Hegel and the Language of Philosophy

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HEGEL AND THE LANGUAGE OF PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract: *Hegel and the Language of Philosophy*

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This dissertation attempts to give an account of philosophical language in Hegel, with particular emphasis on his claim that a philosophical exposition must be living and self-moving. Since Hegel did not provide an extended, thematized account of philosophical language, my primary approach is to take the resources of his thought in general and attempt to construct an account which is consistent with his philosophy as a whole. Thus, a large portion of this dissertation is not directly about philosophical language, but about other determinations such as becoming, indifference, contradiction, life, the understanding, reason, etc., which lay the groundwork for discussing philosophical language in the final chapter.

As a preface to all of this, however, I devote Part I of the dissertation to an investigation of Hegel's view of how one should go about comprehending philosophical determinations, i.e., those things which are the subject matter of philosophy (e.g., the determination 'plant' but not 'poison ivy'; the determination 'art' but not 'Flemish Baroque painting'). Chapter 1 deals with his critique of the formalistic approach which attempts to comprehend things by 'applying' categories to them (e.g., applying 'thinking' and 'animal' to comprehend 'human being'). In Chapter 2 I discuss Hegel's alternate view of comprehension, describing this view in terms of the idea of 'expression': later categories in his encyclopedia are comprehended not by *applying* earlier ones to them, but by grasping the later ones as developmental *expressions of* the earlier ones. Thus, expression is not only a linguistic but also an *ontological* category, a point which is investigated in more concrete detail in Chapter 3 through a close reading of the statement

"being and nothing are one and the same." As it turns out, this *linguistic* expression of being plays an essential role in being's *ontological* expression and development.

In Part II, I explore the logical determinations of 'mechanism' and 'life' in the *Science of Logic*. To set the stage for this, Chapter 4 gives an account of the relation of 'indifference' (present between the 'parts' of a whole) and the relation of 'reciprocity' (present between the 'moments' of a whole). These two kinds of relations allow us in Chapter 5 to see more clearly why Hegel views the logical determination of mechanism as involving a movement of thought whose source is *external* to it, and the logical determination of life as involving *self*-movement and *self*-determination. To further clarify what Hegel means by calling philosophical thought 'living,' I discuss what he might mean by the word 'movement' in the *Logic*, along with his view of the relation between becoming, contradiction, and self-movement.

In Part III I argue that, regarding the logical determinations of mechanism and life, the former finds particularly vivid expression in the operations of the *understanding* and its '*ordinary* language' (Chapter 6), while the latter finds such expression in the operations of *reason* and its '*philosophical* language' (Chapter 7). The faculty of the understanding, whose nature it is to have objects standing over against it (*Gegenstände*) and to operate according to the category of *formal* identity, is characterized by finitude and abstract thinking. As such, the ordinary language which it produces is characterized by these same qualities. This entails a.) that this language is incapable of expressing the *interdependence* of identity and difference, b.) that it thus views the copula ('is') as containing merely formal identity, and c.) that it tends to define its words in abstraction from each other. Another result of ordinary language being produced by the

understanding is that it is incapable of providing a genuinely philosophical account of anything, insofar as such an account requires a level of self-reflexivity which the faculty of the understanding, in isolation, renders impossible.

The faculty of reason, on the other hand, both includes the understanding (with its abstracting powers) and goes beyond it, particularly in its rejection of identity as merely formal (i.e., identity as independent of difference). Crucially, it is this rejection which allows reason to comprehend the dissolutions of the *contradictory* logical determinations which move thinking forward. Directed not toward 'objects' but toward its own self, the goal of reason is self-knowledge via the concrete experience of thinking through its own thinking, a 'thinking through' which is necessary and self-moving insofar as its internal contradictions propel it down one (and only one) logical path. The language of reason – philosophical language – is an essential part of this process.

Philosophical language, *qua* language, possesses a *contingent* dimension, e.g., the way the words sound and the letters are shaped. But this contingency, I argue, does not compromise philosophical language's ability to mediate the non-contingent nature of philosophical thought; for, the nature of logic is that it can reach its full expression only through the determinations of spirit, and all such determinations (with the exception of philosophy itself) *necessarily* contain contingencies. Philosophical language belongs not to the logical sphere (i.e., the sphere which is wholly 'within itself' and *thus* wholly necessary), but rather to the spiritual one (i.e., the human realm). As a result, this language *must* possess contingent dimensions, for it is precisely its '*not*-being-within-itself' which allows it to be *other* to the realm of logic, and thus to be its expression.

In contrast to ordinary language, philosophical language is able to give expression to the interdependence of identity and difference, and to create the meaning of its words not as isolated 'parts' but rather as 'moments' which depend on the meanings of *all the other* words which it has generated. Because of this, philosophical language engages in a continual *diaeresis* (division) and *synagoge* (collection) of its meanings, splitting the meaning of a term into an opposed meaning which contradicts the previous one and leads to a new word with a new meaning, containing the remnants of the previous ones. This dialectical process is a *living* one insofar as the oppositions and contradictions which move the exposition forward are immanent to the exposition itself. Operating throughout the entire encyclopedia (*Science of Logic*, *Philosophy of Nature*, *Philosophy of Spirit*), the self-moving linguistic *diaeresis* and *synagoge* reaches its conclusion in the final definition, that of the term 'philosophy,' thereby bringing together in one word the living remains of the meanings of all prior determinations.

Because philosophy and philosophical language constitutively determine one another, neither can be, or be comprehended, apart from the other. In Hegel's view, although one is *doing* philosophy from the very first words of the *Science of Logic*, one can only *account for* philosophy at the 1,500-page encyclopedia's very end; my claim is that, in the same way, although one is *using* philosophical language from the very beginning, one can only *account for* this language at the very end. Philosophical language receives its determinateness from philosophy, and vice versa. As a result, only at the encyclopedia's end can one fully comprehend what one has been doing and saying for the last 1,500 pages.

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INTRODUCTION

> But those who speak this speech [that all things are in motion] must set down some different language, since now at least they don't have the words for their own hypothesis…. ~ *Theaetetus* 183B

1. The Difficulty with Hegel

Because G.W.F. Hegel is likely more notorious than any other philosopher for the difficulty and density of his language, I would like to ask why he uses the sort of language that he does. I would also like to ask what sort of language he believes philosophy needs to use. To this end, this dissertation will focus on philosophical language in Hegel with a particular emphasis on one issue, his claim that a philosophical exposition must be living and self-moving.

One approach I will use to talk about philosophical language in Hegel's thought will be to provide commentary on what he explicitly says about the issue. However, since he did not provide an extended account of this sort of language, the primary approach I will use will be to take the resources of his thought in general and attempt to construct an account which is consistent with his philosophy as a whole. Thus, a large portion of this dissertation will not be directly about philosophical language, but about other determinations such as becoming, indifference, reciprocity, life, the understanding, etc. When these other matters have been worked through, important groundwork will have been laid for discussing philosophical language in the final chapter. There, I will argue that the proper place within Hegel's encyclopedia for an account of philosophical

language is in the "Philosophy" section at the very end of the *Philosophy of Spirit*.[1] That is, my claim is that an account of philosophical language belongs within the category of philosophy itself, the final section of Hegel's account of both spirit and the whole. Briefly put, I make this claim because I believe that the language which philosophy uses to think itself is a kind of language which is essentially and constitutively determined by its relation to philosophy, and which therefore cannot be comprehended apart from this relation. In Hegel's view, although one is *doing* philosophy from the very first words of the *Science of Logic*, one can only *account for* philosophy at the encyclopedia's very end; I will argue that, in the same way, although one is *using* philosophical language from the very beginning, one can only *account for* this language at the end. Philosophical language becomes the sort of entity that it is through philosophy, and likewise philosophy is not possible without philosophical language. As a result, only at the encyclopedia's end can one fully comprehend what one has been using and doing for the last 1,500 pages.

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To open this investigation, we can begin with what is probably the first thing we notice when we read Hegel's own philosophical language, viz., its extraordinary difficulty. So as to have an example of his manner of writing directly before us, we can consider this description of nature from the opening of the *Philosophy of Nature*: "Since [in nature] the *idea* is as the negative of itself or is *external to itself*, nature is not external simply relative to this idea…rather, the *externality* constitutes the determination in which

[1] I will use the word 'encyclopedia' to refer to Hegel's philosophical thought as a whole.

nature is as nature."[2] This passage is a fairly typical one for Hegel in the sense that, while consisting easily recognizable words, the syntax is so foreign to that of everyday expression that most readers must read it two or three (or more) times merely to grasp the way that the words fit together, much less to understand the meaning. What is it, then, about this mode of expression that makes it so counterintuitive to ordinary thinking, and why does Hegel tend to put words together in such a peculiar way?

In addition to the dense and winding syntax of his philosophical language, a further challenge in reading Hegel is the fact that the individual words which he uses often have several different meanings. Some words, in fact, have *many* meanings, a fact that can be attested to by anyone who has ever wondered what Hegel means by "reason" or "spirit." Indeed, one might be justified in supposing that the more crucial a term is for Hegel, the more meanings it will carry. The way in which his words shift about in their meanings and generally refuse to stand still often leaves the reader not only puzzled about just which meaning is currently being intended, but about whether Hegel is even being consistent with his own terminology.

The collective effect of winding syntax and shifting meanings can at times lead to the sense that Hegel's language is nothing less than nonsensical. Take, for instance, this description of spatial movement in the *Science of Logic*: "External, sensuous motion itself is contradiction's immediate existence. Something moves, not because at one moment it is here and at another there, but because at one and the same moment it is here

[2] G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften II* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1978), §247, my translation. Hereafter, referred to as "*Philosophy of Nature*."

and not here, because in this 'here,' it at once is and is not."[3] It is due to passages such as this one that, for the last several hundred years, commentators as diverse as Kierkegaard and Schopenhauer and Russell have launched harsh critiques against Hegel, critiques ranging from those claiming to demonstrate the invalidity of Hegel's philosophy, to those claiming that demonstrating this would not even be worth the effort. Even when one is fully willing to engage Hegel in a serious way, one finds oneself regularly faced with passages which – even when one seems to have grasped both the words and the syntax – appear to defy comprehension.

In light of all of the above, readers new and not-so-new to Hegel can reasonably pose the question: does Hegel actually need to use such a crowded, twisting, shifting form of expression to convey what he has in mind? If yes, why? If no, why would he not use a clearer mode of writing? It seems likely that the answers to these questions will have some bearing on how we receive what this strange user of language has to say about philosophical language itself.

a. General Reasons for Being Difficult

When authors use an extremely challenging form of expression, a form largely opaque to the everyday reader, the decision to do so could arise for a number of reasons. One would be that such authors wish to conceal what they think from a certain sort of reader, either because they believe that the ideas would be harmful to these readers, or because they believe that the readers, upon reading the ideas, could be harmful to the authors.

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[3] G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A.V. Miller (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1999), 440. Hereafter, *SL*.

Hegel was quite familiar with these kinds of motivation, as evidenced by his discussions of esotericism in his lectures on Plato and Aristotle.[4] While he does not deny that an author might obscure certain ideas from certain readers, he claims that no author can ultimately keep ideas concealed, "as if a philosopher were in possession of his thoughts like external things,"[5] or as if they could "keep them in their pockets."[6] Instead, he says that "[t]houghts are something totally different; conversely, it is the philosophical idea that owns the person."[7] Thus while an author might write in such a way as to conceal some ideas in the text from a particular audience, these ideas (if they are true) will, in Hegel's view, eventually make their way into the public sphere.[8] While never denying the possibility or the usefulness of a kind of 'local' and temporary esotericism, Hegel views the 'global' and permanent concealing of philosophical ideas as not only imprudent but impossible.

Yet Hegel is no radical egalitarian on these matters. His view that ideas cannot ultimately be bottled up does not prevent him from claiming that a person must possess a certain level of desire and motivation in order to grasp certain ideas. When ideas of great complexity are set forth, and even when the presentation is as clear as the subject matter will allow, some people will still not comprehend them. He expresses this point quite clearly in his lecture on Plato's *Sophist*: "The esoteric is the speculative, which, even though written and printed, is yet hidden from those who do not have the sufficient

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[4] e.g., *Lectures in the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 2, trans. E.S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 11-12, 68, 129 (see especially his critiques of Tennemann's interpretation of Plato).
[5] Ibid., pg. 11, my translation.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] both in theoretical and in practical (e.g., moral/social/political) terms.

interest to exert themselves. It is not a secret, and yet is hidden."[9] Hegel is thus claiming that the only 'hiddenness' inherent in philosophical ideas stems, not from the author's mode of presentation, but from the interplay between a lack of will in the reader and the complexity of the ideas themselves.

Another reason why authors in general might use a counterintuitive and 'inaccessible' style of writing is a variation on the above-mentioned desire to conceal their views, viz., the desire to make oneself appear more insightful than one actually is. Of course, this desire – one which generally springs from a person's desire for honor being greater than their desire for knowledge – is the root of what is often called sophistry.[10] Such authors are aware that obscurity can appear as profundity, and they express ideas in a convoluted manner with the intention of creating the impression of hidden depths just out of reach of the reader.[11] Those who succeed in this intention do indeed appear wise to a certain sort of reader, thereby gaining admiration they seek. But while the pejorative label of 'sophistry' is easy to use and easy to set up as standing over against philosophy, we can suspect from reading from Plato's *Sophist* that determining whether a particular author is a sophist or a philosopher is a task of the utmost difficulty; for, as this dialogue communicates, these two types of human beings tend to look more similar to each other than to nearly any other type of human being. So, for example, if Hegel is a sophist, it

[9] Ibid., pg. 68.
[10] Here I am using the everyday sense of the word "sophistry." In *Encyclopaedia Logic* §121, Hegel distinguishes that sense of the word from what he holds to be the essence of sophistry, namely, abstract and ground-less argumentation.
[11] An author might do this to appeal to the sort of human being whom Seneca describes in *On Tranquility* when he says, "…there are people who disdain anything within reach." A similar sort of person is described by Lucretius in *On the Nature of Things*: "For fools always have a greater admiration and liking for any idea that they see obscured in a mist of paradoxical language, and adopt as true what succeeds in prettily tickling their ears and is painted with a specious sound." (I.641-645)

seems that this could be determined only after a serious and extensive study of his thought.

Another reason authors might write in a relatively inaccessible style is that they are simply bad writers. In this scenario, as in the case of sophistry, the obscure might appear to be profound. Then again, it might simply appear to be obscure. Whatever the case, it is clear that the sole cause of an opaque style of writing might merely be a poor writing style, e.g., one which does not clearly indicate the relations between various clauses, or which uses cumbersome clauses where more straightforward ones would do. With respect to Hegel's particular manner of writing, this explanation seems the least likely of the options mentioned so far, given the entirely accessible, straightforward, and at times even eloquent nature of his 'popular' writings in newspapers and journals. The same qualities often appear in the Remarks and Additions in his philosophical writings. An example of the former would be his ironic and extremely funny essay "Who Thinks Abstractly?"; an example of the latter would be the Addition to his exposition of the qualitative syllogism in the *Encylopedia Logic*, where he illustrates the act of syllogizing with the example of a person waking up on a winter's morning and knowing that the ground has frozen overnight based on the particular creaking sounds of the carts passing by. While Hegel may not have had the refined prose of a Schelling or a Goethe, a casual reading of Hegel's writings which are not strictly philosophical reveals that he is fully capable of writing in a lucid and accessible style.

