family is deficient precisely because of its “immediacy” and “naturalness”. And the “immediacy” consists in the fact that it is only a unity of feeling (PR §158, §171) – i.e. not of reflection. The state, similarly to Hegel’s Idea, does indeed develop further the element of singularity, the relation to the whole. And this is exactly the strongest of Hegel’s claims in this regard, as I will show.

¹⁹³ Theunissen, ‘Die verdrängte Intersubjektivität in Hegels Philosophie des Rechts’, p. 328

¹⁹⁴ Klaus Hartmann, ‘Towards a new systematic reading of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right’, in *The State and Civil Society* ed. by Z.A. Pelczynski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 114-136 (p.116).

II. Civil Society and Objectivity

While in the section on the family, Hegel describes harmonic social relations within which individuals can express their own characters, in Civil Society he analyses how the very relations between individuals become alien to them. It is widely known that Hegel regards civil society as an important sphere of individual subjectivity and freedom (PR §260).¹⁹⁵ What is less known and constitutes my key interest here, is that precisely because of the particular type of freedom they enjoy, economic agents are also unfree for Hegel, subject to external market laws, which he describes in a similar way to Objectivity in the *Science of Logic*. Objectivity is the middle section of the Logic of the Concept, preceding the last one (the Idea). In Objectivity, Hegel analyses independent objects that are nevertheless subjected to the objective laws. My aim in this section is, first, to analyse civil society as an overall structure of relations with the help of Hegel's logical conception of Objectivity. Second, I want to see how Hegel transcends Objectivity into the Idea in his *Logic* – with the hope of intuiting, in parallel, how Hegel's description of civil society is linked, via criticism, to the state. This question is interesting since Hegel makes clear at this point which type of subjectivity his Idea, and the state in my interpretation, are not supposed to display.

Similarities between the system of needs and Objectivity

Hegel divides the section on civil society into the system of needs – i.e. the market, the judicial system, and the police and corporations. The structure of relations which characterise civil society are described in the “system of needs”. Hegel introduces civil society in §182 with the claim that it is characterised by two principles. On the one hand,

¹⁹⁵ For a good overview of many of Hegel's arguments, see: Wilfried Ver Eecke, ‘Hegel on Freedom, Economics, and the State’, in *Hegel on Economics and Freedom* ed. by William Maker (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1987), pp.127-158 (p.137ff.).

there is “the concrete person, who is a particular end to herself, as a totality of needs and a mixture of natural necessity and arbitrariness” (PR §182). On the other hand, this self-interested person is “essentially in relation to other such particulars”, so that each one “asserts and satisfies herself” only as “mediated through the others and thus at the same time through the form of universality, which is the second principle” (PR §182).

There are two interesting things to note here. Firstly, Hegel implicitly says that civil society is characterised by a contradiction. Recall that the economic agent is an “independent concrete person” (PR §181, §238); her aim is only herself, her own wellbeing, with no need to consider anybody else, and this wellbeing is defined by herself, her needs and arbitrary wishes. Individuals in civil society exist as “independent concrete persons and therefore relate only externally to one another” (PR §181). They do not consider themselves and act as if they were internally and necessarily linked to others. And yet, as Hegel was cited above as saying, she is also “essentially related to others”. In another famous passage, he argues that economic agents, far from being independent, are part of “a system of all-round dependence” (PR §183).

Secondly, it is important to note the specific way in which individuals are dependent or “mediated”. In the above cited passage, Hegel says that individuals are not only mediated by others, but by being mediated by the others they are also mediated by the “universal”. What Hegel means to say is that the individual economic agent can only realise her own self-interest by means of exchanging with others, and as such is mediated by others; meanwhile, all accidental individual acts of exchange together form regularities or economic laws, meaning that the individual therefore is also being mediated by this “universal”. Hegel does not explicitly name the universal or law he has in mind. He only obliquely offers the following statements a few paragraphs later: “The scattered and thoughtless is subject to a necessity that arises by itself”. “Political economy [...] finds the laws underlying the mass of contingent occurrences” (PR §189A). This description clearly fits the most famous and

important of economic laws, which Adam Smith called the ‘price mechanism’. This law states that through millions of unconnected acts of buying and selling of the same commodity, one (average) price for this commodity is established on the market, a price that in turn determines who can sell or buy and where new investments are being made. The uncoordinated acts of exchange thus entail a form of regularity, namely, one price for each commodity, that regulates buying, selling and investment, as if there had been some ‘invisible hand’ ordering things. As Henderson and Davis convincingly show, Hegel was influenced by Adam Smith as a young man, and the invisible hand, as a specific manifestation of the cunning of reason, is presumably underlying Hegel’s conception of civil society in the *Philosophy of Right*.¹⁹⁶ The specific form the contradiction of civil society takes is thus that free agents are managed by an invisible hand consisting in nothing but the unintentional effects of the agents’ own acts of exchange.

In the middle section of the Logic of the Concept, entitled Objectivity, Hegel describes a very similar constellation. Objectivity describes finite things as “independent objects” (WL2 409/711) that are, at the same time, subject to objective laws: the laws of mechanics, the laws of chemistry and the laws of teleology. Hegel equivocally says: “The absolute is the object” (E1 §194). What he means to say is that the absolute is thought to be dispersed in many independent objects; the absolute unity re-establishes itself through objective laws that unitarily apply to all objects. Hegel therefore characterises objectivity with the following claim:

(36) [T]he object is the complete contradiction of the complete independence of the manifold and of their equally complete dependence (E1 §194).

¹⁹⁶ James Henderson and John B. Davis, ‘Adam Smith’s Influence on Hegel’s Philosophical Writings’, in *Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, 13 (1991), pp. 184-204.

The independence of objects is due to two aspects of Hegel's definition of objects. First, he defines objects as self-enclosed, self-related entities, "the immediate relation to itself" (WL2 408/710). In Hegel's theory, something self-related is self-sufficient, that is, not requiring the relation to exist or have its specific character. Second, Hegel regards objects as concrete entities, containing all aspects that determine them – i.e. weight, volume, consistency – and cannot be separated from these aspects (WL2 410f./712). Objects do not require any external subjective determining,¹⁹⁷ or any difference to other objects, in order to have those qualities.

However, besides being independent, i.e. self-related and defined out of themselves, objects are also "completely dependent", as the above cited passage from Hegel shows. This dependency of consists in the fact that they are completely subject to objective laws. At first, Hegel conceives of those laws, abstractly, as a power or a "universal that is transmitted" (WL2 420/720) – heat or movement, for example. He says about this universal:

(37) The violence exercised on the object is something alien for it. What turns the power into violence is this, that though power, as an objective universality, is identical to the nature of the object, its determinateness or negativity is not its own negative reflection into itself (WL2 420/720).

Here, Hegel is claiming that the power later specified in the laws functions by using the object's own "natures" or properties, and yet it is an alien and violent force over them. In fact, objective laws are nothing but the regularities by which objects affect one another according to their specific properties. And yet, the objective laws happen as something alien, as an act of "violence" to the objects. As Hegel explains, the "object is not reflected

¹⁹⁷ Hegel says that objects are "free from anything added in subjective reflection" (WL2 408/709).

into itself in the power, and the power is not the object's own self-relation" (WL2 421/720). The object is not a participant, and does not express its particularity when it is linked to other objects by means of the laws. This particularity is rather "extinguished" (WL2 421/720), as Hegel repeatedly claims. Objects are only self-related and do not determine their specific relation to other objects; it is therefore left to objective laws to determine their external relations.¹⁹⁸ Mechanical, chemical and teleological laws are universally valid, predictable and calculable, precisely because the objects do not have any resistance to the application of such laws.¹⁹⁹ Hegel says with regard to (external) Teleology: "The means [...] has no power of resistance against the end" (WL2 450/745). Additionally, objects contain all of their defining aspects, but not in an explicit and structured way.²⁰⁰ Objects are dependent in the sense that their defining aspects only appear when they are affected by other objects by means of the laws.²⁰¹ The hardness of a diamond is always present, but only becomes clearly defined and visible when it is (not) scratched by another stone. As such, it is ultimately the objective laws describing the interaction between objects that determine which aspects of the objects actually appear.

This basic constellation of objects being self-related and internally concrete, yet subjected to external laws, is clearly similar to economic agents in civil society. Economic agents are independent both in the sense of being purely self-interested, –not required to consider anybody else – and as "concrete persons", – only determined by their own desires, interests and arbitrariness. Nevertheless, individuals are also subject to the laws of the market. The laws of Objectivity – those of mechanics, chemistry and teleology – subsume all objects under general rules, and they do so by using the objects' very own characteristics, just as do

¹⁹⁸ Pierini, *Theorie der Freiheit*, pp.98, 193ff.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p.98.

²⁰⁰ In Hegel's terms: the object is only an "aggregate" (WL2 411/712), its determinateness contains "no relations" (WL2 411/12), "the object [...] is not the negative unity of its determinateness" (412/713), and its determinations, or aspects, are "indifferent against one another" (412/713).

²⁰¹ For example, Hegel says, improving what he takes to be Leibniz's conception of objects: "The monad [...] is determinate; but since it is a self-enclosed totality, it is also indifferent to this determinateness and is, therefore, not its own determinateness, but a *determinateness posited through another object*" (WL2 414/714).

economic laws. Nevertheless, economic laws, like objective laws, are external to individuals in the sense that the individuals are not “self-related” in the application of the law, not “with themselves”. The prices express neither the interest of the economic agents, nor their particular needs. Objective laws, like economic laws, apply in a calculable and predictable manner precisely because objects and individuals have no influence over their application. In the *Logic* and the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel calls this “blind destiny” (WL2 421/720), “external” or “blind necessity” (E3 §532; WL2 440/736), which is “contingent” (PR §185, WL2 440/736) to objects and individuals – i.e. not influenced by them. Additionally, the market economy seems to be similar to the world of objects in that it is the economic law that determines which aspects of the economic agent become manifested; Hegel does not mention this point though.

As far as I am aware, no interpreter has so far expanded on the parallel between civil society and Objectivity.²⁰² Burbidge notes that Hegel compares civil society to Mechanism,²⁰³ while Tommaso shows how Hegel uses logical Teleology to explain social actions, however,²⁰⁴ without discussing civil society. Indeed, speaking of external Teleology in the *Logic*, Hegel uses a description that directly applies to the invisible hand of the market: “Reason is *cunning* as it is *mighty*. [...] God lets men, who have their particular passions and interests, do as they please, and what results is the accomplishment of *his* intentions” (E1 §209A). External teleology, as discussed in the *Logic*, means that through unconnected and free acts of individuals a higher plan is realised, which they are unconscious of. In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel clearly speaks of civil society in this way as a ruse of reason realising itself in economic interactions: “As particularity is bound to the

²⁰² It is more common to compare civil society to Appearance, and Hegel does sometimes use this terminology. However, the law of appearance is not congruent with economic laws: The law of appearance is not a law that subsumes everything under a general rule, as both economic and mechanic laws do. Rather than being a law or “Gesetz” properly speaking, it instead refers to “Gesetzsein” (WdL2 152/502) – the idea that each appearing thing is posited (gesetzt) by its distinction to the others.

²⁰³ Cf. John Burbidge, ‘Objektivität’, in *Wissenschaft der Logik. Klassiker Auslegen* ed. by Friedrich Anton Koch and Friedrike Schick (Berlin: Akademie, 2002), pp.225-242 (p.225). Unfortunately, he does not refer to the passage he has in mind.

²⁰⁴ Giannino di Tommaso, ‘Teleologie und gesellschaftliches Handeln bei Hegel’, in *Metaphysik nach Kant?*, ed. by Dieter Henrich and Rolf-Peter Horstmann (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1988), pp. 557-571.

condition of the universality, the whole is the ground of mediation, where all singular aspects, all dispositions, all accidentality of birth and of luck liberate themselves, where the waves of all passions emanate, which are govern by reason that shines into them” (PR §182A).

Overcoming Objectivity and overcoming the cunning of reason

The interesting question here concerns how Hegel proceeds from external Teleology to the Idea, and from civil society to the state. How does he overcome the externality of the unifying laws, the separateness of objects, and return to the idea of an integrated whole? Hegel could do so by simply labelling things differently. He could develop the Idea and the state by saying that the external telos is misunderstood. When you come to see that the external laws, the telos ordering individuals according to its plan, is actually also the true internal will of each individual, then you reach the idea of the state and the Idea. Applied to social theory, this would mean that however external the social development or order may be, it is in fact the universal will and expresses our true but hidden individual will; we only have to understand that the external rule or laws already bring about what we should want. Berlin²⁰⁵ and Popper²⁰⁶ were rightly worried about these types of arguments.

But Hegel does not make this argument, and, indeed, he cannot, because external Teleology would remain external even if it brought about what everybody wanted. Even if the cunning of reason creates the best possible result, it is still not our own cunning, and thus is externally applied to us, more like the alms from a charitable master than an act of freedom. Overcoming external teleology is a matter of form, of how the laws or the whole interact with individuals, not a matter of content. Hegel also makes this point, saying that if the

²⁰⁵ Berlin, ‘Two Concepts of Liberty’, p.145ff.

²⁰⁶ Popper, *Open Society and its Enemies*, vol. 2, pp. 30ff.

telos is always applied to something else as its means, then this distinction between telos and means always prevails. The form – i.e. the externality between telos and means and their relation of external application – is not overcome. Through external application one cannot reach an integrated and truly unified whole. The result of the activity of the telos on the means is not the unity of both, but merely another product or means, something that is different from the telos itself (WL2 451/746). Similarly, the cunning of reason affecting individuals does not result in those individuals being part of a complete rational whole. Individuals always remain only external means for future cunning acts of reason. In this relation, individuals and reason remain distinct and the absolute rational whole fails to be established.

Hegel therefore proposes that the relations between objects and the objective structures and laws must change:

(38) The end which is [...] determining the immediate object must not do so as a determinant external to it, and consequently the object must spontaneously (out of its own impetus) unite into the unity of the Concept (WL2 451/746).

External Teleology can only be overcome if the objects reappropriate their own relations. The regularities ordering and uniting individuals must issue from their “own impetus”, arising from them, rather than being externally applied to them. More concretely, Hegel demands an “object that is inner purposiveness, essential subjectivity” (E1 §214). He also says, “external determinateness has now further developed into self-determining” (WL2 444/740).²⁰⁷ The objects themselves shall be aims or self-determining subjects, rather than

²⁰⁷ Also, Ross notes that the development in Objectivity (and, in his reading, already in the Mechanism) is one towards self-determination of the objects, which implies that “the objects’ immanent determinations explain their relationship in a system of motion” (p.97). However, rather than calling this new relation an organism, as I do, Ross identifies it with the absolute mechanism, and reads Hegel’s state in accordance with this concept. See: Nathan Ross, ‘Mechanism and the Problem of Self-determination in Hegel’s Logic’, in *On Objectivity in Hegel’s Social and Political Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 60-97.

the order being one-sidedly imposed on them by the external telos. Only this enables the transition from the planning reason of external Teleology to Hegel's absolute Idea: "The object is not rigid and without process; instead, its process consists in its proving itself to be that which is also subjective, and this forms the advance to the Idea" (E1 §194A). In Civil Society, Hegel does not explicitly push this point. I will, however, show that it is through the corporations and their association in the estates assembly that Hegel attributes to individuals their own subjectivity and the control over their own relations.

III. The state and the Idea

In this section, I shall argue that Hegel's state parallels his discussion of the Idea, the very last section of his *Logic*. The Idea encompasses three parts: (1) Life or the organism; (2) the Idea of Cognition including willing; and (3) the Absolute Idea. That Hegel links his state to the Idea is quite clear. He calls the state the "actual Idea" (PR §262). And he says: "the state is an organism, i.e. the development of the Idea in its differences" (PR §269A), taking up the first aspect of his Idea. The subsequent aspects of Hegel's Idea imply that it is self-cognizing and self-willing absolute subjectivity or "subject-object" (WL2 466/758). He also speaks of the state as "subjectivity" (PR §279) and calls it "the Idea, this actual God" (PR 258A).

The question is, however, how are we to interpret the *Logic* and, accordingly, understand Hegel's state as the Idea. Is the state a self-differentiating organism, within which individuals are assigned pre-determined functions? Is Hegel invoking an absolute God-like subject ruling over individuals or realised through them? Does the subjectivity of the state consist in individuals knowing and identifying with the state, the latter thus being self-conscious through them? I believe not. I will argue that the state organism refers to the composition of the estate assembly, in which each social group can express and coordinate

its interests with others. The subjectivity of the state, for its part, means that individuals collectively oversee their social relations. This interpretation is bolstered by Hegel's logical analysis of these concepts, as I will show.

The Idea incorporates the clear distinction between whole and parts (from Objectivity) into the idea of a harmonious and mutually affirmative relation between them (from the Concept). In the Idea of Life or the organism, Hegel makes explicit what was only implicit in the Concept, namely, that related elements or organs are affirmed in their particular nature by the relation to the whole, while also being determined by it. In the state this explains, I believe, Hegel's proposition of an estates assembly. In Hegel's theory, estates feature as both social entities determined by the division of labour and as groups expressing their own demands in the estates assembly, influencing the social structure through the law-making process. Drawing on the experience from civil society that the relations between individuals may also fail to express their interests and characters, Hegel introduces the element of reflection between the individuals and the structure of their relations. Rather than simply presupposing a harmonious relation between whole and elements – as he did in the Family and Concept – Hegel now supposes that such an affirmative relation is only possible by means of reflection, or a collective self-consciousness, whereby the estates know the social structure and distinct interests and consciously coordinate them.

The estates assembly as an Organism

In the first part on the Idea, namely, the Idea of Life or the organism, Hegel takes up the basic structure of the Concept, that is, a whole within which the concrete relation to others is also a self-relation. In the relation to other organs, one organ affirms its own specific character and is also fully integrated into a unified whole. In contrast to the Concept, where Hegel only analysed three defining relational aspects of such a whole, the related elements

are now clearly denominated and distinguishable from the whole, which enables Hegel to describe their relation more precisely. Drawing on Kant's concept of internal teleology,²⁰⁸ Hegel describes each organ as its own specific and distinct end that is realised by means of the relation to the others and vice versa.

(39) All of the body's members are reciprocally momentary *means* and momentary ends for one another (E1 §216).

Each organ has its own internal character. A heart is something that pumps blood; and by its relation to the other organs the heart realises its internal character. The functions and characteristics it has for them do not differ from what it is in itself, its internal character. This also changes the conception of the absolute. On the one hand, life of the whole organism must be presupposed to speak of 'organs' – as such it is "particular" and distinct from its many organs. On the other hand, it turns out that life is only established in the "dialectic of scattered objectivity" (E1 §216) – i.e. through the identity and difference between the separate objects, which are the organs. Life is nothing but this relation between them, or their "negative unity" (E1 §216) as Hegel puts it. Neither the whole nor the elements are the prior cause. Both are equally original.

In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel speaks of the "organism of the state" (PR §267), of "the individual state as an organism that relates to itself" (PR §259). On one reading, the organs of the state are its institutions (PR §269). The state has to differentiate itself and does so by distributing powers and tasks. This reasoning lends itself to a substantialist and critical reading of Hegel. As Theunissen critically remarks, "the ethical substance concretizes itself in the state institutions",²⁰⁹ the one absolute in the form of the state realises itself,

²⁰⁸ See: Klaus Düsing, 'Naturteleologie und Metaphysik bei Kant und Hegel', in *Hegel und die Kritik der Urteilskraft*, ed. by Hans-Friedrich Fulda and Rolf-Peter Horstmann (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990), pp.139-157 (p.149).

²⁰⁹ Theunissen, 'Die verdrängte Intersubjektivität in Hegels Philosophie des Rechts', p. 327.

differentiates itself, rather than being the differentiated relation between individuals. But, importantly, Hegel offers another explanation for why the state is an organism; one that clearly excludes such a reading and is a necessary element of his whole argumentation. By itself, the differentiation of institutions would make the state concrete in Hegel's terminology, but not all-encompassing and absolute – it would be a differentiated entity, yet not truly include the particularity of its citizens. Hegel therefore introduces a second and somewhat unusual conception of the organs of the state: the social groups themselves are organs of the state and organise the state as an organism, and not just the institutions that represent them. Hegel writes in the *Encyclopaedia*:

(40) It is not in their unorganic form as singular human beings as such (in the democratic mode of voting), but as organic moments, as estates, that they enter upon that participation [in the state]; a power or activity within the state shall never appear and act in a formless, unorganic shape, i.e. out of the principle of maniness and mere numbers [Menge] (E3 §544).

Furthermore, in the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel opposes “implanting in the organism of the state a democratic element devoid of rational form” (PR §308). He continues:

(41) The concrete state is the whole, articulated into its particular circles. Each member of the state is a member of an estate of this kind, and only in this objective determination can he be taken into account within the state” (PR §308).

In order to not merely remain an external force, the state power requires the participation of the individual citizens, and in turn the citizens need to participate in their own particular way, so that their particularity is not something that remains outside the state. Particular

individuals are thus affirmed in their own particular character within the state, rather than being excluded from it.²¹⁰ This is the function of the estates: the agricultural estate, the business estate (with its many professional groups), and the universal state of civil servants. The first two estates are present in the two houses of “assembly of estates” (E3 §544). Land owners belong to the upper house and have a seat by birth, while professional groups send representatives to the lower house. Presumably, Hegel regarded the division of interests between land owners and professional groups as the most fundamental one in society, and wanted to make place for this conflict at the state level by introducing two houses. Civil servants work in the executive. They are not supposed to have their own agenda, unlike the traditional aristocracy in the entourage of the king.²¹¹ Hegel is adamant that the bicameral assembly of estates is not only a legislative organ, but also effectively controls the government – headed by the king as the representative of the entire state²¹² – by approving the budget (E3 §544).

As against what Marx famously argued,²¹³ I therefore believe that Hegel opposes the view that individuals should completely divide themselves into an egoistic economic agent, on the one hand, and an altruistic citizen and member of parliament, on the other. To be sure, egoism is predominant in the market, while the state affairs also require the capacity to consider what is best for the whole state. Yet, as Hegel critically remarks in an early lecture, the “reality of freedom is thought in one-sided extremes: high-mindedness and the mechanism of the state” (VRP1 326). In other words, some people imagine the state as a

²¹⁰ I disagree with Hartmann who says that in parliament individuals are only present as an “aggregate of private persons” (p.123). On the contrary, Hegel explicitly says they should not participate in the state as an “aggregate”, but as an “organized people” (E3 §544). Consequently, I also disagree with Hartmann that Hegel’s conception lacks the “particularization of the universal” (p.124), i.e. the political community. In my reading, particular groups and interests are already present within Hegel’s conception of the state; it is thus internally differentiated or “particularized”. As against what Hartmann claims (p.123), Hegel does not distinguish estates only by their degree of universality, i.e. how much they want (a somewhat undefined) common good. On the contrary, the common good is internally structured and contains the coordination of particular group interests. See: Hartmann, ‘Towards a systematic reading of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right’, p.124.

²¹¹ See for example: Luther, *Hegel’s Critique of Modernity*, p. 206.

²¹² Hegel famously says that since the state is a perfect organisation, the king only has the function of saying “yes” (PR §280A). Only the right of deciding over war and peace is explicitly reserved for the sovereign, since he represents the unified state individual externally (E3 §544). Hegel may have retained the idea of a monarch firstly to symbolise the whole, and secondly as a safeguard against an aristocracy and the republic being taken over by factions. See, for example, Losurdo’s differentiated account: Losurdo, *Hegel and the Freedom of the Moderns*, pp.111f.

²¹³ Karl Marx, ‘Zur Judenfrage’ in *Marx Engels Werke, Vol 1* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1956), pp. 347-377 (p.355).

mechanic external order that is supported by the citizens out of good will, against their egoistic interest. But Hegel claims that the “whole has to permeate everyone, but it must also be distributed; the individuals have to know that they are active for the whole in their particular work” (VRP1 327). My particular economic occupation is a contribution to society. Yet, in civil society, this collective benefit is neither known nor coordinated. To know and decide how my particular work contributes to society, it needs to be represented in the estates assembly. Hegel writes: “What the state demands as duty is also immediately the right of individuality” (PR §261A).²¹⁴ My duty to the state is that I participate in state affairs. But this duty is individualised. The duty to participate in the state is also the “right of individuality”, the freedom to advance and express my particular concerns.

Hegel’s argument for an organic state is thus directed against a complete separation of market and state, as well as against liberal representative democracy.²¹⁵ Previously, he was cited criticising the “democratic element devoid of rational form” and the “unorganic democratic form of voting”. The reasoning seems to be similar to the one proposed by Anti-Federalists, the early critics of the American constitution, who argued that each professional group should send their own representative to small regional parliaments. By summing up all individual opinions and needs, far from letting the individuals express themselves, one actually abstracts away their specific interests and ends up with a meaningless average. This is what happens in civil society, where atomistic interests and actions result in an average price that does not correspond to the conscious decisions and interests of anyone (or everyone). For these reasons, Hegel holds that individuals need to express their specific characteristics by affiliating with others who are in a similar position, and by making demands and participating in the law making process. Only if one has a specific and defined identity can one make demands on others on that basis, and not as

²¹⁴ “The obligation to the substantial is at the same time the existence of my particular freedom (PR §261).

²¹⁵ I agree with Bohmann that there is a republican element in Hegel’s theory of the state. The key point in my reading is the direct participation of professional groups in law-making. See: James Bohmann, ‘Is Hegel a Republican? Pippin, Recognition and Domination in the Philosophy of Right’, *Inquiry*, 53.5 (2010), pp. 435-449.

undefined atoms with an array of unstructured needs and desires.²¹⁶ This implies that everyone should have at least one business or social group to which she pertains. Yet it is the “free choice of the individuals” (PR §262A) as to what business they might pursue.

The state as the Idea of Cognition and the absolute Idea

While the logical conception of an organism parallels the composition of the estates assembly, the Idea of Cognition including Willing is congruent, I believe, to the way in which decisions are made within the state; more precisely, how the state decides about itself. Without question, Hegel conceives of the state as a self-knowing and self-willing entity. For example, he writes:

(42) The state is the actuality of the ethical Idea – the ethical spirit as substantial will, manifest and clear to itself, which thinks and knows itself and implements what it knows in so far as it knows it (PR §257).

While elsewhere, he says: “The state therefore knows what it wills and knows it in its universality as something thought” (PR §270). On the basis of statements like these it is easy to criticise Hegel for personifying the state. For Hegel’s critics, the proposition that the state knows and wills itself, or that society relates to its members, is tantamount to reducing those members to limbs of a self-conscious state, as mere tools of a metaphysical subject. The freedom of individuals Hegel claims to be realised in the state is in fact only their total subjection, their identification with the God-like state that disposes of them. Whether or

²¹⁶ Hegel does not explicitly state why he takes the estates (i.e. the professions and the life styles that accompany them) as the relevant identities which need to be expressed and coordinated in the state. It may be supposed that this is so because, first, they make up a major part of the life of an individual, and, second, in contrast to moral convictions, personal aims and desires, work is already extremely intertwined and dependent upon others and therefore requires coordination.

not this is correct depends upon what (absolute) subjectivity, – particularly willing and cognition – means for Hegel, and what exact role individuals play in it.

In the *Logic*, Hegel presents the Idea of Cognition in the middle part of the last section (entitled the Idea). Hegel's conception of the absolute as an organism thus turns into its conception as Cognition and Willing. This is certainly counterintuitive. An organism is one entity, but Cognition and Willing involve the distinction between a knowing or willing subject and its object that is known or acted upon. But this is precisely the upshot of Hegel's logical conception of Cognition and Willing: subject and object are only two aspects within a whole. The Idea can be described as "thinking, spirit, self-consciousness", "insofar as it has itself as its object" (WL2 487/775). Drawing upon the preceding presentation of the organism or the Idea of Life, Hegel claims: "the Idea is doubled – in the subjective Concept, whose reality it is, and in the objective, which is Life" (WL2 487/775). This means that the organism – as a single whole – thinks about itself, as the differentiation in many organs, or inversely.

Both sides – subject and object – are identical in content and only differentiated in form. Hegel makes this point in general about true knowledge. For Hegel, objects are constituted by their specific structure that can be put into concepts. To be true knowledge, knowledge must contain all conceptual aspects that define the object. As Hegel puts it: "The activity of the subjective Concept must be regarded from one side merely as the *explication of what is already in the object*, because the object itself is nothing but the totality of the Concept" (WL2 503/788). Analytical thinking, according to Hegel, discerns the different "conceptual determinations" of a presupposed unified object, conceptions "that are immediately contained in the object" (WL2 503/787). Synthetic thinking, inversely, unites many disparate objective facts into unified theorems (E1 §231). Subject and object are thus distinct only insofar as one contains the content in a differentiated manner, while the other stands as one singular whole. Each one can be either the aspect of differentiation or the

aspect of unity, depending on the form of cognition. Object and subject are thus completely relative terms. The same substantial aspect – say, the differentiated organs – can be subject in the first sense – i.e. having the whole as the object – or inversely the whole can be the subject and the organs the object.

Despite this proposition that object and subject are identical in content, and exchangeable and relative terms, there is a deficiency in Cognition. The subject “does not cognize itself” (WL2 541/817) in the object. The object appears to be, as Hegel puts it, a “reality that is present independently of the subjective positing” (WL2 545/821); even though they are actually only aspects of the same. As mentioned above, Hegel supposes that Cognition comes about because the Idea doubles itself, objectifies itself, or becomes a self-conscious subject. In Cognition this is not recognised, and Cognition therefore requires a second and complementary moment, which is Willing. Willing makes the object according to the subject, forming or producing it, and, together with the moment of Cognition, subsequently recognises that a congruency of subject and object has been reached (WL2 545/821).

For Hegel’s conception of the state, this means that if the separate individuals and their interactions – the ‘state’ in its broader sense – are the object regulated by state laws, then those same individuals in another form, namely, collectively or as cooperating estates, must also be the state-subject. The state can only be a subject in the sense of a self-reflective system, a self-conscious organism, if you will. The element of subjectivity of the state thus consists in the individuals collectively reflecting on the objective structure of their own society, “custom” turning into the self-conscious “knowledge and activity of the individual” (PR §257). Hegel certainly does not believe that freedom in the realm of politics consists in making arbitrary decisions about whatever you want. The political freedom consists rather in consciously knowing the actual structure of society, and willing and ensuring it to be expressive of and congruent with my own individual and collective interests. In many

commentaries on Hegel's state, the moment of Cognition is overemphasised, with the view that individuals cognise the state as somehow congruent with them, their own reason and interest. But if reason tells the individual anything for Hegel, then this is the structure of the Idea – i.e. the structure of an organic and self-reflective system. And Hegel is adamant in the *Logic* that cognition without volition is deficient. Only by willing the world to be like me – and actively making it so if it is not – can I afterwards cognise this congruency with certainty and in the correct manner. The formula “being with oneself in the other” does not imply that we make ourselves believe that the social system and external legal ordinances are in fact not alien, even though our experience tells us otherwise. Rather, it means ultimately that we own our social relations, and do so by means of the state legislation and coordination of estate interests. In this way, we ensure rather than hope that society is not an “other” to us.

The very last element of his *Logic* and theory of the state is that subjectivity comes to know its own basic structure. Hegel demands that subjectivity shall not simply know and will itself, but that it must also know that it does so. It must know and will itself as self-knowing and self-willing. In the *Logic*, this final element of the Idea is called the absolute Idea: “The Idea is, therefore, only in this self-determination of apprehending itself” (WL2 550/825). “The logical Idea has itself as the infinite form as its content” (WL2 550/825). The basic reasoning here holds that only a system that itself ensures its own structure – namely, that all different elements express their distinctions in relation to one another and yet form one coherent whole – can truly be absolute and all-encompassing. In the *Philosophy of Right*, while criticising Rousseau rather unfairly, Hegel notes that individuals should not simply have a “shared will” (PR §257R) that could basically want anything.²¹⁷ Instead, he insists that the universal will also has a specific content, namely, the “rational in and for itself” (PR §257R). Elsewhere, he remarks that the concept of the will grounds the laws (E3 §163). As

²¹⁷ Cf. Arthur Ripstein, ‘Universal and General Wills: Hegel and Rousseau’, *Political Theory*, 22.3 (1994), pp. 444-467 (p. 452).

I have argued in the second chapter, the concept of the free will is “being with oneself in the other”. As it turns out, the complete form of “being with oneself in the other” is realised in an organic, self-reflective whole for Hegel. The decisions of individuals in their law making practice should therefore always bear this ideal in mind. In such a state order, individuals are “with themselves” in the state inasmuch as they can voice their particular interests and coordinate them with others, and can collectively will and know their own social relations. The state, for its part, is “with itself” in individuals to the extent that it is nothing but their organic relation and it is self-related when they oversee and legislate their own social relations.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that Hegel, in contrast to the likes of Habermas, for example, introduces the state as a subject with which individuals establish relations, rather than there being merely interpersonal relations. Hegel’s contention is not that the state is an individual in its own right, but rather that social structures have a certain independence of their own, which individuals must consciously reflect upon – as individuals, but also collectively in form of the state subject. In civil society, individuals need to experience the social as also something alien from them, in order to then consciously know and at least influence it through the state. Rather than searching for “universalizable interests” and shared beliefs, ignoring the different positions of individuals, Hegel proposes that those differences must be acknowledged on the state level. “Being for oneself in the other” is not a matter of reciprocity and dialogue between two, but a three-fold relation, in which all individuals relate to one another and to the total system of their relations. The other individuals are “others” because of their different social roles – and I am with myself in them, if their roles and mine combine to our mutual benefit. But this can only be ensured if we relate to the

complete structure of our relation, and collectively check that the roles play out in an acceptable manner. In this way, we are also “with ourselves in the other”, which is society, and this aspect of freedom is an important element or condition of the free relation to other individuals.