Unless Hegel is an esotericist or a sophist, it would thus seem safe to say that he uses the language he uses because he believes it is necessary to do so. Naturally, though, if

Hegel is in fact an esotericist or a sophist, he would not be a very proficient one if he made this obvious to his readers. Nor would any critiques he might give of esotericism and sophistry entail that he had not actually embraced one or the other, given that presenting such critiques would very likely be just what an esotericist or a sophist would do. But because this question is clearly not one that can be settled here in an Introduction, let us hold these possibilities in mind but place them off to the side, in order to consider a line of thinking about the possibility that Hegel uses the language he does for specific and necessary reasons.

b. What is *Hegel's* Reason for Being Difficult?

i. What the Language is About

One step in examining Hegel's reasons for being difficult would be to consider the possibility that the 'counterintuitiveness' of his philosophical language is a reflection of #1) the couterintuitiveness of what his language is *about*, and #2) the counterintuitiveness of what philosophical language in its own nature *is*. A particularly appropriate topic to address to shed light on both of these points is the issue of movement, for movement is not only one of the more fundamental topics about which philosophers speak, but is for Hegel an essential dimension of philosophical language *itself*, in its own existence. Let us then take up the issue of movement with regard to #1), i.e., what Hegel's philosophical language is about.

A cursory reading of the history of philosophy reveals that movement – whether movement in place or other kinds of movement – is one of the first great themes of philosophy, and also one of its most challenging. That the nature of movement is not

self-evident to 'common sense' can be seen in the fact that an intelligent and yet still accessible consideration of spatial movement can result in some very strange conclusions. Zeno's famous argument, for example, claims that the very idea of spatial movement is self-contradictory due to the impossibility of infinite divisibility, thus making movement impossible.[12] Whether one agrees with Zeno or not, what is clear is that when we consider serious attempts to explain whether spatial movement exists and, if so, *how* it exists, we find ourselves considering accounts which are anything but simple, anything but immediately intuitive to 'everyday common sense.' From Aristotle's efforts to refute Zeno by invoking *dynamis* and *energeia* in *Physics* Book VI, to modern physics' similar efforts against Zeno using ideas such as special relativity and the Lorentz covariance, comprehending spatial movement is certainly not immediately intuitive to common sense. We can think back, then, to Hegel's manner of writing in the lines where he describes spatial movement as involving what is "at one and the same moment...here and not here" and what "at once is and is not," and we can pose this question: 'Is this way of writing counterintuitive?' Yes. 'Generally speaking, does it appear to be more or less nonsensical?' Yes again. Yet, apparently, so does spatial movement itself to some very great minds, with the only difference being that Hegel's language *about* it appears nonsensical on the face of it, while spatial movement *itself* appears so (even if it, in the end, it is not so) after only a small amount of reflection. This suggests that accounting

[12] For what a Greek would call 'movement in place,' I will use the term 'spatial movement' simply for the sake of terminological consistency with Hegel, and in a non-technical sense. Thus, I do not intend this term to entail an abstracted Newtonian notion of space, one which, e.g., both Aristotle and Hegel would reject.

for fundamental philosophical issues (such as movement) which are not immediately amenable to everyday common sense may require modes of expression that follow suit.

ii. The Language Itself

Hegel does in fact hold that, to account for fundamental philosophical issues, it is at least sometimes necessary to use modes of expression which are not the most obliging to 'everyday thinking.' In speaking above about esotericism and about ideas being 'hidden,' we noted Hegel's view that there are ideas of such a kind that, even when they are presented as clearly as possible, will still not be immediately accessible to ordinary common sense. Connected with this claim is the idea that the *language* used to set forth such ideas is also not something immediately accessible to ordinary common sense.

On this score, Hegel has an interesting ally in the form of Immanuel Kant, who, in his *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, states, "There is no great trick to being commonly intelligible, if we give up the aim of achieving fundamental insights."[13] The pressure to be "commonly intelligible" – one exerted in increasingly greater intensity on Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment authors – was, in Kant's view, equivalent to the pressure to not deal substantially with what is most philosophically important. With egalitarian impulses gaining an increasing foothold in political and religious spheres, it is not difficult to see why Kant felt, and felt the need to resist, this pressure. And it is easy to imagine how, when a philosopher's language deals with something that common sense often *believes* to be readily understandable (such as movement), the tendency to place the

[13] *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Kant's Foundations of Ethics*, trans. Leo Rauch (Mills, MA: Agora Publications, 1995), 28.

blame on the philosopher's language – rather than on the object of investigation, or on one's own self – would be a relatively common event.

"In Accordance With"? Some Assistance from Socrates

Yet, the claim that philosophers should aim to speak in accordance with that about which they are speaking is by no means a revolutionary idea. Nor is it a very helpful one, given that the phrase 'in accordance with' is so general as to be nearly devoid of meaning. Two quite different conceptions of what one might mean by this phrase are well-illustrated by a quick comparison of the reasons why Kant's difficult passages are difficult when he writes 'in accordance with' his subject matter, and why Hegel's difficult passages are difficult when he does the same. Putting it very crudely, we could say that Kant is challenging to read because his explanations are *about* very complicated things (consciousness, knowledge, morality, etc.); Hegel, however, is challenging for the additional reason that the *mode* of his explanations is exceedingly difficult to comprehend. While the distinction between form and content here is one that may not be able to be sustained, it makes some sense to rephrase the above by talking about the difficulty of the *content* of Kant's language, and the additional difficulty of the *form* of Hegel's language. Of course, the form of Kant's language in, say, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, is no stroll through the park. But if, instead of using Kant's general form of writing to explain how the categories of the understanding make knowledge possible, one used it to explain how to build a desk, this explanation would still be a fairly straightforward one (even if the sentences would be half a page long). If, on the other hand, one were to use Hegel's form of philosophical language to explain how to build a

desk (which, of course, Hegel would not think one should do), the resulting explanation would likely be about as challenging as his explanation of essence as positing reflection. As to why this would be the case, we can assume that it has something to do with the above-mentioned strange syntax and shifting meanings of words within Hegel's philosophical language, insofar as these two characteristics appear to characterize 'formal' aspects of Hegel's writing.

But what would it mean for the *form* of language to be in accordance with what the language is about? Also, in some cases the form of language seems to determine what content *can* be communicated – e.g., it would seem difficult to give a full and precise account of human sexual reproduction by means of a Shakespearean sonnet. Thus it is not at all clear that the form and content of language can be fully separated in any other way than through an abstraction of thought.

What is clear, though, is that more specificity is needed about what it would mean for language to be 'in accordance with' its object. On this issue, as with practically all others, Plato proves extremely illuminating. In the *Theaetetus*, as Socrates and Theaetetus attempt to achieve knowledge of what knowledge is, they talk about how one would properly speak about movement and becoming, and Socrates voices the view that one must speak 'in accordance with nature.' In surveying the metaphysical views of the day, Socrates tells Theaetetus that, other than Parmenides, all those who are wise – e.g., Homer, Heraclitus, and Empedocles – assert that everything is in motion, and claim that "nothing ever is alone by itself" because "everything always becomes."[14] Because of

[14] *Theaetetus*, trans. Seth Benardete (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 152D-E.

these claims, these wise men make corresponding claims about how one must *speak*, saying, for example, that "'be' must be removed from everywhere,"[15] given that everything *becomes* and nothing in fact *is*. Socrates continues his description by saying,

> But we ought not, the wise men say, to permit the use of …'this' or 'that' or any other word that implies making things stand still, but in accordance with nature [*kata physin*] we should speak of things as 'becoming' and 'being made' and 'being destroyed' and 'changing'; for anyone who by his mode of speech makes things stand still is easily refuted.[16]

Thus we see these "wise men" claim that one must speak "*kata physin*," which, in this particular context, they take to mean speaking of all things as becoming and in motion, as opposed to speaking of them improperly by making them, in one's speech, simply *be*.

Later in the text, after Socrates and Theodorus have begun their own investigation into whether anything *is*, or whether all things become, Socrates asserts that "if all things are in motion – every answer, about whatever one answers, is similarly correct. Or if you want, in order that we may not put a stop to them in the speech, every answer becomes correct – to say, 'This is so' and 'This is not so.'"[17] If nothing endures, and nothing *is*, both an assertion that 'X *is* the case' and an assertion that 'X *is* not the case' would be equally correct. After Theodorus gives his agreement, Socrates continues:

> Yes, Theodorus, except I did say 'so' and 'not so.' But one must not even say 'so,' for 'so' would no longer be in motion, nor in turn 'not so,' for not even this is a motion. But

[15] Ibid, 157B.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid, 183A.

> those who speak this speech must set down some different language, since now at least they don't have the words for their own hypothesis….[18]

Socrates thus seems to agree with the 'motion men' when they voiced the need to speak *kata physin*, and, more importantly, he seems to agree that if one is not attentive to the manner in which one speaks about something, i.e., to the actual words and sentences that one uses, it is possible for one to *refute* one's speech *by* one's speech. An account has the possibility of invalidating its own content, and it does in fact do so when the words it uses to try to make a certain point (e.g., 'everything *is* in a state of becoming') run directly counter to that very point (e.g., 'everything becomes').[19]

Hegel and *Kata Physin* as 'Form'

In light of our current focus regarding Hegel, these passages from the *Theaetetus* serve three functions. First, they sharpen our focus about what it might mean to speak 'according to the nature' of what is spoken about, insofar as they illuminate one danger of *not* doing so – self-refutation. Second, these passages suggest that in order for language to be in accordance with its object, it must be, so to speak, self-aware. Similar to the discussion above regarding the respective forms of Kant's language and Hegel's language, in this Platonic dialogue we see the idea that language has the possibility of being or *not* being in accord with its object in a certain kind of 'formal' respect (e.g., using or not using 'being' verbs). Third, these passages in Plato pointedly raise the issue of how challenging it is to speak about becoming and about *movement* 'according to

[18] Ibid, 183A-B.
[19] This same point sheds light on why the difficulties are so deep when one attempts to say what non-being is, as we see borne out in the conversations between the Eliatic Stranger and Theaetetus in the *Sophist*. For, "is" seems to be just as improper a designation of non-being as it is of movement.

nature,' and of some of the potentially intractable problems that might arise in trying to do so. Taken together, these points are intimately related to the task of comprehending Hegel's idea of philosophical language. For, as a quick flip through the *Science of Logic* reveals, Hegel believes that *the nature of logic is to be in movement*. And, if Hegel is to give an account of what logic is, he must be able to speak in accordance with its movement. It should thus come as no surprise that he holds that philosophical language must also *itself* be *in movement*, and that the movement of logic and the movement of its language cannot be separated.

What this claim by Hegel actually means is something we will address in the second part of this introduction, and in more detail in Chapter 7, but we can gain a bit more specificity on the matter here in our introduction by further considering the issue of Zeno and spatial movement. While numerous thinkers after Zeno believed that they had been able to refute his account of the self-contradictory nature of spatial movement, Hegel's view was that none of them had actually done so, for the simple reason that, on this point, Zeno was right. What Zeno *concluded* from this point, however, was not something Hegel found persuasive. In Hegel's own words, "The ancient dialecticians must be granted the contradictions that they pointed out in movement; but it does not follow that therefore there is no movement, but on the contrary, that motion is *existent* contradiction itself."[20] For Hegel, the self-contradictory nature of movement which Zeno and others pointed out is not an indication of movement's impossibility, but rather is just what constitutes movement itself. As he says, "it is necessary to think of movement as Zeno

[20] *SL* 440, translation emended.

thought of it, but to move this theory of movement itself further still."[21] And this is just what he attempts to do when he claims that spatial movement simply *is* contradiction in existent form, saying (as quoted above) that "[s]omething moves, not because at one moment it is here and at another there, but because at one and the same moment it is here and not here, because in this 'here,' it at once is and is not."[22] It is worth noting here – as we investigate the idea of language being 'in accordance with' its object – that Hegel develops his claim that spatial movement is existent contradiction *by means of* a statement that is *itself explicitly contradictory*. It thus seems fair to say that his claim *about* contradiction and the contradiction *in* this very claim are not coincidental to one another.

Above it was suggested that the extreme difficulty of Hegel's language might stem both from the couterintuitiveness of what his language is about, and from what his language in itself is. If we focus on the latter in terms of its form as something that could either be or not be in accord with its object, we can see that attempting to explain extremely difficult issues might require an explanation that is extremely difficult not only in *what* it is talking about, but in *how* it is talking about it. If Hegel were asked why his philosophical language is so counterintuitive to everyday common sense, I believe he would raise, among others, the issues we have mentioned above. As to whether these issues have been properly outlined, and as to whether they justify his use of the kind of

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[21] *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie I*, hrsg. Hegel-Institut Berlin (Berlin: Talpa-Verlag), 433, my translation.
[22] *SL* 440.

language he uses, this can be determined only through a much longer and more thorough investigation of Hegel's texts, one which the present work will attempt to accomplish.

2. Hegel on Philosophical Language: An Opening Sketch

a. Language and Thought

As those steeped in ancient Greek philosophy tend to be, Hegel is very attentive to the relation between the activity of thought and the activity of language. For example, in the *Science of Logic* he speaks of the "determinations of thought which we employ on every occasion, which pass our lips in every sentence we speak,"[23] and in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* he elaborates on this theme when he says that, "[a]s it is with all expression of perception and experience, as soon a person speaks, there is a concept within; it cannot in any way be withheld…."[24]

While Hegel holds that language is always accompanied by concepts and by thinking, he also holds the inverse to be true, claiming that thinking never takes place completely apart from language. One place where he refers to this other side of the coin is in the *Philosophy of Spirit*, when he concisely states that "It is names that we think,"[25] also claiming that "we have determinate, actual thoughts, only when we give them the form of objectivity, or distinctness from our inwardness…the shape of externality."[26] He speaks of both sides of the coin, and spins it quite nicely, in the Preface to the *Science of Logic*:

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[23] *SL* 33.
[24] *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie I*, 471, my translation.
[25] *Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, Vol. 3, ed. and trans. M.J. Petry (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1978), §462. Hereafter referred to as "*Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*."
[26] Ibid. §462.

> "The forms of thought are, in the first instance, displayed and stored in human language….Into all that becomes something inward for humans, an image or conception as such, into all that he makes his own, language has penetrated, and everything that he has transformed into language, and expresses in it contains a category – concealed, mixed with other forms or clearly determined as such, so much is logic his natural element, indeed his own peculiar nature."[27]

In other words, every form of thought is penetrated by language, and every use of language contains a category, a form of thought.