Chapter 6

The Philosophy of History and its Logic

Hegel's *Philosophy of History* is by its own understanding a study of freedom. Hegel famously defines world history as the “progress of the consciousness of freedom” (VG 31/19). It is also one of the most controversial of his texts. For this thesis, the *Philosophy of History* is interesting on an interpretive level because Hegel describes a variety of state structures, all of which, I will argue, display some form of “being with oneself in the other”, that is to say, a form of freedom, even if it is only the sovereign freedom of the state itself. The states historically preceding the modern European state are, however, supposed to realise freedom insufficiently or partially. The *Philosophy of History* thus has the benefit of presenting Hegel's concerns over other possible social orders and conceptions of freedom, and it helps us in specifying why exactly the modern state stands as the freest possible state structure in Hegel's view.

Additionally, it is my general contention that, if read with the support of the *Logic*, one can understand Hegel's state theory in a non-authoritarian manner. This proposition will be put to the test here. Hegel's *Philosophy of History* has often been criticised for its anti-individualist and authoritarian tendencies – particularly if one focuses on its connection to the *Logic*. The main targets of such criticisms are as follows: History is the realisation of spirit or reason, which, in turn, is modelled on the logical Idea. Its freedom is the aim of history, and not one of individuals; it shall be “with itself” in them, rather than inversely. And the course of history is predetermined by the *Logic*, not decided upon by the individuals themselves. While broadly agreeing with this critical interpretation, I will show that, if one understands the *Logic* correctly, it is nevertheless possible to view the argument as neither anti-individualist nor authoritarian. I will argue that in the successive discussion of historical

states, Hegel demonstrates that the freedom of spirit can only truly be realised if individuals are free too. That individuals are “with themselves” in spirit is a necessary and constitutive part of spirit’s “being with itself” in them, namely, individuals.

I will develop my interpretation along the following lines. In the first section, I analyse Hegel’s general definition of history as successive attempts to actualise the concept of spirit in different state forms and its connection to the *Logic*. I will also explain why the parallel between history and the *Logic* can only begin with the end of the Logic of Essence, and I will roughly outline the lines of argumentation that can be expected. In the second and crucial section, I will analyse the different historical states Hegel presents in parallel to the end of the Logic of Essence and the entire Logic of the Concept. More precisely, I link China to the Substance, India to the negative aspect of the Substance, Greece to the Concept, Rome to Objectivity, and the modern European state to the Idea.

Before entering a discussion of the *Philosophy of History*, it must be admitted that Hegel’s idea of progress remains questionable not just on the basis of historical fact, but also on account of its inevitable racist implications. It is very chauvinistic and arrogant to not only present Europe as the pinnacle of rationality, but also to even claim that one knows all historical and present cultures well enough to make such a judgment. It may very much be doubted that individual thinking was not known in ancient China, as Hegel supposes, and that secularism – a supposedly European achievement – was not already practised much earlier in India. However, of importance for the purposes of this thesis is the way in which Hegel distinguishes between free and less free models of state, and what he sees as the best relation between individuals and society. The names “Chinese”, “Greek” and “Roman” must be read merely as denominations for his models, which, of course, draw upon common prejudices about those nations in Hegel’s time. I am extremely wary of linking those names to the actual historical peoples (particularly the non-European ones). The historical facts mentioned must be read as illuminating his arguments for and against

possible forms of state, and the divergent conceptions of human nature that accompany them. Hegel's interesting point about China is not that ancient Chinese were not thinking beings, but that even if one were to suppose that individuals were unable to reason, and that the emperor was wise and benevolent, it would nevertheless be mistaken to conceive the right form of state as consisting in individuals' blind obedience.

I. History and *Logic*: a problematic connection

Many interpreters have criticised Hegel for his conception of history, particularly in connection with the *Logic*. For example, Popper maintains that history is identical with a "logical operation" for Hegel.²¹⁸ And he says: "History as he [Hegel] sees it is the thought process of the absolute spirit or world spirit",²¹⁹ Meanwhile, Habermas remarks, "world spirit is the point where the *Logic* reveals its mythical core"²²⁰ – world spirit is the only "subject of history"²²¹ for Hegel. The interpretation seems to hold that world spirit is the subject that makes history happen according to its reasoning which is laid down in the *Logic*. Adorno interprets the problematic connection between history and *Logic* in a more subtle and cautious way. On the topic of Hegel's conception of history, Adorno notes: "the sense that history takes as the logic of things, is not the sense of the individual destiny".²²² For Hegel, history has a logic of its own, namely, the one he describes in the *Logic*. But this logically predetermined development does not (or at least does not necessarily) make sense for individuals, that is, representing an improvement for or to them. Despite some differences in their respective positions, these critics all agree that Hegel's conception of the logic of history has profoundly authoritarian and anti-individualist implications, since it

²¹⁸ Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, p.47.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p.47.

²²⁰ Jürgen Habermas, 'Hegels Kritik der französischen Revolution', in his *Theorie und Praxis* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2000), pp. 128-147 (p.143).

²²¹ Ibid., p.143.

²²² Theodor W. Adorno, *Zur Lehre von der Geschichte und der Freiheit* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2006), p.43

is the *Logic* which decides about the course of history, with the latter taking place by and for spirit or the Idea rather than individuals.

In the present section of this chapter, I will first show that this critical interpretation is broadly correct, since history is, indeed, the history of spirit for Hegel, which is in turn the realisation of the logical Idea. Subsequently, I will set out the general parallel between *Logic* and Philosophy of History, and briefly anticipate why the historical and logical development, nevertheless, need not lead to authoritarian conclusions.

History as the actualisation of spirit

Hegel offers many definitions as to the content or substance of history. The most famous one was already quoted above, namely, the “progress of the consciousness of freedom” (VG 31/19). But he also argues that history is the “revelation of spirit in reality” (PG 39), spirit reaching “the knowledge of what it is in itself (VG 31/17f). History is “the self-production of universal spirit” (PGV19 280); “reason is immanent to historical existence, realizes itself in and through it” (VG 40).²²³ While the first and most famous expression could be read as claiming that the progress of history is one in which individuals become freer and conscious of it, the other passages clearly point in another direction, whereby history is not primarily about individuals, but is instead the history of *spirit*. Spirit or reason realises itself in history for Hegel. Spirit is thus not only a descriptive term for the “spirit of a time”, that is, the actual social structure and thinking of a specific people. Spirit is first and foremost an abstract concept with a normative implication, a concept that shall exist. At first, Hegel says there is only the “concept of spirit”, which is a mere “possibility, a potentiality” (VG 36/22). This is a theoretical definition of what a true spirit should be like.

²²³ This phrase is missing in the Sibree’s translation; it would have been on p. 25.

And this definition is what shall be realised over the course of history. The actual historical spirit of a time is therefore merely secondary, just one expression of the concept of spirit.

What is the “concept of spirit” that shall become existent in history? In the above quoted passages, Hegel says that both spirit and reason shall be realised. Indeed, spirit is self-conscious reason that shall exist in the world, as Hegel points out in the 1817 *Encyclopaedia*: “Spirit is in this way the idea of reason in and for itself, that exists for itself as such” (E3,17 §401). Also, in the *Philosophy of History*, Hegel uses “self-conscious reason” and “spirit” (VG 23/11) synonymously. The meaning of reason or spirit as self-conscious reason is undoubtedly connected to the *Science of Logic*. The *Science of Logic* is supposed to develop the pure rational structure underlying everything, “the logical, purely rational” (WL2 45/51). In his lectures on the philosophy of history, Hegel explicitly says that what appears in history is his Idea as developed in the *Science of Logic* (VPW 25). In addition, in the main version of the text, Hegel points out that the basic constellation of history is that the Idea – as the absolute – is opposed to the individual, finite self-consciousness, within which it shall come to existence (VG 41/26).²²⁴ Even when he sometimes refers to God as the maker of history, Hegel maintains that we must abstract from this religious expression and know that he means the logical Idea (VPW 24).

The connection between the *Logic* and spirit is also clear from the fact that Hegel defines spirit as displaying the form of freedom. In the *Philosophy of History* he writes: “[S]pirit is the Being-with-oneself. This is freedom, exactly” (VG 30/17). Approximately ten pages later, Hegel then says: “The reflection into oneself, this freedom, is in general the abstract moment of the activity of the absolute Idea” (VG 42/27). Hegel thus clearly defines spirit as having the form of self-relation, of “being with oneself”, the relation to another that is also you, and the absolute Idea is also exactly this form of “reflection into oneself”, self-

²²⁴ Hegel says: “This reflection into oneself, the singular self-consciousness, is the other as against the Idea in general [...] This other is thus the finitude, the determinacy, for the universal absolute: it is the side of its existence” (VG 41/26).

relation or freedom. As I have argued in the first chapter, all categories of the *Logic* develop certain forms of “being with oneself in the other”, but the Idea explicates the complete form, the structural relation that truly captures this idea. Given this correlation between spirit, the *Logic*, and freedom, it is certainly questionable whether Hegel’s famously quoted passage on history as the “progress of freedom” actually refers to the freedom of individuals. In fact, Hegel explicitly says in other passages that it is “spirit’s freedom”, namely, the freedom of “universal spirit”, that is developed in history (PR §342).

The concept of spirit, which is supposed to become realised over the course of history, can thus be defined in successively more precise ways. First, it is a whole, a specific form of Hegel’s absolute. Hegel explicitly says that spirit is not finite, but contains all finitude (E3 §386A), and spirit being the Idea also has this implication. Second, when it is completely developed, spirit is truly absolute, in the way first described in the Concept and fully developed in the Idea in Hegel’s *Logic*. That is to say, it is truly absolute in the sense of containing everything finite or all individuals, “being with itself in them” as its moments. Third, the concept of spirit is the absolute in the form of the logical Idea, which shall be self-conscious, free and actualised in the world. Fourth, as will be developed below, spirit is the logical Idea and can only be actualised, free and self-conscious in and through human beings, their relations and self-consciousness.

In fact, actualisation, freedom and self-consciousness are already part of Hegel’s conception of the logical Idea. Since all earlier logical categories are contained in subsequent ones, the Idea contains Actuality, since Actuality is discussed prior to the Idea. Freedom, Hegel says, is the “mode of relating proper to the Concept” (WL2 246/578), and thus also inherent in the Idea and self-consciousness (WL2 545/820), or at least the idea of making oneself one’s object, is one of the key characteristics of the Idea. For Hegel, a whole that is truly all-encompassing can only be so because it is actualised in finite things, exists and is manifest in them and their relations, rather than being their transcendent essence. And such a

complete and rational whole also involves a certain form of self-consciousness and free self-relation. What distinguishes the concept of spirit from the logical Idea is thus only that it shall really exist in the world, and is supposed to become actually self-conscious and free therein, while the Idea only displays the pure form of self-consciousness, freedom and actualisation. The *Logic* only presents a theoretical insight into what a rational and free whole would need to be like. It still needs to “appear” in the real world, namely, in the form of spirit, and more precisely in a series of national spirits, the social structure and ways of thinking of a people.

How does spirit become realised? Hegel claims that the “concept of spirit” still requires “actuation or realisation and its principle is the will and activity of man” (VG 36/22). In other passages, he writes: “The state is the idea of spirit in the external manifestation of the human will and its freedom” (VG 66/47). “The state is the divine Idea, as it exists on earth” (VG 57/39). Hegel is thus proposing that spirit comes to actually exist in the world in the form of a state, which is, in a minimal definition, the centralised rule of human beings. But why should it be that spirit can only come to exist in a human social order and, more specifically, in a state? Hegel does not explain this. I believe that already the very idea of an all-encompassing whole can only be truly realised in a human social order, and spirit being self-conscious and free makes the state form necessary for Hegel. As regards the first point, it is clear that Hegel proposes, already in the *Logic*, that a whole can only truly exist externally, that is, be actualised, if it is manifest in its elements and their relations – not a hidden source or abstract principle. A unity can only exist in finite things, if the elements themselves somehow display their unity. Nature unites things inasmuch as they are subject to the same laws: for example, all living things die. But this unity does not exist in the world, in the sense that it is not manifest in the relations between things. Two entities that die do not share any specific relationship that would express their communality as mortals. Hegel therefore says that “spirit [...] is external to itself in nature” (E3 §381A); the unity of

spirit is lost, it is dispersed. Beside the particular case of the interrelation of biological organs, only thinking beings can acknowledge their unity with others in their own characters, actions, and relations, minimally by following the same rules. It is thus already from the most abstract definition of spirit as a real-existing whole, that one can deduce the idea that thinking beings must be united and, moreover, must be united by means of thinking, rules or orders which they can incorporate into their own conscious behaviour and relations with others.

Hegel's proposition that spirit can exist only as a state results, I believe, from the conception of spirit as self-conscious and free. Hegel says: "[T]he state is rational freedom which knows itself objectively and is for itself" (VG 66/47). He is thus suggesting that spirit in the form of the state is self-conscious – i.e. the state is self-conscious and is, therefore, an instantiation of spirit. In a later passage, Hegel says "the state is [...] the self-conscious being of spirit, such that the freedom of the will shall be realized in law. This presupposes the consciousness of the free will as such. In the Chinese state the moral will of the emperor is law" (VG 201/160). The freedom and self-consciousness to which Hegel refers is clearly the one of the Chinese state, personified in the emperor's will: in this form, the state is free and self-conscious inasmuch as the head of the state knows and wills the state laws. If spirit – the whole that consists in individuals and their relations – is to be free and self-conscious, this is only possible by means of a government. The state as the social whole, represented by the government, is thus free and self-related, "with itself in the other", namely the behaviour of the individuals that make up the state. For an English readership, this sense of the state, namely, as the totality of a society, is unusual. But Hegel always uses the term 'state' in this broader sense (in addition to the narrower sense, for which he sometimes uses the term "the political state" to denote the difference (PR §§273,267), and, indeed, it is quite common in the German language to do so. For this reason, Hegel can claim that any state displays the minimal structure of spirit, namely, a

self-relation or self-determination. The state makes laws, which it follows. The state is then determined by the laws it has given itself. And the state is self-conscious in the sense that the government knows and wants the rules that regulate the behaviour of its people. Or rather, the state in the broader sense consists of the differentiated structure of social relations, and the state in the sense of the government knows this structure and regulates it.

The beginning of the parallel between the Logic and the Philosophy of History

Despite the clear references to the *Logic* in Hegel's *Philosophy of History* that have been acknowledged by many scholars, nobody has yet proposed a specific parallelisation between the historical states and the logical categories. This apparent lack might be explicable in light of the fact that even though one would expect the parallel to start at the beginning of the *Logic* (i.e. with Being),²²⁵ it only begins, and necessarily so, with Actuality (at the end of the Logic of Essence). The idea that spirit must be actualised in human behaviour and relations is key to Hegel's definition of history. In a metaphor, Hegel states that "inner spirit, still hidden beneath the surface, [is] knocking at the shell of the outer world" (VG 46/31), while elsewhere, he speaks of spirit being "internal" (VG 21/9), needing to appear in external reality. Spirit is at first internal, in the sense of a hidden concept that is not existent in reality, or it is internal in the sense of a unity that is active in nature, but not expressed, that is, not manifest in the relations between natural things. In the *Science of Logic*, Hegel discusses actualisation, internality and externality, in the section Actuality. Indeed,

²²⁵ You would deduce this from Hegel's remarks in the History of Philosophy which suggest that state forms and philosophical systems display the same logical categories (VGP 72), and that in Greece Being was introduced as a topic. As I argue below, it is however impossible to think a state with the form of Being or any category preceding Actuality. The parallel between philosophical systems and state forms must be a looser one, namely, that where the state unity is prevalent, some form of unifying philosophy will also be present. I agree, however, with Houlgate that earlier peoples have a partly correct, yet deficient understanding of what later historical people completely grasp – and realise in their social relations. This fits with my reading of the *Logic*, since I propose that earlier logical categories describe the same topic as later ones only in a simplistic way. See: Stephen Houlgate, *An Introduction to Hegel: Freedom, Truth and History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), p.9.

when introducing Actuality, Hegel explicitly refers to spirit, claiming that while nature is only internal, spirit must be “actualised”; spirit must be “mediated” by something else and “return into itself” (WL2 184/527). Spirit is by definition something that is actualised, expressed and present in something else, namely, human individuals and their relations, which means that as such socially related individuals are also spirit itself. Thus, it is only in the section called Actuality in the *Logic* that Hegel for the first time conceives of a whole that is manifest in finite things and their relations, and which can thereby parallel the structure of spirit.

Before the section on Actuality, the absolute is defined either as the abstraction from all distinction of things (Being), or their common but hidden source (Essence). In both cases, the absolute unity is not manifest in things. In the Logic of Being, things are seen as unconnected atoms, thus precisely not as establishing any unity; While in the Logic of Essence, things appear to be completely distinct from one another, thus not displaying their common source in Essence. A state in the form of Being would be a mere abstraction, the theoretical claim that individuals who are unconnected atoms are, nevertheless, instantiations of one and the same, atoms of humanity, if you will. But this would certainly not be a real-existing state, but a mere fantasy. A state in the form of Essence would be the hidden common source of all individuals, perhaps a shared moral principle, which each individual enacts differently and singularly – neither knowing that she shares it with others nor joining others to actualise it in a common order. This implies the following: you can only think a social unity if the unity of individuals is somehow manifest in their own behaviour and relations. In terms of the *Logic*, it is thus with Actuality, at the end of the Logic of Essence, that a social unity can become thematic. Hegel’s Logic of the Concept incorporates this aspect and describes throughout an actualised whole – a whole that is manifest in its elements and their relations.