Hegel's insistence on this interrelationship and interdependency, and particularly his attentiveness to the role of language in the process of thinking, is illustrated throughout the *Science of Logic*. A case in point is this passage from Doctrine of the Concept, on the difference between propositions and judgments: "When a proposition is to be converted into a judgment, then the specific content – when it, e.g., lies in a verb – is converted into a participle, in order in this way to separate the determination itself and its relation to a subject."[28] This conversion of a verb into a participle is not presented by Hegel as some sort of accidental or optional move, but rather as constitutive of a crucial move in the Doctrine of the Concept in which a proposition becomes a judgment such that thinking might make an advance toward its end. That Hegel pays such close attention to the specific parts of speech, and places such importance on them in order to maintain the integrity and trajectory of his logic, is both a clear example of his claim that thought and language are interdependent, and an indication that he is attempting to bear this claim out

[27] *SL* 31, my translation
[28] *SL* 410, translation emended.

in his philosophical practice. Part III of this dissertation will provide a much more thorough account of Hegel's view of the interdependence of thought and language in general, but with this initial sketch in view we can now take a first look at the primary interest of this work, viz., the relationship between thought and *philosophical* language.

b. Philosophical Language

While Hegel never uses the phrases, it is useful as a starting point to think about language manifesting itself either as the 'language of understanding (*Verstand*)' or as the 'language of reason (*Vernunft*).' The language of *Verstand* is one which Hegel would see as lying within the language of everyday speech. Additionally, he would see the language of *Verstand* as the medium of all non-speculative philosophies.

But if a philosophical exposition has its own form of language, one associated with *Vernunft*, from where does it derive this language? Surely it does not create it out of thin air? What is the connection of this language to the language of everyday speech? Hegel speaks to these questions in the *Science of Logic* when he says, "Philosophy has the right to select from the language of common life, which is made for the world of representations (*Vorstellungen*), such expressions as seem to approximate to the determinations of the Concept."[29] Insofar as Hegel sees a philosophical exposition as *setting forth* its various determinations, he sees a philosophical exposition as *defining* its terms as it goes. While philosophy draws, whenever possible, rough approximations of what it needs from the language of *Verstand* (either everyday speech, or non-speculative philosophies), the specific definitions that it gives to these words and the specific way

[29] *SL* 708.

that it *combines* these words are of its own making. Thus, instead of using the language which was 'made for the world of representations,' philosophy must make its own language, one which is suitable for the world of conceptual determinations.

The idea of there being two separate languages, one non-philosophical and one philosophical, is further elaborated by Hegel in the Preface of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, in his comparison of religion and philosophy:

> *The content is the same* [of religion and philosophy], but just as Homer says about certain things that they have two names, one in the language of the gods, and the other in the language of ephemeral humans, so, too, there are two languages for that content: the one of feeling, of representation, and of the thinking that nests in the finite categories and one-sided abstractions of understanding, and the other of the concrete concept.[30]

Because the first kind of language – the language of humans – is a language of feeling, representation, and *Verstand*, it not wholly commensurate with the content it is trying to express. Since this content which the two languages share just *is* the concept, the second kind of language – the language of the gods, i.e., "the language of the concrete concept" – is in fact appropriate to it, and able to express it. Having sketched out these two kinds of language, Hegel goes on to say that "more is required than our merely having the habit of the language of ephemeral consciousness."[31] That is, humans must *learn* to use 'the language of the concrete concept,' i.e., philosophical language. For Homer, the language used by transitory humans and the language used by the gods are what they are due to the natures of their *respective users*; for Hegel, the language used by

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[30] G.W.F. Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, trans. T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting, and H.S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1991), "Preface," pg. 11, translation emended. Hereafter, *EL*.
[31] Ibid., translation emended.

feeling/representation/abstract thinking and the language used by the concrete concept are what they are on that same basis. How, in Hegel's view, we humans can *learn* to speak the language of the concrete concept is one of the main issues that this dissertation is seeking to comprehend.

Having said this, it must be noted that the passage about the languages of gods and humans, when read in isolation from the rest of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*'s Preface, is somewhat misleading. For, it suggests that the form and the content of language are indifferent to each other, such that *how* one speaks is fully separable from that *about which* one is speaking. That is, the passage implies that how one speaks does not ultimately effect or determine that about which is speaking. That Hegel does not actually hold this view is clear from many of his discussions of form and content both in the *Logic*'s Introduction[32] and in the exposition of the *Logic* itself.[33] The language used *about* the concrete concept is language used *by* the concrete concept, and the language of representation and abstraction is precisely that which is simply not able to speak truly about the concrete concept. Additionally, and contrary to what one might infer from Hegel's words above, the language of the understanding is not something which stands in complete opposition to the language of reason. As we will see, it is instead a necessary *element of* the language of reason, in that it is taken up into the language of reason as one dimension of it. With this these qualifications in mind, though, we can say that the idea of two kinds of language which can express the same content is, in spite of needing qualification and later revision, a helpful beginning. And now we have a better basis on

[32] e.g., *SL* 43, 49-50.
[33] e.g., in the logical determination 'life.'

which to give an initial sketch of Hegel's claim that philosophical language – along with its thought, and (what is the same) its object – is not only moving, but self-moving and living.

c. Philosophical Language as Living

In the Preface to the *Science of Logic*, one of the ways that Hegel goes about distinguishing all of the logics of the past from what he wishes to do in this work is by characterizing the other logics as 'dead,' and true logic as 'living.' Speaking of "the pure essentialities which constitute the content of logic," Hegel says that "their self-movement is their spiritual life and is that through which philosophy constitutes itself and of which it is the exposition."[34] 'Life' is a specific logical category in the *Science of Logic* which, appearing near the end of the work, is one of the most complex of the entire 800 page exposition. And Hegel's claim is that life is present in the *Logic* as more than something merely spoken *about* – it is genuinely *operating within* the work as a work.

But does this make sense to speak of logic and of thinking as 'living' and as 'self-moving'? Is this not some sort of category mistake? Or to the put the question another way: When Hegel speaks of language and thinking being either 'living' or 'dead,' is he not speaking metaphorically, using certain rhetorical images to helpfully convey some more literal point? In the Preface and Introduction of the *Science of Logic* Hegel does indeed use the terms 'life' and 'death' very metaphorically, e.g., speaking about logic in terms of bodies and bones. However, within the actual exposition of the *Logic*, he treats life as a specific logical determination. In the process, he explicitly addresses the concern

[34] *SL* 28.

of a category mistake by differentiating between life in the realm of logic and life in the realms of nature and spirit; elsewhere, he makes a clear contrast between "external, sensuous movement" and "internal self-movement proper."[35] From these discussions it even becomes evident – as we will see in Chapter 5 – that, far from the meaning of 'living logic' being derived from some 'literal' sense of life such as plant or animal life, Hegel actually believes the opposite is the case.[36] In his view, the life of logic is life in the first and most fundamental sense, and life as found in plants and animals (as well as in the realm of human affairs) are expressions of logical life.

But as Hegel concedes, the view that logic is living is not an immediately obvious conclusion at which to arrive. He implies that one reason for our hesitancy about this view is a certain *preconception* that is often held about the nature of logic:

> The idea of life is concerned with a subject matter so concrete, and if you will so real, that with it we may seem to have overstepped the boundary of logic as it is commonly conceived. Certainly if logic were to contain nothing other than empty, dead forms of thought, there could be no mention in it at all of such a content as the idea of life.[37]

The reason that the idea of logic as living might seem like a fallacious one is that we tend to assume that logic is *formal* logic, i.e., that it consists of empty forms which are applied by some third party to some external content. Thus, even if we are hypothetically willing to accept that life is a determination existing not merely in the natural world, our preconceptions of logic as formal might still stand in the way. It is worthwhile, then, to

[35] *SL* 440.
[36] *SL* 762-63.
[37] *SL* 761.

say a few words by way of introduction about what the difference is between Hegel's idea of logic, and traditional formal logic.

In contrast to what Hegel considers the living nature of true logic, the forms within formal logic are, as he says in the Preface of the *Logic*, ultimately a "disordered heap of dead bones."[38] For, in their mere formality, they are applied to content external to themselves, and in relation to this content they are ultimately indifferent and unchanging. True logic, on the other hand, involves the activity in which these dead bones are "quickened by spirit"[39] such that they receive a content of their own, viz., their own selves. Logic must no longer be treated as something merely formal which is applied to something outside of itself; rather, what are normally considered the forms of logic must become simultaneously the *content* of logic, such that the forms are involved in *thinking each other*. To give one example of what this looks like: the category of 'determinacy' (i.e., the 'form') is used to think the later category of 'quantity' (i.e., the 'content') in that quantity is recognized to *be* a certain determinacy, i.e., quantity is recognized as having the *determinacy of* being 'quantity.' A further example from the *Logic*'s exposition, one which is even more directly self-reflexive, is the category 'other' being recognized as itself *an* 'other,'[40] thus making it both its form and its content. For Hegel, when logic's form is its own content in this manner, the movement of what is commonly characterized as logic's 'application' is rather a *self*-movement, a spontaneous movement which originates out of itself and thus is not due to some cause external to it. Furthermore,

[38] *SL* 31.
[39] *SL* 53.
[40] *SL* 117.

Hegel closely connects that which has its principle of movement within itself with what is 'living.' A great deal more must be said, and will be said, in order to explain these ideas more thoroughly, but by way of introduction it is sufficient to say that these are the grounds on which Hegel holds logic to be self-moving and living.

In light of the interdependence of thought and language discussed above, it is reasonable to expect that the language which enables the thinking of a living logic must, in some sense, also be living. This is in fact what we see Hegel claiming when, in the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, he says that not only the content of a philosophical proposition but also its form must be characterized by movement. In describing "the dialectical movement of the proposition," Hegel says that "[t]his alone is the *actual* speculative, and only the expression of this movement is a speculative exposition."[41] Additionally, he goes on to refer to this dialectical movement as "the course that generates itself, going forth from, and returning to, itself."[42] Since philosophical language is the expression and making actual of philosophical thought, much of what Hegel says of logic can also be said of philosophical language. Like logic, if philosophical language were simply a matter of empty forms – with its words, grammar, and structure being that which were merely applied to a content to which it is wholly indifferent – then it would not in any sense be living. But if such language has a different relationship to its content, an internal and reciprocally constitutive one instead of an external and indifferent one, then it would make sense to speak of this language as

[41] G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Terry Pinkard, forthcoming through Cambridge University Press, available online at http://web.mac.com/titpaul/Site/Phenomenology_of_Spirit_page.html, §65, translation emended.
[42] Ibid.

living. And if the *elements* of such a language – its words, propositions, and combinations of propositions – are related to each other not like dead bones but like the members of a moving body, it would make even more sense to speak of this language as living. Again, we have not yet begun to account for what such a language would actually look like, but our brief discussion here indicates the outlines of what Hegel means with his rather unusual claim that philosophy and its language are living. This short discussion should also serve as a context for the general goal of this dissertation, viz., to give an account of Hegel's view of philosophical language by discussing how this language is able to express and effect both logical movement and its *own* movement, i.e., its self-movement.

Part I. A Question of Comprehension: Application vs. Expression

Before looking at the issues of mechanism, life, and contradiction in Part II, and ordinary and philosophical language in Part III, I will spend Part I discussing several methodological issues regarding how the rest of this dissertation will proceed. Unfortunately, these issues turn out to be some of the very ones that this dissertation as a whole intends to explore. For example, in Part I's discussion about how this dissertation will go about investigating Hegel's views of contradiction and philosophical language in Parts II and III, we will need to make specific claims about these very views and these very topics. This is due, I believe, to the fact that these topics play a role in one's mode of proceeding in *any investigation at all*. Thus, the 'content' of Part I – the nature of philosophical comprehension – is to some degree the issue of what 'form' the rest of this dissertation should take in its attempt to comprehend philosophical language; yet, it also involves issues that will be part of the 'content' of the rest of the dissertation (e.g., contradiction).

In light of this, both Part I and the dissertation as a whole run the risk of being very long exercises in question-begging. Because I will be attempting to use something similar to Hegel's mode of comprehension in my attempt to give an account of his view of philosophical language, I am proposing to use Hegel's mode of giving an account in my attempt to give an account of his view of what it is to give an account. Thus, if the mode of investigation I will be using throughout is one I have derived from Hegel himself, am I not stacking the deck in his favor, making it likely that the conclusions I come to will be in agreement with his thinking? This objection certainly has some force.

My primary response would be that, as stated in the introduction, my overall goal in this dissertation is to give an account of philosophical language which fits within Hegel's thought as a whole, one which, insofar as I am able, resembles some of what he himself might have written. In light of this goal, it seems that the account I give of what his views on this matter would be should proceed according to his mode of investigation.

Before looking into the issue of comprehension, there is one more issue that should be addressed. The kind of comprehension which we will be investigating is *philosophical* comprehension, that is, the comprehension of the subject matter within philosophy's jurisdiction. For Hegel, this subject matter is limited to that which is necessary, i.e., to the determinations of the Concept. These determinations – let us call them 'philosophical determinations' – are the ones which Hegel gives an account of in his *Encyclopaedia* as a whole. So, for example, this would include the determination 'plant' but not the determination 'poison ivy,' the determination 'art' but not the determination 'Flemish Baroque painting,' the determination 'civil society' but not the determination '16th century Italian civil society.' The second term of each of these pairs can, of course, be comprehended philosophically in terms of the first term, but not in terms of its own specificity, which Hegel would say lies in the realm of contingency. In the 1817 version of the *Encyclopedia*, he gives several examples of such non-philosophical and contingent determinations:

> The study of law, for example, or the system of direct or indirect taxation, ultimately require exact decisions which lie outside the determinacy in and for itself of the Concept. Thus a certain latitude of determination is left open, so that for one reason something be

said in one way but for another reason it can be said in another, and neither is capable of definite certainty.[1]

Matters which lie 'outside the determinacy of the Concept,' then, are contingent, not knowable with absolute certainty, and not within the purview of philosophy. Incidentally, it is for this very reason that such matters are not within the purview of philosophical *language*. Such language, like philosophy, is only concerned with the determinations of the Concept, i.e., the necessary and universal determinations which constitute the *Science of Logic*, *Philosophy of Nature*, and *Philosophy of Spirit*. In our discussion below, then, our concern will be with what Hegel would consider comprehension *proper* (viz., that which grasps what is necessary), as opposed to comprehension in the everyday sense of the term, which would also be concerned with contingent (but of course still important) matters such as, say, the cure for cancer, or the best technologies for producing clean energy.

With these preliminaries about preliminaries out of the way, we will now discuss Hegel's view of the basic mode in which philosophical comprehension should proceed, beginning with his critique of a mode in which he thinks it should *not* proceed.