The *Philosophy of History* thus can only start paralleling the *Logic* with the section Actuality, where the absolute is neither an abstraction from things nor their hidden source, but rather when the absolute unity becomes manifest in the relation between things. To start the parallel between *History* and *Logic* half-way through the *Logic* seems to contradict Hegel's obsession with systematisation. Yet, one simply cannot think a state with categories that imply a total disunity. And since the *Philosophy of History* has the same topic as Ethical Life in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* – i.e. social unity and the state – it is only fitting that they parallel almost the same parts of the *Logic*, at least in my interpretation. The only difference is that in the *Philosophy of History*, Hegel starts with preliminary forms of a real state-unity and he also presents states that are more like the family (built upon trust rather than reason), and states that unite individuals forcefully (as in Objectivity or civil society). In my reading, while China and India are similar to different aspects of the Substance or Absolute, Greece resembles the Concept, the Roman Empire Objectivity, and the European state the Idea.

Salvaging Hegel – the thrust of my interpretation

That spirit is actualised in individuals acting in accordance with unified laws made by a government does not seem to bolster my case for a non-authoritarian Hegel, nor does the idea that it shall become a self-conscious subject. Robert Brandom has proposed to tackle these problems by re-interpreting Hegel's conception of history and reason in a non-authoritarian manner. For Brandom, "reason's march through history" only means that we can tell stories about how we improved our concepts.²²⁶ Brandom thus removes from Hegel's original conception the idea that spirit realises its rational form through history, the concept of spirit as a self-conscious whole, the idea that history has an aim and the concept

²²⁶ See: Robert Brandom, *Reason in Philosophy. Animating Ideas* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2009) p. 91.

of reason in the sense of a predetermined structure presented in the *Logic*. All that remains is the empirical and contingent process of reasoning that has led us to our present concepts. Unfortunately, while reducing Hegel's authoritarian tendencies, by deleting the dominance of the whole and the predetermination of history, Brandom also takes away the very core of Hegel's conception of history – that history is necessary, not accidental; that its progress can be measured by the absolute standard of reason and logical thinking, and not merely by our contingent present beliefs; that states become free in the eminent sense of the best logically possible form of freedom.

In this chapter, I therefore present a different argument, one based upon some agreement with Hegel's critics but which also proposes that Hegel's conception of history as spirit's attempt to actualise itself does also involve the freedom of individuals. Hegel's critics are correct on the following point. Hegel does focus on the whole and its improvement, rather than on individuals, with the course of history being predetermined by the *Logic*. History and the unifying social power are alien forces imposed upon individuals. But I will argue that the history Hegel believes to be discerning is one in which the state and society gradually cease to be an alien force over individuals and instead are successively re-appropriated by individuals. More specifically, I will propose that spirit can only be truly actualised in human individuals and their relations if those relations are determined by the individuals themselves – i.e. not by a dictatorial government – and that the self-consciousness of spirit can only truly be realised if individuals collectively know and oversee their own social relations. The “being with itself” of spirit in individuals requires them being “with themselves” in it, too, in the sense of being affirmed in their particular character and interests and consciously knowing and organising their society.

I believe this reasoning becomes evident when one interprets Hegel's *Philosophy of History* with the help of his *Logic*. As already mentioned, actuality, freedom and self-consciousness are topics of his *Logic* and aspects of the logical Idea. In the section Actuality, Hegel not

only proposes that the absolute must be manifest in finite things and their relations, but he discusses different ways in which this can be understood. His main point is that the absolute cannot be realised either as a simple substance that makes all things its expression, or as the causal necessity arising from a chain effect of finite things. When I discuss China in parallel to the Substance, I will show that Hegel believes that a Spinozan substance cannot be actualised in finite things, the substantialist Chinese state cannot be actualised in Chinese citizens, since it does not contain the distinctions between them. Their distinctions remain outside the absolute and the state, respectively. I will then go on to analyse the becoming of Greece in parallel to Reciprocity. The true form of actualisation, which is also preserved in the Concept, is called Reciprocity, the reciprocal actualisation of finite things in the absolute and vice versa. Finite things are actualised in that each one relates to other finite things according to its own particular nature. Reciprocity also means that it is the interrelation of finite things that causes the absolute to be a specific way – just as its internal structure conditions things. The absolute is therefore actualised in finite things, in that it is nothing but their concrete unified relation and therefore nothing beyond or beside the finite things themselves. I will analyse the advent of Greece and the polis in Athens along the lines of Reciprocity and the Concept, making exactly this point. The last feature of spirit is that it shall be a self-conscious subject, and this is, I believe, fully developed only in the modern European state for Hegel. Self-consciousness and absolute subjectivity are also features of his absolute Idea. It was already argued in the preceding chapter that Hegel does not think subjectivity in terms of a given substrate subsequently acquiring thoughts and ordering objects. The state subject can therefore also not be understood as a given God-like subject commanding objects (individuals). Hegel's proposition is rather that the subject and object are completely identical in content, but different in form. If the subject of the state is taken to be the government and legislature, and the object society or the

people, as I will argue, they can only be identical if the citizens collectively are the collective subject and determine the decision-making process.

II. The different historical states and their logical conception

I will interpret China in parallel with Spinoza's substance, as discussed at the end of the Logic of Essence, and India as the negative result of Hegel's analysis of Substance (2.1). In my reading, the Greek polis resembles the Concept (2.2), Rome Objectivity (2.3), and the European state form the absolute Idea (2.4).

II.1 India and China

(43) China and India lie, as it were, still outside the world's history, as the mere presupposition of elements whose combination must be waited for to constitute their vital progress. [...] the substance cannot arrive at reflection into itself – at subjectivity (VG 147/116).

China and India present for Hegel the two basic elements of states – the state unity and the difference of dispersed individuals. In each state one of the elements represses the respective other. There is thus not a relation of identity and difference between the whole state (as the government) and the interactions of individuals. In China, the state as one substance completely dominates all citizens, with the latter being like unconscious limbs of the emperor. In ancient China, the state thus only displays the form of “being with oneself”, while otherness, the difference of individuals from the state, remains almost absent. India is divided into different ethnic, caste and religious groups, lacking a state unity. Here it is thus only otherness or difference that is prevalent and the self-relation of

the state in its subjects, its “being with itself” in this other is missing. (Interestingly, already at this point, Hegel anticipates that, just as in his *Logic*, the state-substance will have to acquire subjectivity, create and contain the differences within itself).

China and Substance: the domination of the state over individuals

Hegel conceives of China as a completely centralised state. In China, all human relations are legally ordained (VG 161/128) and all matters are regulated by the emperor: there are detailed legal codes for family relations (VG 153f./121), while literature, historiography, poetry and sciences are all subject to the emperor’s approval (PG 81f.), all land is owned by the state (VG 164/130), and the emperor is head of the state and the state religion (VG 166/131). He is even God (PR §355). Everyone except the emperor counts as legally immature (VG 161/128) and does nothing but enact what the emperor decides. As Hegel says, the “universal will acts directly by means of the individual” (VG 152/120). Morality and legality are not distinguished (VPW 142). The moral demands exist as laws and moral misconduct is punished like crime.

Interestingly, Hegel does not consider this a necessarily unhappy condition. It is true that the “wellbeing of citizens, the establishment of a lawful condition, all depends on the character of the emperor” (PG 84), but, according to Hegel, “many excellent emperors have ruled in China” (PG 84). In fact, Hegel supposes that neither the emperor nor the citizens have a consciousness of their own individual selves – the citizens do not feel oppressed while the emperor does not further his personal interest. “The moral will of the emperor is law” (VG 201/160), what he considers morally best. In a lecture, Hegel notes that only in Rome is real despotism possible (PG 72). Presumably, it is only then that emperors have a personal interest which they serve. In China, the emperor acts with “fatherly care” (VG 153/121). He may be mistaken, but he does aim at the common good.

And the Chinese citizens “obey without reflection and selflessly” (VG 152/120). “The individual does not know his own identity as against the substance, which is not yet a power standing over against him” (VG 152/120). Since the individual does not have an individual will, the latter cannot be repressed by the power of the authorities.

Put abstractly, one might say: In Hegel’s China, there is only one entity – the emperor’s will – that permeates everything. This one entity is actualised in all specific deeds, roles and institutions which the citizens enact. Hegel calls the emperor the substance and the citizens its accidents. He writes: “the substance is immediately one subject, the emperor” (VG 153/120); “Individuals appear only as accidents” (PG 72). In the *Science of Logic*, the chapter called the Absolute, according to Hegel, discusses Spinoza’s substance (WL2 195/536). In the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, this topic is analysed within the chapter Relation of Substantiality. I will keep to the term ‘Substance’. The Substance is the first form in which the absolute actualises itself in things. It is therefore the first chapter in the section called Actuality at the end of the Logic of Essence.

Spinoza’s substance actualises itself in things. It does so by making them “the expression or copy of the absolute” (WL2 190/532). One could say here that all things count as accidental expressions of the one substance, its accidents. However, it is more correct to say that things count as nothing but the substance itself. An expression exists outside the one who expresses himself; the expression is made on some external material and does not change automatically when he changes his mind. Things in relation to the substance are rather like glass in relation to light, that is, completely transparent.

(44) There is nothing in the finite which could preserve for it a distinction against the absolute; it is a medium which is absorbed by what shines through it (WL2 190/532).

Glass is invisible, it basically disappears; all one sees is what shines through it. The absolute substance simply extends through things, like light through glass.

Hegel consistently describes China as having the form of a substance. In China, “the universal is dominant, the substance which is not yet soaked up with anything different is only equal to itself” (VG 153/120f.).²²⁷ This empty substance constitutes Hegel’s understanding of Spinoza’s substance. He even explicitly compares China to “Spinozism, which takes what is individual to be null and retains only the abstract substance therein” (VPW 169). However, the most vivid passage on what that means for individuals is the following:

(45) In the Orient [...] only the one substance as such is the truth and the individual has no worth in him and cannot win, in so far as he maintains himself as against the in-and-for-itself; he can rather only have true value through making himself one with the substance, by means of which he stops existing as a subject, disappears into unconsciousness (VGP 40).

Hegel makes this statement about religion in the Orient, but since the emperor is both “high priest and God” (PR §355) in China, and the one substance for all matters, the statement is certainly also true for the Chinese state in general. There is nothing but one substance. Individuals can only exist if they totally submit to it, even to such a degree that they have no consciousness or subjectivity of their own. Hegel was already cited above as saying that individuals do not know their own identity, as against the substance, and “obey selflessly” the state, which is personified in the emperor’s will. In another passage, he says

²²⁷ Hegel also says that the emperor is “the singular self-consciousness as something substantial” (VG 166/132).

that the Chinese people “believe to be born only to pull the wagon of power of the emperor’s majesty” (VG 174/138).

The deficiency of the Chinese state – and of Substance

Having established this parallel the question is: What is wrong with the Substance and the Chinese state in Hegel’s view? If you read Hegel as a substantialist, he should be very pleased with it. In fact, the Chinese state, as Hegel conceived it, is almost exactly like the state that Berlin and Popper believe Hegel must be arguing for, since the one unified substantial spirit – here represented by the emperor – expresses itself in individuals, in that they follow the unified decisions and laws made by this emperor. The state is a well-intentioned order, and the state-government freely decides about its own realisation which individuals accept selflessly. The state is freely “with itself” in its subjects; the latter’s actions are the former’s expression. There is thus certainly the “blind obedience”²²⁸ Popper takes Hegel to be calling for, and one can even say that individuals are free by obeying the Chinese state:²²⁹ “In China, the moral demands constitute the content of the laws” (VG 208/166); the emperor “makes the ethical prevail” (PG 72). In a lecture, Hegel implies that “substantial, objective freedom” is realised in China (PG 71). The Chinese citizens can be regarded as free in a specific sense which Hegel attributes to Spinoza’s substance in a lecture on the Logic, which is in fact precisely the sense of freedom Berlin believes Hegel to be endorsing.²³⁰

(46) When Spinoza proceeds to human spirit, he posits the determination that it liberates itself from bondage and this affects [...] human freedom consists in

²²⁸ Popper, *Open Society and its Enemies*, p.49.

²²⁹ With reference to China, I believe that Popper statement is right: “he equates liberty and law”, *ibid.* 45.

²³⁰ See: Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, p. 132. According to Berlin, we should submit to the social whole because then we do not submit to our own desires.

the love of God, i.e. the direction of spirit to the substance; everything particular consumes itself (VL 168).

Human beings are free in that they identify with the one substance, just as the Chinese citizens, in Hegel's conception, completely accept the emperor's rule. This entails that they are liberated from the rule of their emotions and desires, their "affects". They are free in that they act on the basis of thought, even moral thinking, even though, admittedly, not that of their own.

But Hegel disapproves of the Chinese state, and of the form of freedom he attributes to Spinoza. After the above quoted passage on freedom in Spinoza, which comes from his lectures on the Logic, Hegel remarks:

(47) You need to proceed from the substance to the subject, within which the human being is free. What is outrageous is the determination of Spinoza's substance that man shall see himself only as an accident (VL 168) .

The subject to which Hegel refers is clearly not the individual, but rather the absolute. Since the quoted passage stems from the end of the Logic of Essence, it is thus clear that Hegel refers to the famous reconception of the absolute that leads to his Concept. However, interesting and characteristic is Hegel's point about human freedom: that the absolute shall be a subject rather than a substance does not seem to immediately imply human freedom. For individuals, whether a subject or a substance rules over them would seem to be irrelevant. But, as I will show, Hegel cannot reconceive the absolute without also reconsidering its relation to things. Only if individuals are themselves free can the absolute be thought as a subject.

Hegel says of China, “the unity is on the same primary level of substantiality, i.e. it does not issue from the free subjectivity of the individuals” (VG 181/144f.). Indeed, the Chinese state, as Hegel sees it, does not issue from the free wills of individuals. Why is this a problem? The basis on which to criticise the Chinese state cannot be the ideal of individual freedom or the concept of subjectivity per se, since those concepts are historically and logically posterior. Rather, Hegel regards China and also the substance as deficient in that they are not truly all-encompassing or absolute and therewith also deficiently actualised. China is supposed to be a real existing state-unity, the substance is supposed to be an absolute whole that is manifested in things. But, Hegel supposes, as I will show, that they fail to truly be so and neither present a complete unity nor have a stable external existence, and this is due to the lack of individual freedom.

Spinoza’s substance is “a universal negative power” (E1 §151A), negating the concrete and distinct nature of things, which shall count only as instances of one and the same substance. The problem is that concrete, distinct things thus remain outside substance, which is consequently neither all-encompassing nor actualised in them. The distinct real existing things within which the absolute is supposed to become manifest are “simply found outside the absolute” (WL2 194/534). In the case of China, Hegel makes this same point by comparing China to nature: China is a “natural whole” (PR §355), its moral laws are like “natural laws, external positive commands” (VG 95/71). Natural laws apply equally to all things. They neither express the particularity of things nor their own specific and real connection to the things around them. Natural laws are thus external to things, just as the laws in China are external to individuals: “the law of freedom rules individuals only from without” (VG 201/160). “The ethical determinations are pronounced as laws, but in such a way, that the subjective will is reigned by those laws as an external force” (VG 142/111).

The good Chinese laws are only externally applied to individuals. Hegel does not make this explicit, but this statement presupposes that there is something internal within individuals

that the laws miss out on. Individuals are more than the acting out of the laws. This is so because they have a mind of their own. Human beings cannot become like glass, totally transparently transposing the orders of the emperor into actions. Even if they have neither a particular social status nor a conscious individual will, they at least have some natural desires, drives, needs and feelings. This individuality of citizens is excluded from the Chinese state and remains outside it.

Hegel explicitly draws this conclusion only about the Chinese God, not the state: “Since the tian of the Chinese lacks any determinations, they fall outside it” (VPW 162). Since Hegel supposes a close link between religion and state as forms of spirit – the Chinese religion is a state religion and the emperor its God – this remark may be read as applying to the Chinese state in general. In such a case, the state fails to be all-encompassing because it lacks real distinctions; all distinctions are only transient aspects of the one will of the emperor. In the above quoted passage, Hegel claims that China is like substance in that it has not issued from the free wills of individuals (VG 181/144f.). If Hegel indeed has the logical conception of substance in mind, then he may well see a causal connection here, namely, that China is only like substance – i.e. undifferentiated and not truly realised in individuals, because it does not issue from their individuality. And, more importantly, there is something within individuals that remains outside of the state, something where the state power finds its limit, and something which may threaten the existence of the state. The Chinese state appears to be perfectly “with itself in its other”, self-related in the citizens and their actions, since they are nothing but the tools of the state’s will as personified in the emperor. But, in fact, the true other within which the state would need to exist, in order to be actualised, remains outside the reach of the state. The state is not truly actualised in individuals. It is only present in their externally coerced actions and not in the thinking, characters and relations they would establish of their own accord. It is therefore only fitting that Hegel believes that the Chinese state unity ceases to exist as soon as coercion

decreases. He notes that when the government became more lenient, necessarily disturbances occurred (VG 161/127). In another passage, he says: “When the surveillance from above decreases, there is no principle that could urge civil servants to respect legality” (PG 85).

India – plurality or the relative Absolute

Hegel conceives of India as the opposite of China, with the former seen as total disunity or rather a completely ineffective effort at unification. There are different ethnicities, regions and religions. In Hindu religious practice, sacrifices and the adoration of the statues of manifold gods coexist unconnectedly with the abstract idea of one supreme, abstract being, namely, Brahm (VG 195/155f). Brahm, Hegel says, is cut off from any concrete content (VG 197/157), as the diversity typical of India remains outside it (VG 196/156). Indians never gave their country a name because it never was a single unified empire (VG 180/144). There is no “real state” (VG 201/161) ruling over everything because each of the many castes have a “manifold of customs and religious habits” (VG 192/153), as well as particular rights and duties (VG185/148) with which no state could interfere.

In Hegel’s view, the characteristic of India is that India “difference becomes pre-eminent and in its particularity self-standing as against the all-dominating unity” (VG 180/144). In terms of the *Logic*, India represents, I believe, the negative aspect of the Substance or Absolute. India explicates the negative consequence of Hegel’s argument about China. Hegel says in the *Logic*: “The absolute, merely as absolute identity, is determinate, namely as the identical; it is as such posited [...] as against opposition and manifoldness” (WL2 190/532f). Insofar as the absolute only means everything is one, this claim to identity only negates the validity of the many finite things that exist – and therefore exists beside them, rather than containing them. As such, the absolute is only a “relative absolute” (WL2

191/533), which means that it is not absolute at all, since it is not all-encompassing. The Indian state is also such a unity or whole that exists beside the actual differentiated relations and individuals, and therefore fails to be a true state; also Brahm, the supreme being, exists beside all other beings, not containing their differences. Today, we would say that ancient India, in Hegel's eyes, is a failed state, with its laws and government having no reality and no effect on its people. It is not "with itself" in the citizens, that is, present in their behaviour.

Since I am interested in the different models of state proposed by Hegel, India is less relevant (as are the other Asian nations, which Hegel discusses after India, because those states fail to integrate the elements of China and India – the state unity and differentiation – into a coherent state form). However, it is interesting to consider in what sense India is supposed to represent the complementary element to China, the second element needed for a real state. When comparing China and India, Hegel says in this vein: "An organic life requires on the one hand one soul, and on the other hand, the spreading into differences" (VG 180/144). This "particularization" (VG 180/144) is present in India and represents the progress of India as against China, where only the "one soul" was present.

Characteristic of Hegel is the way in which he defines the two complementary opposites that shall be united into the state. He does not call them the state-unity and the individual. Unlike Hobbes, Hegel does not distinguish between, on the one hand, a condition in which atomistic individuals do what they want, in the absence of a state, and, on the other, individuals' unity in the state. India does not consist of individuals who determine their own lives by means of their own decisions. Hegel argues that in India there are only "differences of masses" (VG 181/144), not of individuals, and those masses are distinguished by nature and habitual rules, and not by their wills. Hegel writes: "The distinctions are referred to nature" (VG 181/144). "Indians pertain to their estates by birth" not because of their "arbitrary wills" as in Europe (VG 182/145). "The estates are

determined by nature”, not by “spirit” (PG 93). Indians thus have no individual freedom, nor in fact are they even individualised, at least certainly not in the sense of an individual human will deciding and acting on its own account. Hegel admits that human beings have particular drives distinct from other individuals, and that they sometimes act on them where the customs do not prescribe otherwise (VG 198f./158). But human beings do not even know themselves as having particular drives; as such they do not know themselves as individuals. Hegel supposes there to be no “self-consciousness that opposes itself to nature” (VG 201/161). To sum up, Hegel proposes that when there is no state-unity, there are some other customary groupings with accompanying rules which dominate individuals.

II.2 Greece – Reciprocity and the Concept

The becoming of Greece and Reciprocity

Hegel will present the Greek polis as the complete and harmonious integration of society and individuals. But before presenting this view, he proposes that a fundamental change occurs in individuals and the social so as to enable their complete integration. The basic thought can already be understood by looking at Hegel’s conception of Asia. Both China and India fail to integrate individuals and the state, according to Hegel, because both elements remain totally alien to one another. If individuals are characterised only by nature-like and conflicting customs or short-lived desires, then individuals can never come to stable agreements on universal laws, nor even think about or decide on anything. Inversely, if the state rules are rational but externally forced upon individuals, they can never truly exist in individuals and in their own minds and wills. The general point about the advent of Greece, therefore, is that there must be something of the whole in individuals and something of individuals in the whole, so that they can be integrated. This, as I will show, is

Hegel's argument when presenting the preconditions of the polis. The preconditions he calls the "subjective work of art" (VG 295/241) and "the objective work of art" (VG 298/244), with the polis being the "political work of art" (VG 306/250). An artwork transforms something natural and given into something mediated, something that only has its specific form and meaning because it contains something else and has been worked on by something else.

The "subjective work of art" consists in human beings becoming thinking beings. Hegel writes: "It is the primary spiritual interest to reshape the body into the complete organ of the will" (VG 296/241). The garments, voice, movements and acts turn into an expression of the human will. Individuals achieve this through the social practice of education, sports (VG 297/243), and musical performance (VG 298/243). The "objective work of art", inversely, consists in turning the whole, in the conception of individuals, into something humanised and man-made. Hegel makes this point on the basis of religious beliefs, but politics and religion are, for him, an expression of the same national spirit: Hegel argues that the Greeks turn the natural, oriental Gods into human-like individuals and spiritual entities – "Man as the spiritual constitutes the truth of Greek Gods" (VG 304/248). But the Greek Gods are not only like humans in the manner of their actions, but they also represent human, spiritual achievements. As Hegel says, "All ethical and spiritual content pertained to the Gods" (VG 302/246). Athene is the city of Athens and the wise fighter. There are the muses, Apollon, the prophetic healer, Zeus, "the protector of the ethical and hospitality" (VG 300/245), and so on. Hegel is adamant that the Greek Gods are concrete individuals (VG 301/246). As such, they cannot be the personification of social institutions or human skills and virtues. Hegel must have in mind the idea that, for Greeks, the Gods directly assist in human achievements – Athene guiding the hero's arrow, the muses literally kissing the poet – while, inversely, the Gods' spiritual qualities only become visible when

manifest in human actions – Athene’s superior strategic talent would be inexistent if human beings did not fight great wars.

In the subjective and objective artwork, Hegel presents the formation of man and of the Gods/social whole, leading to a harmonious yet quite contradictory integration. Hegel writes:

(48) Men honour the divine in and for itself, but at the same time as their deed, their production and their existence: thus the divine receives its honours mediated by the honour of the human and the human mediated by the honour of the divine (VG 294/239).

Ancient Greeks, according to Hegel, know themselves as “creators” and what they create as “human creation”, and yet also as “eternal truths and the powers of spirit in and for itself” (VG 294/239). “For man, only the spiritual he has made out of himself has validity” (VG 289/234). Yet, he also respects what he has made as an expression of the divine, something that has an objective worth and not based on what he individually considers best, right or in her interest. Both individuals and whole are mediated by the respective other, and are even known to be so. Individuals see their own achievements as an expression of the gods, and the divine as their own product.²³¹

The becoming of Greece displays a similarity to Reciprocity, the category at the transition to the Logic of the Concept. The key result of Hegel’s argument on Reciprocity is that the absolute and finite things cannot be presupposed as separate substances, conditioning one another, but rather they must be identical, “one and the same content” (E1 §153A), and

²³¹ “He respects and venerates these intuitions and pictures, this Zeus of Olymp and this Pallas in the castle, and also these laws of the state and its customs; but he, man, is the womb that devised them, he is the breast that fed them, he is the spiritual that has raised them big and pure” (VG294).

only display a “difference in form” (E1 §153A).²³² In Hegel’s conception of Asia, human beings and the state power were two separately existing entities or substances conditioning one another. But Hegel argues in the *Logic* that if the absolute were an “active substance” causally affecting things, defined as “finite substance” (WL2 229/563) or the “passive substance” (WL2 233/566), then the cause would always remain outside the effect. “In the usual sense of causal relationship the cause is finite” (E1 §153), not absolute. Furthermore, it would also not be the first cause of all things, which Spinoza’s substance is supposed to be, but instead would be conditioned by there being something to act upon which lets itself be affected. Also, the power of the Chinese emperor is conditioned by there being individuals to command and by their willingness to receive his orders. To break this cycle of conditioning, Hegel proposes in the *Logic* that each one of the two opposed substances must contain the respective other, therefore “each one is in the relation to the other with itself and unites with itself” (E1 §158). The relation between the individual elements and the whole is one of harmonious and mutual affirmation, which Hegel will describe in his Concept. The state can only be unconditioned and thus free if the government and the people are not two separate existences, but rather are per se identical, only representing a difference within one identical whole. I will argue that this structure is that of the Greek polis.

The Greek polis and the Concept

Hegel believes that the citizens of the Greek polis freely and consciously unite to form a state.

²³² As Iber puts it in their difference is “relational and processual”, not substantial. See: Christian Iber, ‘Übergang zum Begriff. Rekonstruktion der Überführung von Substantialität, Kausalität und Wechselwirkung in die Verhältnisse des Begriffs’, in *Der Begriff als die Wahrheit. Zum Anspruch der Hegelschen Subjektiven Logik*, ed. by Anton Friedrich Koch (Paderborn, Germany: Schöningh, 2003), pp.49-68, p.64.

(49) The formation of Greek spirit originates from independent individualities, from a condition in which singular individuals stand for themselves and are not already, patriarchally, united by a bond of nature. They unite only through another means, in law and spiritual custom (VG 278f./225f).

Greeks are thinking and independent beings. Unlike the Chinese, as Hegel conceives of them, ancient Greeks do not accept the state authority as their given and unchangeable destiny. Rather, they know that the polis originated in their free decision to make shared laws and follow shared customs. But the polis not only originates from the individual wills, it also consists only in the citizens' decision. Hegel writes: "The interest of the community can [...] be entrusted to the will and resolve of the citizens" (VG 308/252). In fact, the polis is nothing but the laws, institutions and activities upon which the citizens have decided and enact according to their plan. Hegel believes the polis to be a direct democracy in which all citizens are present for all public decisions:

(50) He [the citizen] must be present at the main negotiations, participate in the decision-making as such, and not merely by means of his vote, but he must mingle in the heat of the action – the passion and interest of the whole man being absorbed in the affair [...] This unity of opinion to which the whole community must be brought, must be produced in the individual members, heating them by means of oration (VG 312/255).

Considering this passage, it is worth noting that not only do all citizens participate in decision-making, but they take part not by counting votes for and against, but purely by means of discussion. In other words, Hegel proposes that ancient Greeks (or more precisely Athenians) decided by consensus.

Hegel believes that Greeks are independent individuals who freely manage to establish a consensus on all decisions and laws that need to be made. However, it is important to note that for Hegel this is so not because the individuals know the principles of a good state and judge the polis to be good and in their own interest. Quite on the contrary, Hegel supposes that Greeks neither have an individual interest nor think by themselves or judge according to held principles. “The citizens are not conscious of the particular, and herewith of evil, the objective will is unbroken in them” (VG 308/252). Greek individuals do not know any particular interests distinct from those of the polis. “For the individual the substantial, namely the law, the affairs of the state, the universal interest, is the essential” (VG 307f./251). Indeed, Hegel puts this in the most emphatic way as follows:

(51) In this [Greek freedom] the individual will in all its vitality is free and in its particularity the acting out of the substantial (VG 307/251).

What the individual freely wants coincides with the substantial, the decisions, laws and affairs of the polis. Hegel insists that Greek individuals may freely express their particular characters (VG 318/260). And, as he says in the above quoted passage, individuals express their particularity when acting out the laws and common decisions, most likely in the sense of using their particular talents and ideas for the common good. But Greeks do not want and enact the good of the polis in general, some abstract broad notion of what is good for the polis. Rather, they want the specific concrete political life at it is at the moment, i.e. the specific constitution, leaders, decisions and social practices as they exist or are decided upon communally at present. Hegel claims that “Greeks [live] a life for religion, for the state, without further reflection and without analysis leading to abstract definitions, which must lead away from the concrete embodiment of them” (VG 327/267f.). The true ancient Greeks – i.e. Athenians before Socrates – do not distance themselves in their own minds

from the present state of affairs, nor look for general principles of what is right and good, and judge the state according to such principles. Hegel supposes, in my view, that individuals lack or need not develop their own individual judgment, because every decision arises communally and all share the same experiences and collective thought processes, which is to say, they are habituated to think alike. Greek citizens have a “common formation” (VG 312/255). They talk daily in the market, the gym and political institutions, and therefore develop a “communality of spirit, an equality of habits” (PG 128).

To sum up, one might therefore say that the individual wills want nothing but the concrete decisions and laws of the polis, and the polis consists in nothing but what the citizens collectively have decided and want. This is what Hegel refers to in the following statement:

(52) There is a living, universal spirit, which is at the same time the self-conscious spirit of the singular individuals (VG 306/250).

The individual will only realising state institutions, and those institutions consisting in the common actions and decisions of individuals, are one and the same thing, but from two different perspectives.

That Hegel’s vision of Greece resembles the Concept is already clear from the similarity to the category Reciprocity, which is sublated or contained in the Concept and also in the polis. Both sides – the polis and the citizens, the laws and collective decisions and their individual wills – are only formally distinct aspects of the same. The polis contains all citizens and their wills, and their wills contain the polis, since they want nothing but the polis and to be a part of it. Hegel says that, in Greece, “the opposition of the individuals as a this against the universal is not yet present” (VPW 351). Particular individuals are not separate and distinct from the polis (the universal). Indeed, as already developed in chapters 1 and 5, the Universality, Particularity and Singularity of the Concept refer to the identity,

difference and differentiated unity of a whole. And each aspect is supposed to contain the respective others; the simple, universal whole – or polis – contains the particulars and is nothing but their concrete relation, while the particulars – or citizens – contain their unity and are made to be part of the whole. Singularity unites both preceding aspects. Hegel speaks of the “clarity of the Concept, in which no difference creates an interruption, opacity, but is completely transparent” (E1 §164). All differences within a whole that has the form of the Concept are only aspects, formally distinguished perspectives on the same. There are no real differences, rifts or two or more distinct entities. In a similar wording, Hegel argues that Greece is “what is clear to itself” (VG 272/220), having “the clear understanding of itself” (VG 271/220). He may refer to the same constellation, namely, that the polis and the individuals are identical and which makes the relation completely clear or “transparent”, uninterrupted sameness.

The key concepts used by Hegel to characterise the polis are *life* and *beauty* (or art), and this characterisation also links it to the Concept. The polis is an artwork, as are its members and gods. Moreover, it is a “free, beautiful spirit” (VPW 318). Hegel thus clearly describes ancient Greece as an “aesthetic state”, to use a term Chytry proposes.²³³ As Chytry explicates, the aesthetic state was a “romantic aesthetic-organicistic”²³⁴ conception of the state, particularly a conception of the ancient Greek polis which Hegel knew from Schelling and Hölderlin among others. The themes are manifold, but one key proposition is that the state is an artwork made by and for human beings,²³⁵ as well as being an organic whole, the beautiful, harmonious, natural interrelation of elements, rather than a mechanic, forceful, calculated order.²³⁶ While art and beauty per se may be linked to Hegel’s Concept, as

²³³ Josef Chytry, *The Aesthetic State. A quest in Modern German Thought* (Berkley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1989).

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 142.

²³⁵ Ibid., p. 139.

²³⁶ Cf. ibid. 142.

Hilmer argues,²³⁷ organicism is clearly an important element of Hegel's conception of the Concept. And so is life – the other term Hegel uses to describe Greece. In the passage quoted above, Hegel describes the polis as “the living, universal spirit” (VG 306/250); it is a “living democracy” (VG 312/255), individuals experience polis life in its “concrete vitality” (VG 327/267), and this is even the Greek principle (VPW 315). In the *Logic*, Hegel says life has the form of the Concept (WL2 279/605); or, organic life corresponds to the Concept (E1 §161A). His conception of the Concept may indeed be modelled on his understanding of Life in his early writings.²³⁸ As Hegel explains, “life” and other wholes with the form of the Concept “are not universals merely in the sense of higher genera, but concretes” (WL2 279/605); they do not subsume specific subcategories under a general, more abstract concept, but rather they are concrete in the sense of the differentiated relation between their elements. The whole life or living organism only consists in the concrete interconnection of cells, and, inversely, they exist only within this living organism. Hegel repeatedly describes the polis as “concrete vitality (VG 327/267), displaying “the concrete fresh life of spirit” (VG275/223). Also, the Greek polis is nothing but the relation of individual citizens, their shared beliefs that are laws, as well as their common decisions. And each citizen lives for the state, without personal aims or separation from the state, like an organ or cell.