1. Application as Comprehension

a.) The Problem of Formalism

When a thinker does not provide a lengthy exposition of a given topic – as Hegel does not with the topic of philosophical language – a natural response on the part of the curious is to examine the categories which the thinker developed more extensively and

[1] *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline*, trans. Steven A. Taubeneck, in *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline and Critical Writings,* ed. Ernest Behler (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1990), §10. (This is the *1817* version of the *Encyclopedia*.)

then *apply* them to the topic at hand. For example: What would Descartes say about education? 'Consult the *Passions of the Soul* and the *Discourse on Method*,' we might say, 'and see how his discussions of emotions and of method apply to the issue of pedagogy.' What would Aristotle say about humans as *historical* creatures? 'Consult the *Politics*,' we might say, 'and see how his discussion of revolution and regime change might apply to the issue.' In order to comprehend philosophical language in Hegel's thought, we might therefore decide to take particular categories which Hegel has developed and apply them to it. Such an application procedure would likely consist of first studying Hegel's detailed exposition of those categories, and then seeing how they can be identified *within* philosophical language in order to explain what it is, e.g., by seeing how they function as characteristics or properties or elements of it. For example, since Hegel refers to language in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as "the existence of spirit,"[2] we might study the section on 'existence' in the *Science of Logic* and then apply what we find to what we know about language, and then to philosophical language.

From Hegel's perspective, there would be a problem with such an approach, and the problem would be that it totally misguided. In the *Phenomenology* and the *Logic*, he repeatedly and adamantly rejects any approach in which one takes categories from a schema and then *applies* them to something in order to grasp what it is. Thus, to approach any issue in Hegel in terms of the 'application' of logical categories is, in his view, a thoroughly faulty strategy. While this mode tends to be the one that most immediately suggests itself to (as Hegel would say) 'ordinary consciousness,' to use it

[2] *Phenomenology* §652.

would be to start off in the wrong direction, and to ensure that we would not comprehend what Hegel is trying to say.

The word that Hegel sometimes uses to describe such a mode of proceeding is 'formalism.' One indication of his deep opposition to this mode is the amount of time he spends critiquing it in the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In fact, one of his primary goals in the Preface overall is to distinguish between the formalism of the understanding (*Verstand*) and the nature of philosophical thinking, i.e., between the "argumentative procedure" (*räsonierenden Verhalten*) of the understanding and the "conceptual thinking" (*begreifende Denken*) of speculative philosophy.[3] In this context, Hegel describes the understanding's formalism as consisting of a particular way of conceiving what subjects and predicates are, along with a particular way of relating them to each other. The result, he says, is that the understanding attempts to comprehend things in a specific manner: "This formalism takes itself to have comprehended and articulated the nature and life of a shape [*Gestalt*] when it has affirmed a determination of the schema to be a predicate of that life or shape."[4] Specifically, he characterizes this formalism as an approach which *applies* one or more terms from some chart or schema to a thing, and, in so doing, believes it has thereby grasped what the thing is. These terms, he says, can be drawn either from abstract tables or schemas (as is the case with, e.g., subjectivity and objectivity), or from the realm of nature (as is the case with 'magnetism').[5] A simple example of the understanding's formalistic approach – an

[3] See, e.g., Ibid. §59.
[4] *Ibid.* §50, translation emended.
[5] Hegel mentions these three examples in *Phenomenology* §50, along with several additional examples from the realm of nature: electricity, contraction, expansion, east, and west.

example which involves one 'abstract' predicate and one from nature – would be if someone were to apply the predicate 'thinking' to the subject 'animal,' and thereby believed that he had grasped what a human being is.[6]

Hegel begins his critique of such an approach by painting a few striking images of it:

> This method, which consists in taking the pair of determinations out of that universal schema and then plastering them onto everything in heaven and earth, onto all the natural and spiritual shapes and then organizing everything in this manner, produces nothing less than a 'crystal clear report on the organism of the universe.' This 'report' is like a tabular chart, which is itself a little bit like a skeleton with small bits of paper stuck all over it….in this 'report,' the living essence of what is at stake has been omitted or concealed.[7]

Clearly, one of the problems Hegel sees in such a formalistic approach is that it does not do justice to the term taken from the chart or schema; instead, it unreflectively treats the term as something that both has no existence in its own right and is completely indifferent to the specific context into which it is placed. Hegel further spells out this concern by means of an example:

> Even when the determinateness such as, for example, magnetism, is in itself concrete, that is, is actual, it is nonetheless downgraded to the status of something lifeless since it is merely predicated of another existence, and no cognizance is taken of the immanent

[6] The initial example that Hegel himself uses of such a schema or table is the "triplicity" that he says Kant "rediscovered," yet only in a "dead" and "unconceptual" form. Hegel seems to have in mind *The Critique of Pure Reason*'s Table of Categories, where, under each of the four heading, there are three categories. (E.g., under *Qualität* are "Realität, Negation, Limitation.") *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, s. 118-119. Yet, as is clear from the rest of *Phenomenology* §50, Hegel is criticizing not only the Kantian schema, but also fixed schemas or tables of any kind.

[7] *Phenomenology* §51.

> life of this existence, nor of how it possesses its indigenous and distinctive self-production and exposition.[8]

If natural determinations such as magnetism can be predicated of another existence in this way, it is no wonder that *logical* categories – e.g., quality, existence, necessity, universality – are generally viewed as lacking their own existence, as being scraps of paper that can be stuck onto any given surface, and as being dead, dry, and lifeless. Because the understanding views all predicates in this way, it attempts to comprehend things by *applying* predicates to subjects, i.e., lifting them from a chart or table and placing them into a particular context without any change being made to the predicate itself. Thus, the process of predicate application entails that one pick a *pre-defined* predicate (e.g., 'necessary', or 'universal'), attach it to some subject, and then comprehend the subject partially or wholly in light of this pre-defined predicate.

In Hegel's view, however, a predicate in a philosophical proposition is not something that should be 'applied' to a subject at all, for it is not something at-hand which can be selected as a result of its appearing appropriate to the subject, and then simply attached to it. If it were, this would mean that the predicate was completely indifferent to what it was being applied to, and for Hegel this is not something we can assume. So, to use our example above about the definition of a human being, the understanding would take the independent predicates of 'thinking' and 'animal' and then would either apply one to the other or would apply both to whatever idea it already had of 'human being.' In either case, what is assumed is that neither predicate undergoes any essential change in being

[8] Ibid. §53, translation emended.

combined with the other, and, in this way, they have been "downgraded to the status of something lifeless."

From the above, a better picture has begun to emerge of one of Hegel's main concerns with a formalistic approach to comprehension, viz., that it does not properly take into account the being of predicates themselves, or the possibility that a predicate having one determinacy in one context might have another one in another. Clearly, this concern is relevant to the larger topic of this dissertation. While we know that, e.g., Hegel refers to philosophical language as living, and while we know that he gives an account of the category of life in the *Science of Logic*, the attempt to comprehend his view of philosophical language by studying the 'life' chapter in the *Logic* and then *applying* it to philosophical language as one of its predicates would be a formalistic approach that, in his eyes, would end in failure.

In the *Phenomenology*'s Preface, Hegel offers a second critique of the formalistic mode of comprehension. This critique follows directly out of the first, and helps to illuminate his view of both the proper mode of comprehension, and the philosopher's role in doing philosophy. According to Hegel, when the formalistic mode is used, the predicate is brought together with the subject not as a result of the nature of either of them in themselves, but rather through a movement *external* to both, viz., the understanding of *the person doing the applying.* This 'external' movement has already been alluded to in the quotes above where Hegel talks about taking predicates out of a schema and "plastering" them all various subjects, such that they are like small bits of paper which are stuck onto the skeleton of the subject. This last image helps reveal the

connection between Hegel's first critique of formalism (viz., an injustice being done to applied predicates) and his second: the formalistic mode of comprehension views predicates as indifferent to their specific context and in this sense 'lifeless,' and *as a result* the movement which attaches the predicate to the subject must originate in some *external* source, namely, the understanding of the person doing the investigation. In Hegel's words, "The monochromatic nature of the schema and its lifeless determinations…are each and every one the result of the same lifeless understanding and external cognition."[9] We see, then, that the predicate here (e.g., 'thinking') is lifeless not only because it is indifferent to its context, but also because the movement which attaches it to the subject (e.g., 'animal') is brought about not by itself but by the understanding of the person doing the investigation.

In such a mode of application, a predicate and a subject are thought together not due to their own natures, but due to the contingent movements of the faculty of the understanding placing them together. This approach would be appropriate when dealing with matters that are *themselves* contingent, to what we earlier called 'non-philosophical determinations.' Applying a philosophical determination to a non-philosophical one – e.g., comprehending a bear standing in front of you in terms of the philosophical determination 'animal,' or determining the best way to reduce rising health care costs in the 21st-century by applying the philosophical determination 'civil society' – would not be problematic for Hegel. These examples, like Hegel's 'direct or indirect taxation' example mentioned above, are inherently contingent, cannot be known with certainty,

[9] *Phenomenology* §51, translation emended.

and are not the subject matter of philosophy proper. Thus, this sort of application is not what Hegel is criticizing here in the *Phenomenology*'s Preface. What he is criticizing is the approach which applies philosophical determinations to *other* philosophical determinations. For in his view, the contingency of this approach renders it inadequate for comprehending the universal determinations which are the purview of philosophy, determinations which, because of their living and self-ordering movement, are necessary. He clarifies this point by saying, "The understanding, which likes to put everything in its own little pigeon-hole, retains *for itself* the necessity and the concept of the content, which constitutes the concrete, the actuality, the living movement of the subject-matter [*der Sache*] which it [the understanding] puts in order [*rangiert*]."[10] The "content" being spoken of here, i.e., the *Sache*, is what the understanding has under consideration (e.g., animal, or thinking). As we will discuss in detail in Chapter 5, Hegel connects the *necessity* of such content with '*living movement'* due to his view that philosophical determinations have necessary relations to each other, and that these necessary relations constitute the *self-ordering* of the determinations within the whole (i.e., within the Concept). In the formalistic approach, however, the understanding retains this necessity and this ordering process *for itself*, taking them over as its own. This act is most evidenced by the fact that, while the content has its own living movement, *the understanding* is what puts it in order ("*rangiert*"), i.e., what moves the predicate into a relation with the subject.[11] Hegel states that if the understanding were to *realize* that it is

[10] *Phenomenology* §53, my italics, translation emended.
[11] While trains had not yet come to Germany in 1807, some indication of what Hegel probably meant by the word "*rangiert*" is given by the fact that, today, it refers to the act of switching railroad cars onto different tracks.

not comprehending the actuality and movement belonging to the content itself, "it would refrain from schematizing, or at least it would know that it knows no more than what is made available through a table of contents. A table of contents is all that the understanding offers, but it does not supply the contents itself."[12] In sum, then, the formalistic approach is only capable of engaging the matter at hand in an abstract and skeletal way, and its conclusions about the *Sache* have less to do with the *Sache* than with that which it has imposed onto it from its own self.

b.) The Beginnings of Hegel's Response

Given that Hegel so soundly rejects the formalism of an 'application' mode of comprehension, what is his *alternative* view of comprehension? And – to pose this question more specifically to this dissertation – what would be the proper mode of comprehension to use to comprehend Hegel's view of philosophical language? Several characteristics of this alternative mode of comprehension are apparent simply from the above sketch of the critique of formalism in the *Phenomenology*'s Preface. Whereas the formalistic mode involves predicates being attached to subjects by a movement on the part of the investigator, an investigation proceeding properly has a different source of motion, viz., the content itself. As Hegel says, "…the content shows that its determinateness is not first received from an other and then externally pinned onto it; rather, the content gives itself this determinateness, it bestows on itself the status of being a moment, and it gives itself a place in the whole."[13] In speaking of the content as being

[12] *Phenomenology* §53.
[13] Ibid.

self-determining and, so to speak, 'self-situating,' Hegel is emphasizing the contrast with the way that the understanding *took over for itself* the content's "necessity," "actuality," and "living movement."[14] Thus, in some as-yet unspecified way, proper comprehension allows the content to move and determine itself.

What such a 'self-determination' on the part of the content entails, however, is that proper comprehension allows the content to be the origin of the movement *in comprehension itself*. Hegel refers to both of these movements when he says, "Science may organize itself only through the proper life of the concept. The determinateness which was taken from the schema and externally stuck onto existence is, in science, the self-moving soul of the content which has been brought to fruition."[15] So, the way in which science moves, i.e., the way in which thought and comprehension move, should be dictated by the way in which the content moves. Instead of the movement of both the content and comprehension originating in comprehension, it should originate in the content.

At first glance Hegel might appear to be making a rather naïve point in all of this, e.g., 'The object should determine the subject, not the other way around,' or 'Comprehension must be passive, and must allow the content to be active.' Certainly if this was all Hegel was claiming, he would be exhibiting a great deal of naïveté, and doubly-so in a post-Kantian environment. However, given that Hegel specifically names Kant in his critique of formalism in the *Phenomenology*'s Preface, it is safe to assume that he is intentionally using anti-Kantian formulations to express what he is outlining

[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.

here.[16] More significantly, though, the exposition which follows the *Phenomenology*'s Preface is one whose stated aim is to give an account of what knowledge is, i.e., to gain knowledge of knowledge. And as we know, Hegel believes that one of the major accomplishments of the *Phenomenology* is to show that the difference between subject and object, between comprehension and content, turns out to be no difference at all.

That aside, Hegel goes beyond making the shallow claim that comprehension must allow itself to be determined by the content, when he makes a more specific claim about how comprehension can actually accomplish this. Namely, comprehension must be willing to 'enter into' what it is trying to comprehend. This 'entering' metaphor forms the basis of the following paragraph, in which the understanding is contrasted with proper comprehension:

> Instead of entering into the immanent content of the subject-matter, the understanding always surveys the whole and stands above the individual existence of which it speaks, or, what amounts to the same thing, it does not see it at all. However, to an even greater degree, scientific cognition requires that it give itself over to the life of the object, or, what is the same thing, that it have the inner necessity of the object before it and that it articulate [*auszusprechen*] this inner necessity. Absorbing itself in its object, it forgets the former overview, which is only a reflection of knowledge out of the content and back into itself.[17]

'Standing above' and 'surveying' the whole are clearly involved in any process of taking pre-determined predicates from a schema or chart and *applying* them to subjects. Because such an attempt stands at a distance from the object (from the *Sache*), it is *not*

[16] see *Phenomenology* §50, where he criticizes Kant's categories of the understanding.
[17] *Phenomenology* §53.

able to be guided by the object, by the necessity inherent in the object itself. "Scientific cognition," on the other hand, enters into the object, insofar as it does not bring in predicates from some external source, but rather follows the "immanent content of the subject-matter" and the "life" therein. Instead of standing high above the content and giving an overview of it, proper comprehension is absorbed into the content in all its particularity, thus allowing itself to be moved and guided by the content's specific actuality.

This very brief discussion of Hegel's view of comprehension's mode of proceeding is, to be sure, still quite abstract and even formalistic in nature. To put some skin and muscles on this skeleton, let us consider how Hegel's preferred mode of comprehension would play out with regard to our recurring example of the 'human being.' More specifically, let us consider how Hegel *himself* goes about thinking through and giving an account of what a human being is.[18] Instead of trying to comprehend 'human being' by attaching the predicate 'thinking' (determined in some prior and independent manner) to the subject 'animal,' Hegel first thinks through what an animal is, on its own terms.[19] Before doing this he had thought through more simple natural determinations, e.g., space, time, matter, inorganic physics, plant, etc. His thinking through of 'animal' involves

[18] One might make the objection that, if Hegel uses a *certain mode* to comprehend content, then *he himself* is *applying* concepts to other concepts, and thus practicing a kind of formalism. At least two points can be made in response. First, the 'formalism' that might be involved in applying a certain mode of comprehension to content is qualitatively different from that involved in applying *predicates* to the content, insofar as the latter brings not just a *form* in from an external source but part of the content as well. Secondly, it turns out that, for Hegel, not even the form of comprehension is imported from an external source and applied to the content, insofar as the form (as Hegel discusses in the Preface to the *Science of Logic*) *arises out of* the content itself.

[19] This treatment is found in the third chapter of the third section of the *Philosophy of Nature*. In the second chapter of this same section, he thinks through the determination 'plant,' which then leads him to the determination 'animal.'

discussions of 'soul,' 'subjectivity,' and how the animal is 'for itself' because it is has 'self-feeling' (insofar as it can not only feel *with* its body but can *feel* its body, e.g., in the form of pain). When he concludes his thinking through of what an animal is, he states that he has concluded the account of nature as a whole, i.e., the natural sphere, and the *Philosophy of Nature* comes to an end. This occurs because what is still *implicit* within the determination 'animal' – and which demands to be further accounted for – is something qualitatively different from an animal and from nature in any of its determinations, i.e., is something which is 'for itself' in a *qualitatively different* way than anything in nature.[20] And this is thus the point at which the *Philosophy of Spirit* picks up the thread, beginning as it does with a discussion of "Subjective Spirit" that involves the "natural soul" and then the "feeling soul," a discussion which clearly has originated out of the account of the animal and yet is clearly dealing with an essentially different determination. Later in the *Philosophy of Spirit* – with the accounts of 'animal,' the human 'natural soul,' and the human 'feeling soul' as the background – Hegel gives accounts of 'self-consciousness' and of 'thinking.' What is relevant to note for our purposes here is that, in Hegel's view, these latter accounts spring out of, and only make sense in light of, the former accounts. Thus, he comprehends what a human being is and what thinking is *out of* the determination 'animal.'

To describe the above example in the language of the *Phenomenology*'s Preface, we can say that Hegel does not take predicates from some chart or pre-determined table and then attach them to 'human'; rather, he allows the movement of the content to direct both

[20] viz., in an infinite way.

itself and his comprehension. And, clearly, the content here is not some initial abstraction plucked out of the air – e.g., some initial idea of 'human' to which he then attaches predicates; rather, the content involves not only the human but also the animal (and the plant, and inorganic physics, and the logical, etc.). Because Hegel's thinking 'enters into' and has 'given itself over to the life of the object,' it is able to be guided by it. Whereas the application model of comprehension stands above the idea of 'human being' and gives an overview of it by means of assigning predicates, Hegel's thought – having 'entered into' the determination 'animal' – is moved by the internal necessity of that determination to think the spiritual determinations 'natural soul,' 'feeling soul,' etc., and then to think 'self-consciousness' and 'thinking,' eventually leading to a full determination of what a human being is.[21]

To sum up: rejecting the formalism of an 'application' mode of comprehension, Hegel claims that proper comprehension of philosophical determinations enters into the content and proceeds according to the movement intrinsic within that content. In a very limited and incomplete way (due to both issues of space and issues of youth), this is the mode of comprehension I will attempt to use in providing an account of Hegel's view of philosophical language. The issue of how an account should proceed, however, has not been given a sufficiently detailed treatment in the pages above. And while we have now looked briefly at an example of Hegel's alternative method of comprehension in action, a very reasonable *objection* could now be made to both this method and to his critique of

[21] The fact that thinking here is *thinking about thinking* is a good illustration of the quote from the *Phenomenology*'s Preface which we quoted in part above: "…scientific cognition requires that it give itself over to the life of the object, or, what is the same thing, that it have the inner necessity of the object before it and that it articulate this inner necessity....[] [as] sunken into the material and advancing in that material's movement, knowledge returns back into itself…." *Phenomenology* §53, my underline.

formalism: Does not Hegel himself, in his own philosophical works, proceed precisely by means of *applying* certain concepts to certain content? More specifically, does he not apply concepts that appear *earlier* in his system to concepts that appear *later*, in order to comprehend the latter? Examples of this would seem to range from an application of the 'dialectical method' (with its famous 'three moments') onto whatever subject-matter is at hand, to an application of categories from the sphere of logic to the spheres of nature and spirit. Hegel response would be, in short, to claim that none of these practices involve application. In order to see why, we need to get a better sense of how he conceives of his alternative mode of comprehension. To this end, we will take up the theme in greater detail in the next chapter (Chapter 2), in terms of the idea of *expression*. Then, to examine these same ideas concretely in action, in Chapter 3 we will do a close study of the *Science of Logic*'s proposition "being and nothing are one and the same." These two chapters will lay the groundwork for closing out Part I of this dissertation with a discussion of why the three-moment dialectical process does not fall prey to the critique of formalism.

2. Expression as Comprehension, and More

a. Two Kinds of Expression

One way to starting thinking through this alternate view of philosophical comprehension is to consider each philosophical determination to be the *expression* of an earlier one. By 'earlier' I mean 'earlier in the account.' For example, since for Hegel 'being' is an earlier determination than 'essence,' essence would be the expression of 'being'; and, since 'animal' is an 'earlier' determination than 'human,' 'human' would be

the expression of 'animal.' Therefore, to think an earlier determination and then to think a later one as an *expression* of the earlier one would be to *comprehend* the later one. Instead of *applying* the earlier determination to the later one, one thinks the later one *out of* the earlier one, as the expression of the earlier one.

As a point of comparison for this 'thinking the later out of the earlier,' it is helpful to note that the idea of expression which I am referring to here runs along the same lines as Hegel's frequent locution, 'A is the truth of B.' For example, he asserts in the Doctrine of Essence that 'essence is the *truth* of being,'[22] and that 'appearance is the *truth* of existence.'[23] I am thus claiming that one could legitimately re-articulate these two examples as 'essence is the *expression* of being' and 'appearance is the *expression* of existence.' But what does it mean for one thing to be the 'truth' and the 'expression' of another?

First, it is important to distinguish the meaning of the word 'expression' as I am using it here from its meaning in a more everyday sense. To differentiate these two senses, I will call them 'developmental expression' and 'static expression.' A first difference between these two is that what I am calling 'static expression' refers only to the sphere of *human* expression, e.g., via language or painting or music. 'Developmental expression,' on the other hand, includes those kinds of specifically human expression but also many others, such as the example regarding essence as the expression of being. A second difference is that, in 'static expression,' the expression is an externalization of something *already fully formed*. Thus, what is expressed is *indifferent* to its expression, i.e., is not in

[22] *SL* 389.
[23] *SL* 496.

any way determined or altered by it, such that it remains 'static' in the midst of being expressed. While an expression of this type is, of course, dependent for *its own* being on what is expressed, the inverse is not the case. An example of this *post hoc* character of 'static expression' is when someone explains to another person his position on an issue which he has explained in the same way on a previous occasion to someone else. In such a situation, the speaker's thoughts are already formed, and thus are the same after being expressed this second time as they were before. The words of such an explanation – while receiving their own specific being from these thoughts – are not *shaping* the thoughts but are *simply externalizing* them, i.e., simply operating for communicative purposes.

By contrast, 'developmental expression' entails that what is expressed is *not* fully what it is apart from being expressed; rather, what is expressed is what it is *only through being* expressed. We can illustrate this second sense of expression by imagining someone explaining his position on an issue to another person where the position is one he has never explained to anyone before, and which he – until the moment of speaking it – had not entirely formulated even to his own self. Because the speaker's thoughts are not fully formed when he begins to speak, the words of the explanation are both communicating *and forming* the thoughts, in their very being. Thus, in 'developmental expression' of all kinds, both in the human realm and in others, what is expressed is not indifferent to, but rather dependent upon, the expression. Put otherwise, the *expression* of the expressed is the *development* of the expressed; the expressed *comes to be more fully what it is* through the expression. To better understand this developmental sense of

expression, we will now look in more detail at the connection between expression, development, and coming-into-being.

b. In-itself, For-another, For-itself

One of the most basic dynamics at work in Hegel's logic is that, for something to become fully what it is, it must do so *through* something else, i.e., it must do so in and through an other. One way that Hegel commonly talks about this early on in the *Science of Logic* is in terms of the three determinations of "being-in-itself," "being-for-another," and "being-for-itself."[24] He discusses the first two at length in his treatment of the relation between 'something' (*Etwas*) and 'other' (*Andere*), a treatment which claims that both something and other are what they are only in opposition to each other.[25] That is, a something is a something only in *contrast to* (as other to) an other, and an other is an other only in contrast to a something. So, while the designation 'being-in-itself' might appear to apply to solely 'something,' and the category of being-for-another solely to 'other,' it turns out that both apply to both: 'something' is *also* being-for-another, and 'other' is *also* characterized by 'being-in-itself.' It is with this as a backdrop that, later on in the Doctrine of Being, the more complex category of "being-for-itself" arises. In this section, Hegel further explains how the 'something' that initially was *merely* 'in-itself' turns out also to be *essentially* 'for-another,' in that its 'other' turns out to be playing a role in determining what the 'something' is. Furthermore, since the 'other' ends up being not only other to the 'something' but part of the *being* of that 'something,' the

[24] *SL* 116-129; 157-186.
[25] Ibid., 116-122.

'something' engages in a "*return* into itself."[26] That is, the 'something' becomes what it is through the 'other,' and in so doing becomes *for-itself*. As Hegel explains, what is for-another becomes for-itself when it "transcends otherness"[27] – when what was initially other turns out not to be so.

Later in the *Science of Logic*, in The Doctrine of Essence, this dynamic gains further complexity but also further clarity. For, the relation between 'something' and 'other' can be recognized in the relation between 'force' (*Kraft*) and 'expression' (*Äußerung*), with expression being an expression of force insofar as it is the *other* of force. Later still in the exposition, something similar to the dynamic between force and expression appears in the categories of 'inner' (*Innere*) and 'outer' (*Äußere*).[28] What is relevant for our purposes here is that, in all three of these pairs of terms, the first term only *is* insofar as it is both unified with and present in the second term, its other. At the end of the section entitled "On the Relation of Inner and Outer," Hegel says that, with regard to 'something' (*Etwas*), "its appearance is not only the reflection into an other [*Andere*], but also into itself, and its externality [*Äußerlichkeit*] is thus the expression [*Äußerung*] of what it is in itself…it ['something'] is nothing *but this, to express* [äußern] *itself*."[29] The connection in German between the nouns 'expression' – *Äußerung* – and 'outer" – *Äußeren* – emphasizes a crucial point: the *outer* of an inner as the *other* of that inner is the *expression* of that inner. Clearly, this expression is not an incidental one, but rather is one that makes it possible for the expressed to become fully what it is.

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[26] Ibid., 158.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid., 523-528.
[29] Ibid., 528.

Additionally, in a more complex version of the 'in-itself' becoming 'for-itself' through its other, the inner becomes *actual* through its outer, as we see when Hegel defines "absolute actuality" as "the unity of the inner and the outer."[30] To put this dynamic in slightly plainer terms: in order for something to become actual, to become fully what it is, it must find expression in an other.

This dynamic as present within the logical sphere can be seen operating in similar ways in other spheres as well. A helpful example from the human sphere is romantic love. In the *Philosophy of Right*, one of Hegel's descriptions of love reads as follows: "On the whole, love is the consciousness of my unity with another, so that I am not isolated as myself, but rather win my self-consciousness only through the renunciation of my being as myself, and through knowing myself as the unity of myself with another and of the other with me."[31] Similar to how Socrates[32] and Aristotle[33] claim that we can only come to know ourselves through seeing ourselves *in other* human beings, Hegel holds that we come to a consciousness of ourselves by seeing and finding ourselves *in another*, viz., in the one whom we love and who loves us. In order for this to be accomplished, I must give up my isolated 'in-itself' status, and be willing to enter into a unity with an other in whom I can find myself. In this other, my self is expressed, is externalized from me, and the result is that I see myself in this other, and see myself in a way that I never

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[30] Ibid., 529.
[31] *Philosophy of Right*, trans. Alan White (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2002), §158, Remark.
[32] e.g., *Alcibiades I*, in *Socrates & Alcibiades: Four Texts*, trans. David M. Johnson (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing Co., 2003), 132c6-133c7.
[33] e.g., "Direct contemplation of ourselves is impossible…. And so, just as when wishing to behold our own faces we have seen them by looking upon a mirror, whenever we wish to know our own characters and personalities we can recognize them by looking upon a friend; since the friend is, as we say, a 'second self' [*hetero ego* – "other I"]." *Magna Moralia*, trans. G. Cyril Armstrong, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), II.15 (1213a10-27).

could directly. Furthermore, this increased consciousness of myself gained through the other constitutes a *change* in myself, and, specifically, a change in which I (as people often say) 'become more myself.'

It is important to emphasize that this general dynamic of 'becoming oneself in an other' cannot take place if the 'something' is merely in an *indifferent* unity with its other. That is, the unity cannot be one in which the something stands in relation to its other yet maintains its independence over against it. As Hegel says in the example of love, there is a need for a "renunciation of my being as myself." This point comes out more strongly in the further remarks he makes about the nature of love: "The first moment in love is that I do not want to be a self-subsistent person as myself and that, if I were, I would feel defective and incomplete. The second moment is that I win myself within another person…while the other in turn attains the same in me."[34] So, as every good relationship counselor knows, what a person (traditionally, a man) might interpret as his 'healthy self-sufficiency' turns out actually to be incompleteness, due to this person not losing himself in the other so that he might fully become himself. Whether in love or in any other sphere, becoming oneself in an other involves externalizing oneself into an other in such a way as to genuinely lose one's independence.

An expression, then, makes what is expressed more fully what it is. What is in-itself, which initially appears to be what the thing at hand 'really is,' turns out to *become* what it is only *through* something other, i.e., only through being expressed in another. In light of this we can say that an essential dimension of what it is to *be* an 'expression' is to be an

[34] *Philosophy of Right*, §158, Remark.

other to the something that it is expressing. The process of expression involves there being something *other* than what is *being* expressed, *doing* the expressing.[35] Or, to put it the other way around, in order for something to be expressed, it must *have* an other, an other *through which* it is expressed.