Unsurprisingly, Hegel calls Greece the “realm of beautiful freedom” (VG 137/106), of “living freedom” (VG 318/260). Freely and completely wanting the laws that are actually in place, individuals are “with themselves in the other”. And individuals freely express their

²³⁷ Hilmer argues that beauty is the “Concept as self-manifestation” and “characterises before all the structure of spirit: the reflecting into oneself, which is at the same time being for another”. Beauty means a relation to something else, namely, the artwork, which is also you, recognising yourself in the artwork. See: Brigitte Hilmer, *Das Scheinen des Begriffs. Hegels Logik der Kunst*. Hegel Deutungen, vol. 3 (Hamburg: Meiner, 1997), p.262 and p.266, respectively.

²³⁸ One can come to this conclusion on account of the prominence of life, and particularly the organism, in Hegel's early writings, as well as the links he draws between life, organism and the Concept. On life in Hegel's early writings, see: Jean Hyppolite, ‘Vie et Prise de Conscience de la Vie dans la Philosophie Hegelienne d'Iena’, in his *Études sur Marx et Hegel* (Paris: Edition Marcel Rivière et Cie, 1965), pp. 11-41.

own characters when acting for the polis. Individuals are affirmed in their own wills and talents by polis life, and are thus also, in this respect, with themselves in it. As regards Greek spirit, Hegel says: “Spirit found itself with itself not beyond” (PG 125). In this statement, Hegel talks about the relation of thought to nature and the human body – the “subjective artwork” in Hegel’s terminology. But it is also true for the Greek polis. Spirit, namely, the polis, consisting in the concrete relations and decisions of the citizens, is actualised in their actions and wills. Since the individual wills are not repressed, but already contained in the state will, the state relating to the citizens does not relate to anything external, anything that needs to be repressed, but purely to itself. The Greek state is “with itself” in individuals. Regarding a whole with the form of the Concept, Hegel claims that it “overreaches its other, but not as something violent, but as something that is in the other calm and with itself” (WL2 277/603). It is presumably because of this relation to an other that is also contained in the whole that Hegel calls the Concept the “realm of freedom” (WL2 251/582).

The deficiency of the polis and of the Concept

“Typical of this state is that custom is the form in which it consists, namely the inseparability of thought from real life” (VG 329/271). Greek citizens (before Socrates) want the polis, but only the real existing polis in its concrete present form. As cited above, Hegel supposes that they do not have any general concepts of what is good or right with which to measure the present state as against this standard and to judge it accordingly. Their thinking and the real institutions and acts are directly identical. As Michael Inwood puts it, “Men share the same norms, institutions, gods and cultic activities, and cannot raise

the questions why they do so or whether they should do so”.²³⁹ Individuals do not know themselves as different from society – so that they might question the latter – neither is the polis consciously known as different from individuals’ immediate wills and acts.

Hegel presents the problem as follows:

(53) This Greek Ethical Life [...] nevertheless, fails to be the highest standpoint of spiritual self-consciousness; the infinite form is missing, just this reflection of thinking into itself [...] the infinity of self-consciousness, that, what shall be valid for me as right and ethicality, is confirmed in me, by means of the testimony of my spirit (VG 323/264).

Hegel uses the logical term “infinite form” to say what is missing in Greece. The term has different uses in the *Logic*, but it primarily refers to the internally differentiated Concept (WL2 455/749) as the form containing all content, all finite things, as its moments. This is certainly also given and not lacking in Greece, since the Greek polis is supposed to contain all individual wills. But Hegel says in the *Logic* that the Concept “as infinite form is the *punctum saliens* of all vitality and for that reason it distinguishes itself from itself” (E1 §166A). As said above, in the Concept finite elements and the whole are identical. The whole contains all life, all finite things or cells. But finite things are not clearly distinguished from the whole to which they belong; and the whole with the form of the Concept should be the “*punctum saliens*”, the point where the manifold of living entities emerges, not where it exists within an unclearly differentiated whole. Here, then, Hegel is arguing that finite things and the absolute must be distinguished; finite things must also exist outside the absolute. Only in this way can this distinction between finite things and the whole

²³⁹ Michael Inwood, ‘Hegel, Plato and Greek Sittlichkeit’, in *The State and Civil Society: Studies in Hegel’s Political Philosophy* ed. by Z.A. Pelczynski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 40-54, here: p.40.

subsequently become part of the whole itself, that is, its own self-distinction, as opposed to a distinction made merely as observers, a distinction that stems from without the absolute.

The exact nature of the problem is more evident for social philosophy than in terms of the *Logic*. In social terms, the criticism means that the polis is a harmonious whole, but the elements – individual wills and public laws – are insufficiently distinguished. This entails, for Hegel, that the specific differentiated content of public decisions does not arise in the reflective relation between individuals and society, but instead stems from somewhere else. For Hegel, the ancient Athenian democracy (before the advent of Socrates) is inherently connected to the oracle: “To decide out of oneself you require a fixed subjectivity of the will, that is determined by preponderant reasons; the Greeks did not yet have this power and strength of the will” (VG 310/254). Greeks “did not decide through themselves, but they took the decision from something else” (VG 311/254). The oracle (VG 306/250), the opinion of a good orator (VG 311/254), an accidental twist of the discussion, provided the Greeks with the content of their decision. The latter did not arise out of their own reasoning (PR §279). As Hegel was cited above saying (VG 327/267f.), the citizens of pre-Socratic Athens lack both the mental distance to judge the political order, and the general principles and convictions about what is right, needed in order to judge. That they came to agree upon something was thus not due to the fact that the decision was based on a shared rational principle – i.e. everyone reaching the same conclusion in his own mind – but rather required their physical presence and participation in the same discussions, being carried away by the same collective feeling. Slavery is the side effect of this problem, I believe. Hegel notes that slavery is “the necessary condition for the beautiful democracy, where each citizen partook in the pleasures [...] babbling, listening to speeches” (PG 128). The constant presence of all citizens is typical for Athens, according to Hegel. This is necessary because “the picture of the interests must reach them lively” (VPW 363). Since Greeks make the same decision without having a rational basis, there must be some other ground

for the decision in which they all share. That is to say, they all need to share the same unfounded and yet strong image or feeling that motivates their decision. And this shared emotion can only arise if people sit together, which implies that citizens cannot work.

When Hegel claims, as in the above cited passage, that the “reflection of thinking into itself” is missing in Greece, “self-consciousness” or “infinite subjectivity” (VG 306/250), he thus means to say that thinking must not only create a social world and want it, but self-consciousness also requires that the subject of this consciousness knows itself as different from this world, and creates and identifies with the social order for good reasons and according to its own principles. In the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel says that, in general, “the infinite form of subjectivity must be built into the state” (E3 §552). In the *Logic*, Hegel ultimately has the intention to establish the absolute not only as an integrated, organic whole, but as a self-conscious subject, and this requires the separation of a subject and object of thought. In Greece, it is Socrates who first introduces the mental separation of the individual from the social, therewith starting the demise of the Greek polis (VG 329/269f.). For Hegel, this separation comes to its complete form in the Roman Empire. I will argue that, in the *Logic*, this stage corresponds to Objectivity.

II.3 The Roman Empire and Objectivity

The Roman state: The split between subjectivity and objectivity

For Hegel, the Roman state introduces the split between the individual and the social world. “The citizens became alien to the state, for they found in it no objective satisfaction” (VG 378/312). It is therefore characterised by two closely linked phenomena:

(54) In such a condition is now Roman life: the one side of fate and the abstract universality of rule, on the other the individual abstraction, the person (VG 384/317).

Earlier in the same text, Hegel makes the point that “abstract universal personality” and the “abstract universality, which exercises severe discipline over humanity” (VG 339/238), are the two characteristics of Rome. Both state rule and the individual are “abstract” as against each other, that is to say, they are unconnected and not concretely or organically linked. Hegel’s basic proposition is, I believe, that both the state and the individual reflect into themselves, respectively, and thus away from one another.²⁴⁰ While in the polis, the state was nothing but what individuals wanted and individuals wanted nothing but the state, each one of those elements now becomes concerned with itself. As Hegel puts it: “Here [in Rome] we have an aristocracy, one that is rigid and opposed to the people” (VG 340/279). The patricians rule according to their own interest as against the people (VG 358/294), and the Roman emperor rules by his arbitrary will (VPW 417). The Roman law does not issue from the citizens, nor does it coincide with their convictions. Hegel says: “The Romans then accomplished this important separation and discovered a principle of law which is external, i.e. separate from conviction and sentiment” (VG 351/289). Hegel’s point is thus that the Romans invented positive law, namely, law that is valid simply because it was decreed. Individuals, for their part, have the “abstract freedom of the individual within herself” (VG 340/279), “legal personality, the freedom of the I within itself” (VG 340/279). Roman individuals are self-centred, either caring only about themselves as legal persons, or regarding all external reality as null (as in the case of the stoic).

²⁴⁰ This is what Hegel means when he says that the “political universal” is “for itself”, the individual “within itself”, both having the “form of internality” (VG 340/279).

The specific constellation typical of the Roman Empire is thus that individuals are completely self-related, as is the government. But, of course, the disinterest of the state towards its citizens only regards their own interests and beliefs. The Roman state still, and even completely, imposes its rule on individuals. Hegel repeatedly points out that the rule is like “fate” (VG 339/278; VPW 393) to the individuals: an unpredictable and irresistible power to which individuals are completely subjected. The state demands “self-sacrifice to the grand object of the union” (VG 345/284), complete “subordination (VG 346/284) – and receives it. Contradictorily, the legal person, who only wants her own interests, is free and self-related and yet totally subjected. “The legal personality, the freedom of the I within itself” coexists with a state as “the power over concrete individuality that very much subordinates it” (VG 340/279).

This description of the Roman state in the *Philosophy of History* bears similarity with Objectivity in the *Science of Logic*. In Objectivity, finite things as objects are purely self-related and therefore independent, and nevertheless completely subsumed under objective laws, which Hegel also compares to “fate” (WL2 421/720). Hegel describes both the objective laws (WL2 439/735) and the Roman state as abstract universals, in the sense of wholes that do not express the particularity of their members, and both the Roman individuals and individual objects as purely self-related and thus “indifferent to one another” (WL2 412/713), or the context within which they exist (VG 340/279).²⁴¹ In the *Logic*, Hegel offers a causal explanation as to why these independent entities are nevertheless completely subjected. He argues it is because objects are completely self-related and therefore do not establish relations to other objects, while something else, an external force or law, relates them. A similar causal connection is presupposed in his description of Rome. He writes:

²⁴¹ The difference between the Roman Empire and Objectivity is, however, that the objective laws are nothing but the objects’ own characteristics – their weight, volume or speed when thrown, for example – connected in a law-like manner. This is not true for Roman laws.

(55) It is the pride of the individual to be absolutely valid as private persons [...] but the development of private law, which introduced this high principle [the private person], involved the decay of political life (VG 384/317).

“A middle ground was missing between the emperor and the governed” (VG 384/317). The egotism enshrined in private law entails that individuals do not express political interests on the basis of which they could negotiate with who governs, and thereby connect to the emperor. The state rule is external and forced upon them *because* they are egoists and only concerned with themselves. Hegel also insinuates this when speaking of the Roman family: “It remains an unfeeling, unspiritual unit and it posits the unity of these units as an abstract universality” (VG 351/288). Because the family is simply a separate unit, the rule over these units cannot emerge as the organic relation to other families, but must be an external rule and abstract subsumption of independent units.

Hegel takes this thought to the extreme, proposing that if individuals are only independent persons, then the state necessarily exerts its power by disrespecting their personal and property rights. “This private law is thus at the same time the non-existence, the non-recognition of the person” (VG 387/320). The emperor is the “person of persons, owning all persons” (VG 387/320). The reasoning seems to be the following. Individuals are only and purely atom-like, egoistic persons. They do not share cultural links, collective interests or convictions, nor do they participate in legal rule. Thus, they legally are, and see themselves as, completely independent from one another, that is, only related to and wanting their own private property. If a state unity – a unity of these atom-like persons –

must nevertheless be established, this is only possible by denying their complete independence and taking away their private property.²⁴²

The first similarity between Objectivity and the Roman state is the total lack of freedom of nominally free and independent entities. But the section on Objectivity in the *Logic* also fulfils the same argumentative function as the Roman Empire in Hegel's *Philosophy of History*. Both sections are intended to introduce the difference between a subject and an object that will later be required for self-consciousness. Spirit in its complete form must be self-conscious, and the last logical conception, Hegel's Idea, is also supposed to contain self-consciousness and self-willing. Hegel says the following of external teleology, the last form of Objectivity: "the Concept equally has to produce the being-for-itself of its subjectivity, thus a relation of it as purpose to objectivity emerges" (WL2 408/710). The term being-for-oneself has two meanings for Hegel: (1) separateness – being by oneself; and (2) consciousness – something existing for one's own mind. Schick is probably right to propose that this second meaning is also implicit in this passage.²⁴³ Hegel thus says in the quoted passage that subjectivity must become separate from objectivity, and at least consciously knowable as distinct from it. "The telos is the Concept, which is outside the objective externality and opposed to it, and therefore defined as subjective and existing" (VLM 172). In the Roman state, as Hegel describes it, both the government and the citizens have acquired a subjectivity of their own and regard the rest of the world as external objects. Hegel even compares this structure to "external teleology", the government imposing "its ends as against the people" (VG 358/294). Moreover, Roman individuals also have finite ends for which they want to use others as means.

Hegel's presentation of Objectivity and the Roman state is thoroughly critical with the main problem being that state rule and the objective laws are external to individual entities.

²⁴² I have proposed in the second chapter that the legal person is linked to the Logic of Being. In the Roman Empire, the topic is not the atomistic person, but a person that is also subjected to a political rule. It is thus a different topic than the one discussed in Abstract Right and therefore also parallels a different passage of the *Logic*.

²⁴³ Schick: *Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik*, p. 260.

Unlike the natural, desire-driven individuals without any legal status – i.e. the individuals Hegel views as the ancient Chinese – Roman individuals are not completely alien to the state. Indeed, they are even constituted as legal persons by the state. Yet, individuals are alienated from the state and unfree in relation to it. Hegel makes this point explicitly only about Roman religion: “The divinity, religiosity of the Romans is therefore nothing free, but something in itself limited, against which they are unfree and that is against them unfree” (VPW 403). But what he says about the Roman Gods is also true of the Roman state, namely, that the individual wills remain outside it, limiting it in the process, while the state, inversely, limits and subdues individuals. The problem here is similar to that of China, but more acute, since Hegel supposes that Roman individuals are conscious of their individual interests and thus averse to the state, and are not simply alien and readily dominated. Also, in the *Logic*, Hegel notes critically that the meaning and use which the final end gives to objects is external to the object itself (WL2 457/750). The objective law of teleology thus fails to be truly realised in them, and fails to be all-encompassing, containing all things. Hegel therefore proposes: “The mechanical object is [...] indifferent to its determining [...]. This external determining has now developed into self-determination” (WL2 444/740). It was proposed in the preceding chapter that the objects themselves must become “subjects”, and freely and actively unite into the absolute. This conclusion is explicitly made as regards Rome. In stoicism, individuals manage to completely detach their minds from reality and come to know their own internal thinking. It is through this internal thinking that early Christians come to the vague hope that there is something within their own free reasoning and willing that makes them both equal to God, the creator, and may enable their reconciliation with the world around them. Indeed, Hegel says, they hope to be like God also in the sense of the origin of everything, the whole world (VG 403/333).

II.4 The modern European state and the Idea

The European principles: Reformation and Revolution – Cognition and Volition

Hegel's method when presenting Europe differs from his description of earlier nations. First, he supposes that European history repeats the key developments of all earlier epochs (VG 417/345), and only at the very end of the section comes to talk about what he regards as its new and characteristic European achievements. However, only these latter achievements are interesting for the present study. Second, Hegel does not present one specific, concretely existing historical state. The entire section is entitled "the Germanic world", but he does not present "the Germanic state". Rather, he identifies the Germanic world with major parts of Europe²⁴⁴ with all its many sovereign states incorporating "all the Germanic principles" (VPW 440). This implies that the key European achievement consists of general principles of statehood which are realised differently in different European states, not just in one concrete state. Lastly, Hegel says very little about the general state structure implicit in these principles, because he believes to have sufficiently explicated this in his *Philosophy of Right* (VG 529/447).²⁴⁵

The key achievements for which Hegel credits Europe, and that inform the European form of state, are the Reformation and the French Revolution. Hegel interprets both these historical events as two opposite ways of overcoming the split between subjectivity and objectivity – the individual and society – which, he believes, was introduced in the Roman period. In the Reformation, as well as the Enlightenment, individuals, by means of their

²⁴⁴ Hegel says: "the Western, Germany and thirdly the Eastern, Slavic" (VPW 443).