From the above discussion, it is clear that what is merely in-itself is not expressed.[36] If what is in-itself were to be on its *own* terms, as opposed to becoming what it is through an other standing essentially over against it, then this in-itself would *have no other* which could function as its expression, which could *be* its expression, because to be such an expression requires the relation of 'essentially standing over against.' But in fact, for Hegel there simply is no such thing: there is nothing which is wholly and unqualifiedly in-itself.[37] While we can look back and see *in hindsight* that something was in-itself, the very act of *calling* it such is a partial expression of it.[38] For Hegel, nothing within the purview of philosophy completely lacks an other which in some way determines it; that is, nothing completely lacks an expression.[39] Rather, there is only that which is *partially* in-itself, insofar as it is not fully expressed and thus not fully developed. In the *Science of Logic* we see this over and over, such as in the transition from substance to the concept; as Hegel describes this transition, "The concept…has substance as its immediate

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[35] While the idea of a 'pure *self*-expression' might be seem to be a counterexample to this last claim, Hegel would argue that, when examined closely enough, such a phenomenon exists only in an equivocal way (e.g., what is expressed contains an other within it).

[36] A.V. Miller seems to agree with this point insofar as he often translates "*an-sich*" as "implicit" and "*für-sich*" as "explicit." In my view, these rather free translation choices often significantly obscure Hegel's meaning, but the general conceptual framework that seems to be driving these choices is one with which I am sympathetic.

[37] A helpful point of comparison here is Hegel's critique of any kind of *Ding-an-sich*.

[38] provided that the expression is a 'developmental' one, and not a 'static' one. That all philosophical language engages in 'developmental' expression – i.e., brings what it is naming more fully into being *by* its naming of it – is a claim that will be defended later in this dissertation.

[39] Not even nothing itself.

presupposition; substance is the *in-itself* which the concept is as *manifested*."[40] As the in-itself comes into an explicit relation with its other, it becomes more fully what is in and through that other.

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In light of the last several pages, a reasonable question to ask would be this: 'If we are trying to understand expression as a mode of *comprehension*, why does the discussion of expression thus far sound much more like an *ontological* category?' A first response to this would be that, for Hegel, one cannot account for the structure of thinking without also talking about the structure of being; this is so, he would say, both because thinking itself *is* and thus 'has being' (a less controversial claim), and because when thinking knows its own structure, it is *also* knowing the structure of being (a more controversial claim). This is the reason this chapter is entitled "Expression as Comprehension, and More." For Hegel, the discussion of what it is to comprehend something is inseparable from ontology. But even if we were to reject Hegel's view on this matter, we could accept the possibility that the 'ontological' nature of expression has 'epistemological' implications. After all, even someone subscribing to a representational model of epistemology might assent to the idea that we can orient our approach to *knowing* a given thing based at least in part on what the thing *is* (e.g., what *sort* of thing it is).[41] In the

[40] *SL* 577.

[41] It seems that one would have to know *something* about the thing in order to make a statement about "the best way of knowing it," i.e., the best way of knowing it *in full*. (e.g., "this thing is a living thing; thus, if we cut it apart we won't be able to study it *qua* living.") This situation, to be sure, leads to one of the biggest problems in philosophy, that of getting started without begging the question. Hegel believes he has solved this problem in the *Science of Logic*, for in this work he claims that the form (or 'method') of thinking arises *immanently out of* its content (the 'content' here also simply being 'thinking').

next section, then, we will continue the ontological/developmental emphasis by examining another aspect of how the 'in-itself' develops by means of something which is other to it.

c. In-Itself vs. Posited: the Expression of the Idea

Hegel often speaks about a given determination becoming what it is by contrasting the 'in-itself' with what is 'posited.' The connection between something being *posited* and being *expressed* is an intimate one: in both, the 'something' becomes what it is through its 'other.' We have already seen how this was the case with expression, and a good way to see how this is so with positing is to return again to the *Science of Logic*'s section on 'something' and 'other.' Here, Hegel says, "Being-in-itself [*Ansichsein*]…has being-for-other [*Sein-für-Andere*] as its contrasted moment; but posited-being[42] [*Gesetztsein*], too, is contrasted with it." Then, referring to the term "posited-being," he says that within it "indeed lies being-for-another [*Sein-für-Andere*]…."[43] When something is posited, when it is *gesetzt*, it is 'set' or 'placed' or 'laid' down. Thus the point that Hegel is making in the quote above is that whenever something is posited, it is precisely *not* 'in-itself,' because in being posited it is the 'other' of, and is *dependent* on, what is *doing* the positing: this is why he says that being-for-another '*lies in'* posited-being.

To give one example of this, Hegel says in the *Science of Logic*'s section on Measure that the "identity of quality and quantity present in measure is only in-itself at first, and

[42] Instead of the usual translation of "positedness," I choose to translate *Gesetztsein* as "posited-being" due to the fact that the usual translation – by omitting the '*Sein*' that Hegel very intentionally placed in the word – gives the impression of a pure action/process, instead of signifying the process *plus a result* which Hegel has in mind with the word.
[43] *SL* 121.

not yet posited."[44] He then goes on to show how their identity in measure is, through the exposition of measure, posited and expressed. Posited-being is a 'being which is set down,' and, since it involves being-for-another, it clearly contrasts with the merely implicit and merely 'internal' nature of the 'in-itself.' In being posited, something is no longer in-itself: it finds being-in-another, and is expressed *in* that other.

In his logical works, Hegel repeatedly emphasizes the distinction between what is in-itself and what is posited, and he even places it at the very center of what it is to do philosophy. In this striking passage from *Science of Logic,* he indicates how central he sees this distinction to be when he speaks of how its presence or absence allows us to distinguish true philosophy from all other attempts:

> In the different spheres of determination and especially in the progress of the exposition, or more precisely, in the progression of the concept toward the exposition of itself, it is of capital importance always clearly to distinguish what is still in-itself and what is posited, the determinations as they are in the concept and as they are posited, as being-for-another. This is a distinction which belongs only to dialectical development, which metaphysical philosophizing, under which critical philosophy also belongs, does not know.[45]

The exposition of the concept is what Hegel considers the *Science of Logic*, the *Philosophy of Nature*, and the *Philosophy of Spirit* to be, and his claim is that if we do not properly differentiate what is in-itself and what is posited, this exposition cannot be successful. The reasoning behind his claim is that this exposition just *is* the positing, the

[44] *EL* §108, Addition.
[45] *SL* 122.

setting forth, of all the determinations which at first are merely implicitly present in the concept.

In the *Encyclopaedia Logic* he describes this same manner of exposition when he says that "the whole course of philosophizing, being methodical, i.e., *necessary*, is nothing else but the mere *positing* of what is already contained in a concept."[46] This, then, is snapshot of Hegel's view of how a philosophical exposition progresses: something that, in an earlier section, was only in-itself, i.e., only present in an implicit way, is later set forth in an other, i.e., is posited and expressed.[47] The movement in which the *in-itself* of a less developed philosophical determination becomes *expressed* in the 'other' of a *more* developed determination is, then, a movement continually at work within Hegel's philosophical exposition.

And while we have not invoked the word thus far, this movement that we have been discussing for pages and pages as 'developmental expression' is what Hegel refers to as *Aufhebung*. For, the movement from 'in-itself' to 'posited' is a becoming: a passing away of a previous determination *as that isolated (an-sich) determination*, and the coming into being of a *result*. As something posited, this result is something whose being is a *carrying forward* (albeit in an altered form) of what was present earlier. Thus, Hegel's point that *Aufheben* in the German language has a double sense – both "to cause

[46] *EL* §88.
[47] To put all of this in Kantian terms, Hegel sees the exposition of the concept as involving (although not being limited to) a very, very long string of analytic judgments.

to cease, to put an end to" and "to preserve and to maintain"[48] – is helpful here in understanding what happens when something is posited and expressed.[49]

But for Hegel this kind of expression is operative not only on the level of individual determinations, but also on the largest scale. Most textbook accounts of Hegel mention something about his view that the Idea (i.e., the entirety of the logical sphere[50]) externalizes itself into Nature and then returns to itself by means of Spirit (i.e., the realm of human affairs).[51] It is in this element of Hegel's thought that the dynamic of something becoming what it is through an other is seen at its broadest and most comprehensive level: the Idea expresses itself in the other of Nature[52] so that it can become itself through the realm of human things. More specifically, Hegel's claim is that the Idea 'in-itself' implicitly possesses the character of *knowing itself*, and thus fully becomes itself only when it *actually* knows itself. To reduce it to a few sentences, the Idea's activity of actually knowing itself takes place in this way: first, the Idea has an *other* (and thereby finds *expression*) in nature,[53] one result of which is the existence of the animal organism; second, the human being, as containing the animal organism within itself in sublated form, gives rise to the whole realm of human things; finally, the most

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[48] *SL* 107.
[49] We will see in our discussion of reciprocity in Chapter 4 that when something is expressed, it not only *is* posited, but also *posits*. That is, it *is posited in* its expression, *and* it *posits* its expression.
[50] Insofar as the Idea is the last category in the *Science of Logic*, and insofar as each category contains in sublated form the categories that precede it, the Idea contains all of the determinations of the logical sphere.
[51] Here and below, when I capitalize the words "Nature," "Spirit," "Logic," and "Idea," I do so only in order to more clearly indicate that the meanings intended are those of Hegel's technical senses of these terms, as opposed to their more everyday meanings (e.g., "the nature of X is that…").
[52] *Philosophy of Nature*, §247.
[53] As Hegel puts it in the *Philosophy of Nature*: "Nature has emerged [*sich ergeben*] as the idea in the form of otherness. Since the *idea* is thus as the negative of itself or is *external to itself*, nature is not external simply relative to this idea... rather, *externality* constitutes the determination in which nature is as nature." §247, my translation.

developed dimension of this realm of human things is philosophy, and philosophy just *is* the activity of the Idea – as present and active within embodied human beings – *actually* knowing itself. This view of the whole of things and of the structure and process of its becoming is, to be sure, grandiose and ambitious, but at this point we can see that it is merely a blown-up version of the same basic dynamic that we have been discussing above within the logical sphere, and with the example of romantic love. While the Idea may not be in love with Nature, it nonetheless becomes fully what it is only through Nature, insofar as it is only able to knows itself because of Nature's making possible both Spirit and philosophy.

Given Hegel's view that the dynamic of 'becoming actual through expression' is present *between* the three spheres of Logic, Nature, and Spirit,[54] we can now come to an important conclusion: for Hegel, everything in the realm of Nature and of Spirit is an expression of the Idea.[55] As he puts it in the *Logic*, "…everything actual *is*, only insofar as it has the Idea within itself [*in sich*] and expresses it."[56] Clearly, the expression going on here is – to invoke the terminology we were using earlier – a *developmental* expression of the Idea, in that *by expressing* the Idea it is making the Idea more actual. To further this thought in light of the above discussions: everything in the realm of Nature and of Spirit is (initially, at least) an 'other' to the Idea which, to a greater or lesser extent, expresses the Idea, thereby contributing to it becoming what it is.

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[54] See *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* III, §574-577. Hereafter referred to as "*Philosophy of Spirit*."

[55] It would also be just as correct to say that everything in Nature and Spirit is an expression of being. For, given that being is the first category in the logical sphere, everything in that sphere is an expression of being. (The Idea, insofar as it is the last category in the logic, is being's fullest expression in that sphere.)

[56] *SL* 756.

With all of this in mind, we can now make an 'ontological generalization' of no small importance: in Hegel's view, to ask *what something is* is to ask about *its specific ability to express the Idea*. Put otherwise: what something *is*, *is* its particular capacity of expressing the Idea.[57] For example, Hegel sees a turtle as expressing the Idea better than a rock, human desire as expressing the Idea better than a turtle, ordinary language better than human desire, and music better than ordinary language. This is a somewhat strange statement, so I should describe it with more specificity. First, each of the determinations I have listed is something that is *other* to the Idea; because of this otherness, each is able to *express* the Idea. In expressing the Idea, each of them *contains* the Idea in a form *more developed* than the Idea in-itself, i.e., the Idea as found at the end of the *Logic*. Second, each of these determinations successively *better expresses* the Idea, i.e., better expresses what is implicit within the Idea. What is implicit within the Idea is, among other things, the Idea coming to know itself, and as we discussed above, this takes place in its fullest form by means of a human being doing philosophy. Thus, to put it crudely, a turtle better expresses what is implicit within the Idea than a rock because a turtle is more like philosophy than a rock is.[58] Ordinary language better expresses what is implicit within the Idea than a turtle does because ordinary language is more like philosophy than a turtle is; similarly, music is more like philosophy than ordinary language is.[59] All of these

[57] What something *is* determines how well it is capable of expressing the Idea. But it is just as true to say that what something *is* is determined *by* how well it is capable of expressing the Idea.
[58] I.e., a turtle – *qua* 'animal organism' (*Philosophy of Nature* §350-375) – is more like the determination 'philosophy' (i.e., more like the Idea knowing itself, the *full* expression of the Idea) than a rock is, qua 'geological nature' (*Philosophy of Nature* §338-342).
[59] I.e., music, *qua* 'art' (*Philosophy of Spirit* §556-553) is more like the determination 'philosophy' than language is (*Philosophy of Spirit* §457-460).

examples illustrate the larger point: that what something *is* has to do with its particular ability to express the Idea.[60]

Let us once again specifically connect all of this back to the larger question we are dealing with, viz., what the proper mode of comprehension is. The approach of *applying* more general (earlier) categories to more specific (later) ones is based on the ontological assumption that earlier categories are complete in themselves, and not developed by later ones; it is for this reason that this approach attempts to simply 'lay' the earlier ones indifferently onto the later ones. But, if the nature of philosophical determinations is such that each one is the expression of an earlier one, then in order to *think* a given determination, one would need to think it *out of* the ones that preceded it, i.e., out of that *of which* the determination is an expression.

In light of the entire discussion above, an objection similar to the one mentioned at the end of Chapter 1 could still justifiably be raised: 'If this mode of comprehension as 'expression' is valid across a whole range of circumstances and subject matters, is it not implied that we should *apply* this mode to all these various subject matters? How does this mode of comprehension not fall prey to the same critiques which were leveled against comprehension as application?' A good way of responding to these objections is to conclude the general overview that we have been engaged in thus far and look closely

[60] To give a full account of the issue of various things expressing and thus developing the Idea, we would also need to raise the issue of *history*, along with the difference between development of the Idea in nature and in spirit. For example, Hegel would claim that there is a difference between the way that space (*Raum*) developmentally expresses the Idea and the way that sculpture does. For, space's developmental expression of the Idea has always existed, and has always been constant; by contrast, sculpture in ancient Greek times was developmentally expressing the Idea in a different way than it did before or after. E.g., several hundred years after the apex of Greek sculpture, what was advancing the development of the Idea *historically* was no longer sculpture but painting and music (the "Romantic" arts).

at a specific section of text to see how all this really works. This is what we will do in Chapter 3, in taking up Hegel's claim that "being and nothing are one and the same." But before leaving our current 'overview mode,' I would like to digress for a moment from the discussion of expression as comprehension and, in anticipation of Part III of the dissertation, make a few remarks about how language fits into the general picture of expression that we have been outlining.

d. An Aside on Language

Earlier we spoke of the difference between 'developmental' and 'static' expression, with the latter being the kind which merely externalizes what it expresses. That is, in 'static' expression what is expressed is not shaped or formed by its being expressed, but remains just as it was before being expressed. Examples of this kind of expression can be found in the realm of language (e.g., telling 20 different people at a conference one's academic affiliation and philosophical interests), or outside the realm of language (e.g., drawing the same crude image of the tri-partite soul on the blackboard that one drew the previous year to illustrate a point in Aristotle). But in addition to 'developmental' and 'static' forms of expression – both of which can operate in language and also in other arenas – there is, of course, the more everyday and familiar use of the word 'expression.' This is *linguistic* expression, the type usually associated with reference, sense, meaning, etc. (a theme we will explore at length in Part III).

Leaving aside philosophical language for the moment, we can say that *ordinary* language has the ability to engage in all three of these types of expression. In a discussion above I used 'ordinary language' as an example of one kind of 'developmental'

expression *of the Idea*. But ordinary language's 'developmental' expression of the Idea is something quite different than a scenario in which someone develops a new idea about something (say, about how to make electric motors more efficient) through the process of dialoguing with a friend. While both scenarios involve ordinary language engaging in 'developmental' expression, *what* they are developmentally expressing and *how* they are doing so are of quite a different nature. To better grasp this difference, let us take a step back for a moment and consider the relation between ordinary language's 'developmental' expression of the Idea and its ability to engage in any kind of 'linguistic' expression at all.

Both kinds – the 'developmental' expression of the Idea, and 'linguistic' expression in general (whether 'static' or 'developmental') – are involved in ordinary language. First, insofar as ordinary language *is*, it engages in the 'developmental' expression of the Idea; that is, ordinary language (like everything else that is) expresses the Idea in some fashion by its *mere being*, thereby allowing the Idea to become more fully what it is. Second, insofar as ordinary language *refers*, *means*, etc., it also engages in the 'linguistic' sense of expression. But, these two senses of expression are more tightly linked within ordinary language than simply co-existing in the same entity. For, *the fact that* ordinary language engages in 'linguistic' expression has to do with what it *is*; and, since what a thing *is* determines the *kind* of 'developmental' expression of the Idea in which it engages, this means that ordinary language's 'linguistic' expression just is *its particular manner* of 'developmental' expression. Because ordinary language engages in 'linguistic' expression, it engages in a different kind of 'developmental' expression than,

say, a turtle does (which expresses the Idea not *qua* language, but *qua* animal). Unlike a turtle, language's 'developmental' expression *involves* 'linguistic' expression. Put otherwise, 'linguistic' expression is *one type* of 'developmental' expression, the type in which ordinary language engages.

Philosophical language, too, engages in both types of expression: 'linguistic,' and 'developmental' expression of the Idea. However, the way that these two senses of expression *interact* in philosophical language is not the way that they interact in ordinary language. And this provides us with a first opportunity to begin distinguishing the two kinds of language. Ordinary language engages in a 'developmental' expression of the Idea *qua* ordinary language *regardless* of what it is expresses linguistically, and how it expresses it. With regard to the 'what' (its content), it could be expressing meaning about the weather, a baseball game, a film, etc. With regard to the 'how' (its form), ordinary language could be engaging in either a 'developmental' or a 'static' expression *of its own content* (viz., the speaker's thoughts, about such things as the weather, baseball, or a film). Regardless, it is still engaging in its specific kind of 'developmental' expression *of the Idea*, simply by being what it is, viz., something which expresses meaning by associating ideas with certain sounds in the air, marks on the page, etc. For in general, and as we have already seen, something engages in its particular kind of 'developmental' expression simply by being what it is, insofar as 'being what it is' is the means by which the thing allows the Idea to become more fully what *it* is. And the being of ordinary language does not depend upon expressing any particular content in any particular way. Thus, it engages in a 'developmental' expression *of the Idea* even when it

does *not* engage in developmental expression *of its own content* (viz., the speaker's thoughts being expressed), and *regardless* of what that content is. For, even if ordinary language is *static* with respect to the speaker's thoughts, it is *developmental* with respect to the *Idea*. This is the case because there is nothing within the *being* of ordinary language which entails that it express meaning in a way which develops what it is expressing, or that it express meaning about any particular topic; it does not need to do either in order to be ordinary language. Provided that a given statement is engaging in *some* kind of 'linguistic' expression, its mode and its contents of expression are irrelevant to its status as ordinary language, and thus irrelevant to its 'developmental' expression of the Idea *qua* ordinary language. Both the particular content and the particular form of its 'linguistic' expression are irrelevant to its 'developmental' expression of the Idea.

Philosophical language, by contrast, only *is* philosophical language insofar as it expresses *specific* linguistic content, and insofar as it expresses its own specific content in a *developmental* manner. That is, philosophical language engages in a 'developmental' expression of the Idea *qua* philosophical language *only if* its 'linguistic' expression is of a particular nature, viz., if it is expressing 'philosophical determinations' in a developmental fashion. By 'philosophical determinations' I mean what I mentioned back at the very beginning of Part I, viz., the determinations which Hegel sees are necessary determinations of the Concept, which he gives an account of in the *Encyclopaedia* as a whole.[61] For language to be 'philosophical,' it must be *about* these determinations –

[61] e.g., not 'bulldog' but 'animal,' not 'British constitutional monarchy' but 'the state.'

about what Hegel sometimes calls 'speculative content'[62] – and it must *develop* these determinations through giving an account of them. Thus, these requirements with respect to its content and its form (the latter being its mode of expression) are features which distinguish philosophical from ordinary language. And this clarifies the claim we made at the beginning of the previous paragraph, that the way 'linguistic' expression and the 'developmental' expression of the Idea *interact* in philosophical language is not the way that they interact in ordinary language. Because *what* philosophical language expresses 'linguistically' (its content) and *how* it expresses it (its form) contribute to making philosophical language what it is, this means that its specific content and its specific form are what enable it to engage in its 'developmental' expression of the Idea *qua* philosophical language at all. While this is not the case with ordinary language, both the specific content and the specific form of philosophical language's 'linguistic' expression are *constitutive of* its particular 'developmental' expression of the Idea.

But the relation between philosophical language's 'linguistic' expression and its 'developmental' expression of the Idea is even closer still. Above we mentioned that, for language to be philosophical, its 'linguistic' expression must have a *specific form*, viz., it must *develop* its content in its expression of it; additionally, it must have a *specific content*, viz., content which is 'speculative,' i.e., which consists of one or more of the *philosophical determinations* which constitute the whole. But 'the philosophical determinations which constitute the whole' just *are* the determinations *of the Idea*. This leads us to a significant conclusion. Because philosophical language's specific

[62] *EL* §82, Addition.

'linguistic' expression is a '*developmental'* expression of *its own content*, and because its own content just *is* the Idea, its specific 'linguistic' expression *is* a 'developmental' expression of the Idea. In philosophical language, 'linguistic' and 'developmental' expression are one.

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In the sections above, we have provided a critique of the view that philosophical comprehension takes place through the application of categories, and have offered the alternative claim that it takes place through thinking 'earlier' categories and then *out of them* thinking 'later' categories, with the latter expressing the former 'in their truth.' Because this 'expression' mode of comprehension is the one Hegel subscribes to, and because this dissertation is an attempt to present a view of philosophical language consistent with his thought, Parts II and III of this work will, albeit in a limited and incomplete way, endeavor to use this mode of comprehension.[63]

But before moving on to Part II, we still need to respond to a serious objection to the expression mode of comprehension. As mentioned above, this is the objection that this expression mode is self-contradictory insofar as it critiques the application mode and yet seems itself to be *applied* to the subject matter at hand, standing indifferently over against it. Back at the end of Chapter 1 we raised the similar objection that the 'triadic' structure of Hegel's philosophy (the 'dialectical method') seems to represent a *form* that is *applied* to whatever content is being dealt with at the time. And now we could add to this the question, 'Aren't the dynamics present within expression – in-itself, for-another, etc. –

[63] limited and incomplete insofar as Parts II and III will not be operating in a presuppositionless manner.

indifferent to whatever they are operating within?' To respond to these objections more fully, we will now conclude the high-flying overview that we have been engaged in thus far, and descend into a specific section of text at the beginning of the *Logic* to see what all this looks like at the ground level. Our investigation of the proposition "being and nothing are one and the same," and of why this proposition fails, will illuminate the fundamentally non-formalistic nature of Hegel's thinking, and, along the way, also provide a few more insights into the nature of philosophical language.

3. Expression, in Action: "Being and Nothing is One and the Same"

"In *representation*, or for the understanding, the proposition 'being and nothing are the same' appears to be such a paradoxical proposition that it may perhaps be taken as not seriously meant. And it really is one of the hardest propositions that thinking dares formulate…."[64] In taking an in-depth look at this paradoxical and most challenging of propositions, we will focus on three main issues. First, we will look at why Hegel claims that this proposition is unable to express its content, and, more specifically, why it is unable to express the *movement* present within it. Second, we will investigate what is required *beyond* this proposition such that its content *can* be expressed. Third, we will show why the proposition's failure of expression leads to the coming into being of the triadic 'form' of Hegel's philosophy, and why the particular manner in which it comes into being entails that it is not actually formalistic at all. In addition to shedding light on the issues of formalism/application and expression, another advantage of taking a close look at this particular proposition is that it will gives us the chance to broach several

[64] *EL* §88.

themes on language that will be taken up in more detail in the later parts of this dissertation, especially the question of the way in which philosophical language can be said to 'move.'

a. Its Deficiency

In the Second Remark of the "Being" section, Hegel addresses the defectiveness of the proposition that being and nothing are one and the same. Back in the First Remark, Hegel had described the unity of being and nothing in dramatic terms, calling it "the primary truth" which "constitutes once and for all the basis and element of all that follows,"[65] and claiming that all the logical determinations that are yet to come are "examples of this unity."[66] Additionally, in the First Remark he had discussed why the proposition asserting the sameness of being and nothing is seen by ordinary consciousness to be completely implausible, and then he defended the proposition against these criticisms. It is somewhat ironic, then, that Hegel begins the Second Remark by saying, in effect, that those who find this proposition implausible are *correct* in their assessment. As he explains, "the expression of the result which arises out of the consideration of being and nothing, [as expressed] through the proposition 'being and nothing are one and the same' is incomplete."[67]

The reason that this proposition is incomplete is that, while it expresses the sameness of being and nothing, it does not express their difference. In Hegel's words,

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[65] *SL*, 85, translation emended.
[66] Ibid.
[67] *SL* 90, translation emended. "*…der Ausdruck des Resultates, das sich aus der Betrachtung des Seins und des Nichts ergibt, durch den Satz* <Sein und Nichts ist ein und dasselbe> *unvolkommen ist*."

> The emphasis is laid chiefly on their being *one and the same*, as in judgments generally, where it is the predicate that first states what the subject is. Consequently the sense seems to be that the difference is denied, although at the same time it appears [*vorkommt*] directly in the proposition, for this enunciates both determinations, being and nothing, and contains them as differentiated.[68]

Thus, insofar as the proposition asserts the sameness of being and nothing very clearly, it seems to *exclude* their difference. Yet, their difference is nonetheless *present in* this assertion of their sameness, insofar as this assertion "contains them as differentiated."

With respect to his claim that difference is implicitly present in the proposition, Hegel responds to a possible objection: "At the same time, it cannot be meant that abstraction should be made from them [being and nothing] and only the unity retained. Such a meaning [*Sinn*] would self-evidently be one-sided, because that from which abstraction is to be made is equally present and named in the proposition."[69] That is, if someone claimed that the proposition abstracts away from the difference between being and nothing, and speaks only of their sameness, Hegel would point to the fact that the words "being" and "nothing" are uttered separately within the proposition, revealing that their difference has not been left out of the proposition but is included within it. While the difference is not explicitly expressed, it is nonetheless present; in terms of the language of Chapter 2 above, the difference is *in-itself* but not yet *posited*. Difference is tacit in the proposition, and Hegel says that this tacitness is the proposition's deficiency: it does not fully express its content.

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[68] Ibid., translation emended.
[69] Ibid., translation emended.

The way that the *sameness* of being and nothing is asserted is a familiar one – viz., a sentence directly stating that something is the case. We are also familiar with how a sentence can have a meaning present within it without directly stating it, e.g., one person cooks dinner for a friend, and the friend takes one bite and says, "Maybe I should cook next time." What is less familiar is a situation lacking in all social or emotional context in which a proposition with the basic form "A and B is the same" or "A is B" contains an implied, unexpressed meaning. Additionally, the unexpressed meaning in the proposition about being and nothing is a meaning not just other than, but directly *opposite* to, the expressed meaning of the sentence, making the situation even more peculiar. Thus we can ask: 'What is the *means by which* the difference of being and nothing is present yet not asserted?'

In Hegel's words, this difference "*vorkommt*,"[70] a word that can mean either 'appears' or 'occurs.' So what exactly occurs when something "*vorkommt*" in a proposition, when something not expressed by the proposition is nonetheless present within it? The answer to this question is the other side of the coin to a seemingly more apparent matter, viz., what happens when meaning *is* directly expressed by a proposition.

One approach to gain insight into these matters is to look more closely at the categories of activity and passivity present within Hegel's descriptions. This approach will be limited due to our having not yet worked out what these complicated terms might mean, or how they function within the *Logic*, but for the moment we can just take

[70] *SL* 90.

Hegel's words – and specifically, the verbs he uses – at face value.[71] Given Hegel's claim that difference merely 'appears' or 'occurs' in the proposition about being and nothing, it seems that the proposition is not active with respect to the expression of difference. In terms of the language of Chapter 2 above, the difference is merely 'in-itself.' By contrast, the proposition actively expresses sameness; in terms of Chapter 2, samenesss is 'posited.' For, as Hegel points out, propositions *in general* – language with the basic form of 'A and B is the same' or 'A is B' – actively assert the sameness of their elements, insofar as "the predicate …states what the subject is."[72] And this is just what we see in the proposition about being and nothing, insofar as it "enunciates [*spricht aus*] both determinations"[73] and is thus active in its separate naming of them. However, with respect to the *difference* of these two determinations, i.e., with respect to this one dimension of the *relation between* being and nothing, this proposition plays a passive role. That it plays this passive role with regard to the difference of the two can be seen in Hegel's statement that the proposition simply "*contains* [*enthält*] them as differentiated."[74]

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[71] Taking the words 'active' and 'passive' at face value can only be a temporary measure because, in Hegel's view, one of the main accomplishments of the *Logic* is precisely the overcoming of this distinction. Thus, if in our reading of the *Logic* were to continually associate activity with form (here, the form of proposition), and passivity with content (here, the proposition's content), we would be misinterpreting what the *Logic* as a whole is doing. For Hegel's discussions of how the separation between activity/passivity and between form/content is overcome in the *Logic*, see, e.g., "The Relation of Causality," *SL* 558-571; the discussion of speculative method at *SL* 838-840 and *EL* §238, Addition (see also his commentary on Aristotle at *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* Vol. 2, 164). Another example of how this separation cannot be held fast is Hegel's claim that the 'content' of the *Logic* is active insofar as it generates both itself and the developing 'forms' by which it is thought, 'forms' which were *themselves previously* 'content.' (see, e.g., *SL* 27.)