²⁴⁵ Timo Bautz confirms that the last state form described in the *Philosophy of History* corresponds to the state of the *Philosophy of Right*. (See: Timo Bautz, *Hegels Lehre von der Weltgeschichte. Zur logischen und systematischen Grundlegung der Hegelschen Geschichtsphilosophie*. (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1988), p.35.) The question of why Hegel then needed to make the effort to analyse history in the first place can be answered as follows: the *Philosophy of Right* only shows how the state should be if reason and the concept of the will were to exist in reality. In the *Philosophy of History*, Hegel wants to show that it did come to exist and that the model of the European state already contains all other state models or states, thus having proven its necessary reality. On the idea that the *Philosophy of Right* is deficient because it is only a particular state – i.e. not containing all others – see: Emil Angehrn, 'Vernunft in der Geschichte? Zum Problem der Hegelschen Geschichtsphilosophie', *Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung*, 35 (1981), pp. 341-364 (p.344).

own inner belief or reasoning, come to accept the given reality as identical to them: “Nature is now a system of known and recognized laws, man is at home therein [...] he is free in the cognition of nature” (VG 522/440). Enlightened individuals are free, “with themselves” in nature, in that they recognise their own reason in its laws. For Protestants, the state order is rational and an expression of the holy spirit, which is identical to their own spirit and reasoning. Hegel therefore writes about the Protestant world view:

(56) Obedience to the state laws, as to reason [...] In this obedience, man thus pertains only to his universal being, which is his own rationality (PG 206).

In both cases, it is the individual’s own reasoning or act of faith (VG 496/416) which establishes this reconciliation with the world and therefore makes her free, at home or “with herself” in the world. However, the freedom only consists in understanding the world, not in changing it or knowing it as my own product. The French Revolution also relies on the individual’s free will, but demands that it must create a new reality (one that it wants), rather than accepting the given one. On the French Revolution, Hegel claims: “The principle of the freedom of the will has asserted itself as against the existing law” (VG528/446). “Thinking [...] is the activity and production of the universal” (VG 520/438).

Hegel’s *Science of Logic* ends with his presentation of the Idea, which is divided into three consecutive chapters: (1) Life or the organism; (2) Cognition including Volition; and (3) the absolute Idea. The absolute Idea integrates the previous three aspects of the Idea, presenting an organic whole that is also a self-knowing and self-willing subject. While the idea of an organism – or, in social terms, social differentiation – is not taken up again in the *Philosophy of History*, the Reformation and the French Revolution clearly resemble Cognition and Volition, respectively. Like those historical events, the chapter on Cognition and

Volition starts with the proposition that there is subjectivity and its separateness, or “its being-for-itself has as its presupposition a world in itself opposed to it” (WL2 498/784). Volition and Cognition, or the theoretical and the practical idea, are two ways of overcoming this separation between subjectivity and objectivity. Hegel defines Cognition as “the accommodation of the existing world into oneself, into subjective representing and thinking”, while Volition consists in “conversely, sublating the one-sidedness of the world [...] determining this world through the inwardness of the subject” (E1 §225). The parallel to Reformation – where individuals accept the given reality – and revolution – through which they create a new social reality – is apparent.²⁴⁶ Hegel also points out that the Germans are “theoretical”, while the French are “practical” (VG 526/444), echoing the distinction between the theoretical and practical idea. It is interesting that the logical thought, namely, that the whole is a subjectivity opposed to objectivity, translates into the *Philosophy of History* as the individuals thinking about their world, and not some God-like super-subject doing so. The whole becoming conscious and having a will means that individuals collectively come to think about reality and will it to be like their own wills.

Deficiency and integration of the European principles – the absolute Idea

One might now pose the question, what is wrong with the principle of the Reformation and the French Revolution, and with Cognition and Volition, respectively? For Hegel, Cognition and Volition each in its own way fail to overcome the split between objectivity and subjectivity, and thus by themselves fail to be absolute, the absolute Idea.²⁴⁷ The deficiency of Cognition is that what is known as identical to subjectivity is something

²⁴⁶ I therefore agree with Merold Westphal that Hegel links Reformation to what Westphal calls the “principle of subjectivity”, the subjective cognition of what is given as divine. The “principle of autonomy”, which Westphal distinguishes from the first principle, must be linked to the French Revolution in my reading. For Westphal’s argument, see: Merold Westphal, ‘Hegel and the Reformation’, in *History and System: Hegel’s Philosophy of History*, ed. by Robert L. Perkins (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984) pp.73-92 (p.80).

²⁴⁷ In Cognition and Volition “the Idea itself is only a sought-after beyond” (WL2 548/824), the absolute unity of both sides is not reached.

“given”, a “reality that exists independently of the subjective positing” (WL2 545/821). Also, of Luther’s Reformation, Hegel admonishes that the “content of the truth” is something “given and revealed by religion” (VG 523/441f.). The problem here is that by accepting the given, objective reality, one does not make it identical to subjectivity, but merely turns it into an accepted objectivity. It is still different from the subject, but is accepted. Hegel thus implies that only when objectivity is not simply “given” to, but stems from, the subject – as proposed in Volition – can this objectivity be truly identical to the subject. But Volition is deficient too, because the will realising itself in reality never attains the recognition that it has been realised, that reality as it is given is like the will and does not need to be substituted by a new reality arising out of the will. Reality always remains a “barrier” to be overcome by the will, something the will takes to be “null” and worthless (WL2 545/821). “Hence it is the will itself that alone stands in the way of attainment of its goal, for it separates itself from cognition and external reality” (WL2 545/821). Hegel’s famous criticism of the French Revolution is, of course, also that it is purely destructive and never happy with external reality, never cognising it as what the will had wanted, constantly imposing something new (PR §5A). More precisely, Hegel supposes that the individuals participating in the French Revolution did not have a stable and clearly defined content which they wanted to realise in reality. If I do not know what I want or what I want constantly changes, it can never be realised and I can never reach the recognition that the reality is now as I wanted it to be. In Hegel’s eyes, Volition therefore lacks Cognition of reality as being identical to subjectivity.

“The absolute Idea, as it has shown itself to be the identity of the theoretical and practical idea, each of which is by itself still one-sided” (WL2 548/824). How can the two principles be united? If Hegel was saying that I must both accept the given reality and create a new one, this would be impossible, a bad contradiction. I may choose what reality should be like, but I shall choose the given reality. This is not what Hegel proposes. Rather, Hegel is

saying that we are free to create a reality as we want it, but we have to know what we want and how we want it to be. He does not say that we should accept any given reality. Rather, he supposes that we must want something, we must want society to exist in a specific form and recognise it if it exists in this way. We cannot arbitrarily and incessantly decide and change what reality should be like. If you do not know what you want, and if you are not constant in wanting it (because you want it for a good reason), it can never be realised. The two insights Hegel wants to integrate are thus as follows: (1) we shall not simply accept a given reality, that is, reality must stem from our wills; and (2) we must want something concrete, and when it is realised, we must want this reality.

Hegel's integration of both elements consists in the proposition that since we need to make a decision on how society should be, we should take the structure of our own will as a guideline. We should will the structure of free willing, and will it to be realised. Hegel says about European spirit: "The Germanic spirit is the spirit of the new world, whose aim is the realisation of [...] the infinite self-determination of freedom, that freedom, which has its own absolute form itself as a content" (VG 413/341). In a very similar wording, Hegel writes about the absolute Idea: "thus the logical Idea has itself as the infinite form for its content" (WL2 550/825). Cognition has something else as its content, the given external reality. The Idea of Volition proposes that reality shall be like the subject, but this subjective will does not know what to want. Only if the content is subjectivity itself, which is then externally realised, can subjectivity and objectivity become integrated to form the absolute Idea. Only if the will knows and wants its own form, the form of free willing, can it accept reality if it displays this specific form, while at the same time knowing itself as the source of this reality and in accordance with it. Hegel describes "our world" (the world of his contemporaries) as "the realm of the will, that brings itself into existence" (VG 524/442). Hegel does not explicitly say what he means by spirit and the will in these sentences. But since spirit becoming self-conscious and self-willing consisted in individuals

collectively thinking about and determining their world, it may be supposed that it is again those collective individuals that now come to will the form of free willing, that it be realised in a social order.

The type of freedom of individuals is thus not that of arbitrarily constructing their world, although they are indeed free to do so, but Hegel would regard this as a failure to realise true freedom. Rather, true freedom consists in wanting a system to be in place that is the freest social order. Hegel says in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* introducing the absolute Idea: “the good has been reached”, the “objective world is in and for itself the Idea, and yet, at the same time, eternally posits itself as the purpose and produces its reality through its activity” (E1 §235). There is still the element of Volition present, the production of reality, but not in the sense that I destroy and rebuild reality in order to prove myself as its producer. Rather, social reality already has the form of the Idea. And individuals know it as their own production, and want to ensure with their activity that it continues to have the form of freedom. The particular modern form of freedom added to earlier forms is that the modern state is “with itself” in individuals and their actions, in the sense that it is self-conscious, with individuals collectively reflecting on and willing their social interactions; and this is also precisely the particular modern freedom of individuals. In Ancient Greece, individuals and consequently the state lacked this element of reflection, and in ancient Rome there was critical and conscious reflection on society, but society was not actually in accordance with the individual wills and interests, and therefore also not recognised as such. Now, freedom truly has the form of “being with oneself in the other”, since society and other individuals are consciously known as distinct from the individual, partly independent from her, and yet she also has a certain control over society by participating in law-making and can express and ensure her own particular interest through the estates.

Conclusion

At the end of the *Philosophy of History*, Hegel does not explicate how exactly the modern European state – in the broad sense of the entire social order – displays the complete form of free willing and the logical Idea. But since the European state, just as the logical Idea, is supposed to contain all earlier stages, the answer can be deduced from the historical development as Hegel depicts it. Political rule cannot consist in the rule of someone over someone else, and it cannot take its content, the decisions made, from outside the community, out of somebody's individual mind. This is the lesson from ancient China, where the state failed to be realised in citizens because it was not the latter's thinking that was being enacted. One might speculate that the monarch is what is positively retained from China in the European state, symbolising and safeguarding the unity of one single state, as in China. Furthermore, individuals should experience the direct social unity in the family, and the state should integrate this element of organic relations, namely, in coordination of interest in the estates assembly. This is the element appropriated from Ancient Greece. But individuals must also know themselves as different from society, as they did in the Roman Empire. This aspect of developing one's own individual reasoning and interests is present in civil society in the modern state. Lastly, not only individuals but also the state itself must display the form of self-consciousness and free willing; it shall be an organic and self-reflective system. Through the Reformation, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, individuals come to realise that the state must have the form of willing itself, there being a collective subject knowing and willing society and ensuring this basic rational and mutually beneficial organic structure of the state.

This narrative shows that the freedom of the state necessitates the free participation of individuals. The state can be “with itself” in individuals, existing in their thinking, expressing its unity in their coherent and mutually beneficial interaction, and be self-conscious and self-willing, only on account of the participation of individuals, because they

collectively know and will their social relations in the legislative. As such, they know and demand their particular benefits in the estates assembly and they freely want and accept the state order. The state “being with itself” in its other, namely, individuals, implies that the individuals are also with themselves in the state, collectively managing the state affairs, making their egoistic demands to it, and rationally and reflectively accepting its basic structure.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have argued that Hegel's entire *Logic* discusses different forms of "being with oneself in the other", which he later defines as freedom. Hegel's *Logic* is an ontology that inquires into the basic structure underlying everything. Hegel supposes that this structure must involve a whole and its elements. Throughout the *Logic*, he therefore analyses different possible relations between finite things, and between finite things and the absolute, which, as I have argued, all display some form of being with oneself in the other, or freedom. My thesis thus explicates the *Logic* on the basis of one principle only, namely, "being with oneself in the other", or freedom. In doing so, the thesis shows that the different forms of freedom implicitly discussed in the *Logic* also feature in Hegel's social philosophy. This enables a more precise understanding of the different forms of freedom discussed in Hegel's social philosophy and explains the link between *Logic* and *Philosophy of Right*.

In fact, my study implies that Hegel's philosophy can be understood as a philosophy of freedom in an even stronger sense than has been previously proposed. Since Hegel's *Logic*, as an ontology, analyses increasingly complete forms of free relations between elements, Hegel is implicitly proposing that the very ontological basis of all reality is *freedom*. Additionally, one key insight of this study is that "being with oneself in the other" is not only a relation between individuals, but is also a relation to the social whole for Hegel, as it is indeed throughout the *Logic*. Hardly any commentators mention this second relation of freedom, and when they do so, it is with a critical connotation, suspecting an authoritarian tendency. Michael Theunissen notes, for example, that in this vertical relation to the state, love and recognition means "condescension"²⁴⁸ and the knowledge of one's given task,²⁴⁹

²⁴⁸ Theunissen, *Sein und Schein*, p. 43.

²⁴⁹ Theunissen, 'Die verdrängte Intersubjektivität in Hegels Philosophie des Rechts', p. 329

respectively. For Theunissen, the relevant figure of thought here is simply “being with oneself”, that is, being without any other.²⁵⁰ Also, Axel Honneth worries that in the “vertical relation” to the state, the term recognition seems to denote only passive acceptance.²⁵¹ I have shown in this study not only that the relation to the social whole, and in particular the collective reflection on our own social relations, is one key characteristic of Hegel’s conception of freedom, but also that it can be defended against its critics. Any interpersonal relation acquires a certain pattern of its own, an objective element, and Hegel simply supposes that this pattern must be made the object of collective reflection in the estates assembly. This moment of collective subjectivity is meant to ensure that social relations remain organic and mutually beneficial. Rather than artificially supposing equality and direct uninterested interactions between individuals, Hegel admits that individuals have different social roles and that there is an objective, predetermined element to their relations. Yet, social interactions should be mutually beneficial, and Hegel supposes that there must be institutions to oversee this.

In this thesis, I have presented a new and systematic reading of the *Philosophy of Right*, analysing all spheres of the state as different forms of “being with oneself in the other”, paralleling different parts of the *Logic*. My interpretation resembles Neuhouser’s in some aspects. Like Neuhouser, I focus on the holism of Hegel’s state theory and argue that the freedom of the social whole does not contradict the freedom of individuals. However, Neuhouser proposes that the state is self-determining, and, additionally, since it is made up of human beings, it must also accommodate their nature as thinking and free beings.²⁵² This happens, according to Neuhouser, on the basis of human beings having been granted the status of a legal person, and in morality.²⁵³ Neuhouser thus ultimately views the freedom of the state as a self-legislating whole, as something beside the freedom of individuals and

²⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 333.

²⁵¹ Honneth, *Leiden an Unbestimmtheit*, p. 125f.

²⁵² Neuhouser, *Foundations of Hegel’s Social Theory*, p. 130.

²⁵³ Ibid., p. 131.

their self-interested acts as persons and their private reasoning in morality. By contrast, my argument has been that the organicism, subjectivity and freedom of the state consist in individuals relating in a organic way, and them knowing and willing their own social relations. The freedom of the whole systematically includes that of individuals – this, I have argued, can be bolstered with Hegel’s *Logic*, since the organism and subjectivity are logical categories. Neuhouser’s reading misses the fact that the self-differentiation of the whole,²⁵⁴ and it having the structure of the Concept, coincides with individuals’ relating to one another according to their own particular characters and interests.

On the subject of possible further avenues of research, my analysis of the *Logic* may serve to address the vexed question of *dialectics*. The structure of a relation of identity and difference, “being with oneself in the other”, is, I believe, also the basic structure which Hegel calls dialectics. I am unable to develop this speculative thesis here, but I will sketch out the assumptions on which it is based in addition to some possible implications that may be worth investigating: (1) Dialectics denotes a structure, not only or primarily a method. Indeed, Hegel is adamant that the dialectical method serves to reveal the dialectical structure of reality. Hegel says in this vein: “Dialectic is rather the proper and true nature of determinations of the understanding, of things and of the finite in general” (E1 §81). “It [dialectic] is nothing different from its object or content” (WL1,12 22). (2) Dialectic is a structure in which two elements are distinct or opposites, but yet also somehow identified. Hegel defines dialectic as the “grasping of what is opposed in its unity” (WL1,12 24). In abstract terms, the so-called triad step of dialectics can be called position, negation, and double negation, which can be translated as follows: (i) one unified single whole or claim; (ii) the relation of difference or contradiction within this whole or against this claim; and (iii) the overcoming [*aufgehoben*] of this contradiction, uniting the contradictory elements

²⁵⁴ Neuhouser says the important self-differentiation of the state is the one into the three spheres, abstract right, morality and ethical life, see: *ibid.*, p.127.

into a differentiated whole or more complex claim (i.e. *Aufhebung*). These three aspects of identity, difference, and differentiated unity, are also present in the formula “being with oneself in the other”, and certainly in many logical versions of it. (3) If “being with oneself in the other” is indeed the topic of the entire *Logic* as well as forming the basic structure of dialectics, then the latter must be understood as having an ontological status. Indeed, I believe it could be argued that all reality is in some way dialectical for Hegel. He thus accords to dialectics such a foundational status. (4) If “being with oneself in the other” is the basic form of dialectics and also that of freedom, this implies that dialectics and freedom are closely linked. If a dialectical whole fails to be established, that is to say, if the contradiction or difference prevails, then this would imply a lack of freedom. At least in Hegel’s social philosophy, this does indeed seem to make sense and could also be a useful basis for understanding Marx’s and Adorno’s appropriation of Hegelian dialectics, on the grounds that they do not believe in the reconciled dialectical whole.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁵ I have already inquired into the connection between Hegel and Adorno and their views on a reconciled whole, without, however, explicitly talking about dialectics or “being with oneself in the other”. See: Baumann, ‘Hegel, Adorno and the Concrete Universal’.

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Appendix

List of passages quoted from Hegel

This is a list of the German original of all indented quotations from Hegel used in the thesis.

Chapter 1

(1) Als Sein ist das Fürsichsein einfache Beziehung auf sich, und als Dasein ist dasselbe bestimmt; diese Bestimmtheit ist dann aber nicht mehr die endliche Bestimmtheit des Etwas in seinem Unterschied vom Anderen, sondern die unendliche, den Unterschied in sich als aufgehoben enthaltende Bestimmtheit. (E1 §96A)

(2) Das Eins bezieht sich auf sich, auf Eins, diese Beziehung ist aber Negation; das Eins ist selbst das, sich auf sich zu beziehen, das ist die Repulsion des Eins, Setzen der vielen Eins. (VL 123)

(3) Was sich als von ihm unterschieden vorhanden zeigt, ist sein eigenes Selbstbestimmen; dessen Einheit mit sich, so als unterschieden von sich, ist zur Beziehung herabgesetzt. (WL1 183)

(4) Das Absolute als Indifferenz hat [... den] Mangel [...], daß die Bestimmtheit des Unterschieds nicht durch dasselbe determiniert ist, wie es daran den ersten hat, daß die Unterschiede an ihm nur überhaupt hervortreten, d.i. das Setzen desselben etwas Unmittelbares, nicht seine Vermittlung mit sich selbst ist. (WL1 449)

(5) Aber das Wesen ist Insichsein, es ist wesentlich, nur insofern es das Negative seiner in ihm selbst, die Beziehung-auf-Anderes, die Vermittlung in ihm selbst hat. Es hat daher das Unwesentliche als seinen eigenen Schein in sich. (E1 §114)

(6) Das Wesen [...] ist die Beziehung auf sich selbst, nur indem sie Beziehung auf Anderes ist, das aber unmittelbar nicht als Seiendes, sondern als ein Gesetztes und Vermitteltes ist. (E1 §112)

(7) Etwas ist, es scheint in Anderes, diese Beziehung auf Anderes kommt ihm selber zu, es ist in sich als Grund reflektiert. (VL 148)

(8) Allerdings ist der Begriff als Form zu betrachten, allein als unendliche, schöpferische Form, welche die Fülle alles Inhalts in sich beschließt und zugleich aus sich entläßt. (E1 §160)

(9) Der Begriff [ist] die Totalität, also in seiner Allgemeinheit oder rein identischen Beziehung auf sich selbst wesentlich das Bestimmen und Unterscheiden [...] diese Form seiner Identität mit sich, [die] alle Momente durchdringt und in sich faßt. (WL2 273)

(10) [D]ie Idee hat [...] in [ihrer] Subjektivität zugleich das Moment eines Objekts; die Idee tritt daher hier in die Gestalt des Selbstbewußtseins. (WL2 545)

Chapter 2

(11) In Ansehung der in diesem und in den folgenden Paragraphen der Einleitung angegebenen Momente des Begriffes des Willens, welche das Resultat jener Prämisse sind, kann sich übrigens zum Behuf des Vorstellens auf das Selbstbewußtsein eines jeden berufen werden. Jeder wird zunächst in sich finden, von allem, was es sei, abstrahieren zu können, und ebenso sich selbst bestimmen, jeden Inhalt durch sich in sich setzen zu können (PR §4A).

(12) Das erste von aller Bestimmung mich los zu machen, das zweite alle Bestimmung zu setzen. Diese zwei Bestimmungen wird jeder Mensch in seinem Selbstbewußtsein finden, es ist die Freiheit. Der Mensch erscheint nun als ein Wesen voll Widersprüche, er ist der Widerspruch selbst (VRP4 118).

(13) Der Wille enthält α) das Element der reinen Unbestimmtheit oder der reinen Reflexion des Ich in sich, in welcher jede Beschränkung, jeder durch die Natur, die Bedürfnisse, Begierden und Triebe unmittelbar vorhandene oder, wodurch es sei, gegebene und bestimmte Inhalt aufgelöst ist; die schrankenlose Unendlichkeit der *absoluten Abstraktion* oder *Allgemeinheit*, das reine Denken seiner selbst (PR §5).

(14) ... jeder Tätigkeit des Lebens, jedem Zweck, jeder Vorstellung zu entsagen. Auf diese Weise wird der Mensch zu Brahman: es ist kein Unterschied des endlichen Menschen und des Brahman mehr; jede Differenz ist vielmehr in dieser Allgemeinheit verschwunden (PR §5A).

(15) Ein Wille, der, wie im vorigen Paragraphen auseinandergesetzt ist, nur das abstrakt Allgemeine will, will nichts und ist deswegen kein Wille (PR §6A).

(16) β) Ebenso ist Ich das Übergehen aus unterschiedsloser Unbestimmtheit zur Unterscheidung, Bestimmen und Setzen einer Bestimmtheit als eines Inhalts und Gegenstands (PR §6).

(17) Hier in diesem § ist noch nicht das Beschließen, sondern bloß die Richtung des Willens auf etwas Besonderes. Vergleichen wir dieses Moment mit dem vorigen, so ist dies das Moment der Verendlichung des Ich (PRV21 44).

(18) Ich ist zuvörderst als solches reine Tätigkeit, das Allgemeine, das bei sich ist; aber dieses Allgemeine bestimmt sich, und insofern ist es nicht mehr bei sich, sondern setzt sich als ein Anderes und hört auf, das Allgemeine zu sein (PR §7A).

(19) Das Besondere, was der Wille will, ist eine Beschränkung, denn der Wille muß, um Wille zu sein, sich überhaupt beschränken. Daß der Wille etwas will, ist die Schranke, die Negation. Die Besonderung ist so das, was in der Regel Endlichkeit genannt wird (PR §6A).

(20) Die Freiheit liegt also weder in der Unbestimmtheit noch in der Bestimmtheit, sondern sie ist beides. [...] Freiheit ist, ein Bestimmtes zu wollen, aber in dieser Bestimmtheit bei sich zu sein und wieder in das Allgemeine zurückzukehren (PR §7A).

(21) Es liegt in ihr [der Person] diese Einheit des Unendlichen und schlechthin Endlichen, der bestimmten Grenze und des durchaus Grenzenlosen. Die Hoheit der Person ist es, welche diesen Widerspruch aushalten kann, den nichts Natürliches in sich hat oder ertragen könnte (PR §35A).

(22) Die Bewegung des Daseyns besteht darin, diese Grenze aus ihrer Aeusserlichkeit in sich hinein zu verlegen. Im Fürsichseyn ist diese Umkehrung vollendet (WL1,12 98).

(23) Die beschließende und unmittelbare Einzelheit der Person verhält sich zu einer vorgefundenen Natur, welcher hiermit die Persönlichkeit des Willens als ein Subjektives gegenübersteht, aber dieser, als in sich unendlich und allgemein, ist die Beschränkung, nur subjektiv zu sein, widersprechend und nichtig. Sie ist das Tätige, sie aufzuheben und sich Realität zu geben oder, was dasselbe ist, jenes Dasein als das ihrige zu setzen (PR §39).

(24) Ich bin nun das Thätige [...] diese Schranke abubrechen, und thue es nur, indem ich diese Schranke zu dem Meinigen mache, ihm die Fremdheit nehme, und in ihm bei mir bin. Dies ist dasselbe, als daß ich mir Realität gebe, die Subjektivität aufhebe, mich selbst zum Gegenständlichen mache (VPR3 198).

(25) [...] ist also erstens die eigene immanente Beziehung des EIns vorhanden; und zweitens, insofern sie negativ und das Eins seiendes zugleich ist, so stößt das Eins sich selbst von sich ab (WL1 187).

(26) Indem ich Person, die unendliche Beziehung meiner auf mich bin, bin ich die absolute Repulsion meiner von mir selbst, habe meine Realisirung nur in dem Seyn anderer Personen, und bin darin erst eine wirkliche Person für mich (E1,17 §405).

(27) c) Der Wille als (a) in seiner Beziehung auf sich, nicht von einer anderen Person (b), sondern in sich selbst unterschieden, ist er, als *besonderer Wille* von sich als *an und für sich seiendem* verschieden und entgegengesetzt, *Unrecht* und *Verbrechen* (PR §40).

Chapter 4

(28) Das Eine des Sollens also ist das Verhältniß des subjektiven Willens zum Begriff, und das Andere ist das Verhältnis des subjektiven Willens zum Objektiven Äußerlichen (VRP3 339).

(29) [D]as Gute beruht auf dem Wesen des Willens. Jenes ist nur formell, und diese Übereinstimmung mit sich [...] Das Gute ist so auch diese Übereinstimmung mit sich (PRV21 139).

(30) Das unendliche Selbstbestimmen [...] [w]eil es in diesem seinem ersten Hervortreten am einzelnen Willen noch nicht als identisch mit dem Begriffe des Willens gesetzt ist, so ist der moralische Standpunkt der Standpunkt des *Verhältnisses* und des *Sollens* oder der *Forderung* (PR §108).

(31) Aber indem das Unterscheiden im Scheinen oder Vermitteln enthalten ist, das Unterschiedene aber im Unterschiede von derjenigen Identität, aus der es kommt und in der es [...] als Schein liegt, selbst die Form der Identität erhält, so ist dasselbe so in der Weise der sich auf sich beziehenden Unmittelbarkeit (E1 §114).

(32) Das Ziel ist, daß dieser subjective Wille identisch werde mit dem Begriff des Willens; an sich ist er identisch damit. Der subjective Wille ist [...] ganz identisch mit sich, rein für sich, aber eben indem er dies ist, so ist er diese Identität mit sich, welche der Begriff ist. An sich ist der Begriff des subjectiven Willens und des Willens an sich <identisch> (PRV21 105).

(33) Der erste Bruch der Handlung ist der des Vorgesetzten und des Daseienden und Vorgebrachten, der zweite Bruch ist zwischen dem, was äußerlich als allgemeiner Wille da ist, und der innerlichen besonderen Bestimmung, die ich ihm gebe; das Dritte endlich ist, daß die Absicht auch der allgemeine Inhalt sei. Das Gute ist die Absicht, erhoben zu dem Begriffe des Willens (PR §118).

(34) Aber das Gute und Rechte ist auch ein solcher nicht bloß natürlicher, sondern durch meine Vernünftigkeit gesetzter Inhalt; meine Freiheit, zum Inhalt meines Willens gemacht, ist eine reine Bestimmung meiner Freiheit selbst (PR §121A).

Chapter 5

(35) Liebe heißt überhaupt das Bewußtsein meiner Einheit mit einem anderen, so daß ich für mich nicht isoliert bin, sondern mein Selbstbewußtsein nur als Aufhebung meines Fürsichseins gewinne und durch das Mich-Wissen, als der Einheit meiner mit dem anderen und des anderen mit mir (PR §158A).

(36) Das Objekt ist daher der absolute Widerspruch der vollkommenen Selbständigkeit des Mannigfaltigen und der ebenso vollkommenen Unselbständigkeit der Unterschiedenen (E1 §194).

(37) Die Gewalt gegen ein Objekt ist [...] Fremdes für dasselbe. Die Macht wird dadurch zur Gewalt, daß sie, eine objektive Allgemeinheit, mit der Natur des Objekts identisch ist, aber ihre Bestimmtheit oder Negativität nicht dessen eigene negative Reflexion-in-sich ist (WL2 420).

(38) Der in seinem Mittel tätige Zweck muß daher nicht als ein Äußerliches das unmittelbare Objekt bestimmen, somit dieses durch sich selbst zur Einheit des Begriffes zusammengehen (WL2 451).

(39) Alle Glieder [sind] sich gegenseitig momentane *Mittel* wie momentane Zwecke (E1 §216).

(40) [E]s ist nicht in der unorganischen Form von Einzelnen als solchen (auf demokratische Weise des Wählens), sondern als organische Momente, als Stände, daß sie in jenen Anteil eintreten; eine Macht oder Tätigkeit im Staate muß nie in formloser, unorganischer Gestalt, d.i. aus dem Prinzip der Vielheit und der Menge erscheinen und handeln (E3 §544).

(41) Der konkrete Staat ist das in seine besonderen Kreise gegliederte Ganze; das Mitglied des Staates ist ein Mitglied eines solchen Standes; nur in dieser seiner objektiven Bestimmung kann es im Staate in Betracht kommen (PR §308).

(42) Der Staat ist die Wirklichkeit der sittlichen Idee - der sittliche Geist, als der offenbare, sich selbst deutliche, substantielle Wille, der sich denkt und weiß und das, was er weiß und insofern er es weiß, vollführt (PR §257).

Chapter 6

(43) China und Indien liegen gleichsam noch außer der Weltgeschichte, als die Voraussetzung der Momente, deren Zusammenschließung erst ihr lebendiger Fortgang wird. [...] die Substanz vermag [nicht], zur Reflexion in sich, zur Subjektivität zu gelangen (VG 147).

(44) [E]s ist nichts am Endlichen, was ihm einen Unterschied gegen das Absolute erhalten könnte; es ist ein Medium, das von dem, was durch es scheint, absorbiert wird (WL2 190).

(45) [I]m Orient [...] ist das Hauptverhältnis dies, daß die eine Substanz als solche nur das Wahrhafte sei und das Individuum keinen Wert in sich habe und nicht gewinnen könne, insofern es sich erhält gegen das Anundfürsichseiende; es könne vielmehr nur wahrhaften Wert haben durch die Ineinssetzung mit dieser Substanz, worin es dann aufhört, als Subjekt zu sein, verschwindet ins Bewußtlose (VGP 40).

(46) Indem Spinoza fortgeht zum menschlichen Geiste, macht er zur Bestimmung, sich von der Knechtschaft zu befreien, und das sind die Affekte [...] menschliche Freiheit besteht darin in der Liebe Gottes, das ist die Richtung des Geistes auf die eine Substanz, alles Besondere verzehrt sich (VL 168).

(47) Von dieser Bestimmung der Substanz muß aber zum Subjekt übergegangen werden, worin der Mensch frei ist. Das Empörende ist die Bestimmung der spinozischen Substanz, daß der Mensch sich nur als Akzidens betrachten solle (VL 168).

(48) Die Menschen ehren das Göttliche an und für sich, aber zugleich als ihre Tat, ihr Erzeugnis und ihr Dasein: so erhält das Göttliche seine Ehre vermittels der Ehre des Menschlichen und das Menschliche vermittels der Ehre des Göttlichen (VG294).

(49) Dies ist der elementarische Charakter des griechischen Geistes, [...] daß die Bildung von selbständigen Individualitäten ausgeht, von einem Zustand, in dem die Einzelnen auf sich stehen und nicht schon durch das Naturband patriarchalisch von Hause aus vereint sind, sondern sich erst in einem anderen Medium, in Gesetz und geistiger Sitte, zusammentun (VG 278f.).

(50) Er muß bei der Hauptverhandlung gegenwärtig sein; er muß an der Entscheidung als solcher teilnehmen, nicht durch die einzelne Stimme bloß, sondern im Drang des Bewegens und Bewegtwerdens, indem die Leidenschaft und das Interesse des ganzen Mannes dareingelegt [...] Die Einsicht, zu der sich alle bekehren sollen, muß durch Erwärmung der Individuen vermittels der Rede hervorgebracht werden (VG 312).

(51) [I]n ihr [der griechischen Freiheit] ist der individuelle Wille in seiner ganzen Lebendigkeit frei und nach seiner Besonderheit die Betätigung des Substantiellen (VG 307).

(52) [E]s ist lebendiger allgemeiner Geist, der zugleich der selbstbewußte Geist der einzelnen Individuen ist (VG 306).

(53) Diese griechische Sittlichkeit [...] ist dennoch nicht der höchste Standpunkt des geistigen Selbstbewußtseins; es fehlt ihr die unendliche Form, eben jene Reflexion des

Denkens in sich [...] die Unendlichkeit des Selbstbewußtseins, daß, was mir als Recht und Sittlichkeit gelten soll, sich in mir, aus dem Zeugnisse meines Geistes bestätige (VG 323).

(54) Solcher Zustand ist jetzt das römische Leben: auf der einen Seite das Fatum und die abstrakte Allgemeinheit der Herrschaft, auf der anderen die individuelle Abstraktion, die Person (VG 384).

(55) Es ist der Stolz der Einzelnen, absolut zu gelten als Privatpersonen; [...] aber [...] die Ausbildung des Privatrechts, welches dieses hohe Prinzip einführte, war mit der Verwesung des politischen Lebens verbunden (VG 384).

(56) Gehorsam gegen die Staatsgesetze, als gegen die Vernunft [...] In diesem Gehorsam gehört der Mensch nur seinem allgemeinen Wesen, das seine eigene Vernünftigkeit ist (PG 206).