[72] *SL* 90. More precisely, he is speaking about judgments in this quote, but the assertion applies to propositions as well, insofar as the two are *formally* identical: 'A is B.'

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid, translation emended, my italics.

Further evidence for this proposition's passivity with respect to the expression of difference is found in what Hegel says as he continues to develop this Second Remark:

> Now insofar as the proposition 'being and nothing are the same' enunciates the identity of these determinations, but, in fact [*in der Tat*…in the deed], equally contains them both as distinguished, the proposition contradicts itself in itself and dissolves itself [*löst sich auf*]. Bearing this in mind, we see that here a proposition is posited [*gesetzt*] which, observed more closely, has a movement through which it itself vanishes. But with this there takes place [*geschieht*] in the proposition that which should constitute its actual [*eigentlichen*] content, namely, becoming.[75]

From this quote we see that the 'actual content' of the proposition "being and nothing are one and the same" turns out to be the result of the combination of *two* meanings: the meaning which the proposition *expressed* (regarding sameness), and the meaning which it did *not* express (regarding difference). Thus, so long as the difference of being and nothing is not expressed, neither is proposition's actual content, viz., becoming. For only when the difference of the two is expressed along with their sameness can the proposition *contradict* itself, thus causing it vanish in the movement of its self-dissolution, into becoming. To put this more concisely: no expression of difference, no expression of contradiction (with sameness); no expression of contradiction, no vanishing movement; no vanishing movement, no becoming.

Since this proposition fails to expresses the difference of being and nothing and thus fails to express contradiction, its complete content, becoming, is also not expressed. This is clear from Hegel's description of the proposition's relationship to becoming, for he

[75] Ibid, translation emended.

uses the same kind of 'passive' language in this description as he used to describe the proposition's relationship to difference: just as difference *kommt vor* (appears/occurs), becoming *geschieht* (takes place)[76] within the proposition. And, just as the proposition merely "contains [*enthält*]"[77] the difference of being and nothing, Hegel says that the "proposition thus *contains* [enthält] the result [i.e., becoming]…."[78] Yet, speaking of this result, Hegel goes on to add that the proposition just "is this *in its own self*."[79] We are thus presented a strange situation: it is possible for a proposition – a linguistic, expressive entity – to be *unable to express its own self*. That is, Hegel is claiming that a proposition can contain contents which it itself is unable to express, and which thus remain merely implicit within it.

But Hegel's account of why the proposition about being and nothing is unable to express itself fully does not simply describe this particular proposition; it describes *all* propositions asserting the sameness of two things. For the basic dynamic is the same: a proposition fails to express itself when it fails to express both the sameness *and* the difference present within it, thereby failing to express its own contradiction and specific movement of dissolution contained within itself, which it itself *is*. That Hegel would view his account of this dynamic here at the beginning of the *Logic* as having such far-reaching implications should not be surprising. As we mentioned above, Hegel describes the unity of being and nothing in the First Remark as "the primary truth" which

[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid

"constitutes once and for all the basis and element of all that follows,"[80] claiming also that all the logical determinations which are to come are "examples of this unity."[81] Through what we have seen thus far regarding the proposition about being and nothing, we have thus gained an initial insight into the proposition *in general*. For we can now see that, on its own terms, the proposition in general is stillborn, incapable of expressing the movement within its own self, a movement which is more powerful and more fluid than it can live up to.

b. Its Expression

If the proposition "being and nothing are one and the same" is unable to express its own self due to its failure to express the difference and contradiction present within it, why does the *Science of Logic* not come to an end at its very beginning? The merely descriptive answer to this question is that, when we look at the exposition itself, we see that after the sameness of being and nothing is asserted in one proposition, their difference is asserted by a *second* proposition. In this way, the difference *implicit in* the first proposition is *asserted* in the second. But where does this second proposition 'come from'? In the Second Remark Hegel tells us that something else has stepped in to remedy the inadequacy of the first proposition with regard to its content: "…the fact to which we must pay attention here is the defect that the result is not itself *expressed* in the proposition; it is an external reflection with discerns it therein."[82] An "external reflection" takes over the *active* role which 'should have been' executed by the

[80] *SL*, 85, translation emended.
[81] Ibid.
[82] *SL* 90.

proposition, taking on the role when it "discerns" both the difference and the becoming within the proposition.

A passage from the *Encyclopaedia Logic* version of this same Remark helps to further clarify what is lacking on the proposition's part, and also alludes to what external reflection's specific involvement is. Hegel states: "Indeed, a speculative determination cannot be expressed correctly in the form of such a proposition; what has to be grasped is the unity *in* the simultaneously *at-hand* and *posited* [vorhandenen *und* gesetzten] diversity."[83] So while difference is indeed *vorhanden* and 'in-itself' in the proposition (insofar as it *kommt vor*), the fact that the proposition cannot express this difference means that it cannot *setzen* it, cannot posit it, cannot lay it down. Three other significant points can be drawn from this passage. First of all, we see here once again the intimate connection between 'expressed' and 'posited' that we discussed back in Chapter 2: to say 'what is expressed is *expressed in* its expression' is to say 'what is expressed is *posited in* its expression.'[84] Secondly, Hegel is making a claim about *all* propositions, viz., that they are incapable of expressing both sameness and difference. Due to their *form*, they express either one, or the other. Thirdly, the implication in this quote is that an activity *other* than, and external to, the proposition must come onto the scene in order to take the difference which is merely 'at-hand' in the proposition and posit it or 'lay it down' by

[83] *EL* §88, Remark 4, translation emended.
[84] However, because in 'developmental' expression there exists a reciprocal relation between what is expressed and its expression, it is equally true to say, 'what is expressed *posits* its expression.' This will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

actually expressing it. This is precisely what external reflection does, as we saw Hegel describe a moment ago.[85]

But how does this 'external reflection' express what remains unexpressed in the proposition? Here is Hegel's description: "For the purpose of expressing the speculative truth, the deficiency [of the proposition] is complemented initially by adding the contrary proposition: *being and nothing are not the same*…."[86] Thus the difference in the proposition 'being and nothing are the same' is posited and expressed not by itself, but by a second proposition, 'being and nothing are *not* the same.' This second proposition is laid down by external reflection after it discerns the difference as present but not expressed in the first proposition. Because the first proposition was unable to 'express/press out/*drück aus*' what is present within it, and what it implicitly *is*, external reflection and a second proposition must (so to speak) 'pull out/*zieh aus*' this meaning from it, from an outside position. Or, to follow this last German verb into another of its meanings, we could say that external reflection must 'undress' the proposition, showing it for what it truly is. And the reason it must do this is that the proposition is unable to undress itself.

Of course, for Hegel external reflection is not external to the *Logic* as a whole, but rather external to what it posits, which in this instance is the difference between being and nothing. Such a manner of externality is what we see Hegel describe in the section on External Reflection in the Doctrine of Essence, when he says, "What external reflection determines and posits in the immediate are in this respect determinations

[85] *SL* 90.
[86] *SL* 91, translation emended.

external to the immediate."[87] In the situation we are discussing here, the "immediate" is being and nothing, and what external reflection determines and posits in them is their difference.

However, while external reflection is what brings about thought's movement from the sentence 'being and nothing are one and the same' to 'being and nothing are not the same,' this fact is not manifest in the *actual exposition* of the Doctrine of Being. It is only in the Second *Remark* on Being – i.e., outside of the exposition proper – that Hegel is able to recognize and comment on external reflection's role. For, in the Remark he is speaking from the perspective of one who has already thought through the determination of external reflection *itself*, in the Doctrine of Essence. From this vantage point, he thus possesses the larger perspective to comprehend what is going on 'beneath the surface' of the Doctrine of Being, viz., the "background"[88] constituted by the Doctrine of Essence, which includes external reflection.

To shed a bit more light on external reflection's expression of the difference of being and nothing, and on the difference between what is 'present/in-itself' vs. 'posited/expressed,' we can take the whole the discussion above and situate it within a broader context. The expression of the difference of being and nothing that finally does take place here in the Doctrine of Being (through the statement 'being and nothing are *not* the same') can be productively contrasted with the expression of the *category* of difference that takes place much later, in the Doctrine of Essence. Hegel alludes to this contrast in the first remark on Becoming in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*:

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[87] *SL* 403, my translation.
[88] *SL* 389.

> But correct as it is to affirm the unity of being and nothing, it is equally correct to say that they are *absolutely diverse* too – that the one is *not* what the other is. But because this difference has here not yet determined itself, precisely because being and nothing are still the immediate, it is, as belonging to them, the unsayable….[89]

In the phrase 'being and nothing are not the same,' the difference between being and nothing has been posited and expressed in a *minimal* sense; yet, nothing further can be said about this difference: it is the 'unsayable.' That is, if someone were to say, "OK, being and nothing are different; but, *in what way* are they different?" there could be no response provided at this point in the exposition. The reason for this, Hegel says, is that "difference has here not yet determined itself." As we saw above, difference has not determined *itself* because it has been determined by an *other*, viz., by external reflection. And what Hegel is alluding to with the "here not yet" is that, at a later point, difference *will* determine itself. Indeed, this is just what we see in the Doctrine of Essence, in the account of difference itself. Here, identity and difference are shown to be *inseparable*, i.e., mutually determining and intertwined. That is, they are intertwined not simply with respect to being and nothing (which are both 'the same' *and* 'different'), but also with respect to *themselves*. When we comprehend identity and difference themselves by thinking through the Doctrine of Essence, we can look back over our shoulder at the Doctrine of Being and see why we were unable to account for, or further describe, the difference of being and nothing. Looking back, we can see why we were confused about how being and nothing could be both same *and* different, and we can see why – in light

[89] *EL* §88, translation emended, underline mine.

of what was still in-itself and not yet posited – there was no way, at that point, for us to have been anything other than confused.

c. The Reach of "Being and Nothing is One and the Same"

From Hegel's discussion of the proposition about being and nothing in the Second Remark, we have seen a concrete example of how something that was initially 'in-itself' – merely silently present – is posited and expressed. We have also discovered something important about the nature of the proposition in general, with respect to its inability to express sameness and difference simultaneously. Hegel makes several more statements in the Second Remark which go beyond the discussion of the particular proposition on which he is focusing, and provide insight into the proposition in general. For example, after his initial comment about external reflection being that which expresses the difference of being and nothing, he says, "In this connection we must, at the outset, make this general observation, namely, that the proposition in the *form of a judgment* is not suited to express speculative truths; a familiarity with this fact is likely to remove many misunderstandings of speculative truth."[90] The 'judgment,' as Hegel reveals in the Doctrine of the Concept,[91] is distinguished from the proposition by means of its content; in terms of form, however, it is the same as the proposition.[92] Thus the limitations which apply to the *form* of the judgment also apply to the form of the proposition. In the quote above, then, Hegel is attempting to help his readers avoid a common way of misreading a philosophical proposition. A bit later, he calls a judgment "an *identical* relation between

[90] Ibid.
[91] *SL* 626; *EL* §167, Remark.
[92] see *SL* 410-11, 626.

subject and predicate,"[93] and then says that "if the content is speculative, the *non-identical* aspect of subject and predicate is also an essential moment, but in the judgment this is not expressed."[94] This statement, of course, describes exactly what takes place in the proposition about being and nothing, but it also asserts unequivocally that this inability to express both sameness and difference is not unique to that specific proposition, but instead characterizes all propositions which claim the identity of their parts.

To see another example of this phenomenon, we can look to the comments Hegel makes just before the beginning of the exposition proper in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*. Earlier we mentioned that language which is 'philosophical' is language whose content consists of determinations of the Concept, i.e., language which has 'speculative content.' In following quote we see Hegel use this latter phrase, and we also find a helpful analysis of why a proposition with such content inevitably fails on its own terms:

> …the speculative…contains the very antitheses at which the understanding stops short…. For this reason, too, a speculative content cannot be expressed in a one-sided proposition. If, for example, we say that 'the absolute is the unity of the subjective and the objective,' that is certainly correct; but it is still one-sided, in that it expresses

[93] *SL* 90.
[94] Ibid., 91. Given that this quote is describing *all* identity statements, it is clear that reason that the difference between being and nothing is not expressed in the proposition "being and nothing is the same" is something *in addition* to the fact that this particular difference in its concreteness is here "only meant" and "unsayable" (*SL* 92, *EL* 141). For, while the differences between later determinations are in fact sayable, i.e., able to be described (e.g., the difference between the subjective and the objective), it is still the case that single identity statements regarding such determinations (e.g., "the subjective is the objective") are unable to express the difference between the subject and the predicate.

> only the aspect of *unity* and puts the emphasis on that, whereas in fact, of course, the subjective and the objective are not only identical but also differentiated.[95]

Speculative content, then, is that which possesses a sameness *and* a difference of its parts. So, while the understanding is incapable of seeing the difference present with a proposition expressing identity, we cannot really blame the understanding for this, because the proposition itself fails to express the difference. Its very form – 'A is B' – guarantees that it fails in this respect.

Thus far we have looked at several of Hegel's direct comments in the Second Remark about the relation of 'the speculative' and the proposition. By continuing to think about the failure of the proposition 'being and nothing are one and the same' to fully express its contents, we can arrive at several more conclusions about the proposition in general, and about philosophical language. And – following not the 'application' but the 'expression' mode of comprehension – two points about philosophical language which we will now examine are not *generalizations* made *from* the failure of that specific proposition, but rather the *results of* this failure.

The first of these results can be formulated thusly: the failure of the proposition about being and nothing to express its contents is the *cause* of the failure of *all* philosophical propositions to express their contents.[96] For, this proposition occurs at the very beginning of the *Science of Logic*, and this entails that everything in this work is

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[95] *EL* §82, Addition, translation emended.
[96] This is not to say that the former failure is the *only* cause of all the latter failures. The cause of this former failure – i.e., the reason why the proposition about being and nothing is unable to express the difference which it contains – has also to do with the nature of the copula, viz., the fact that 'is' does not express difference.

contained *in* and comes *out of* this proposition.[97] Earlier we referred to Hegel's characterization of the primacy of the unity of being and nothing in the First Remark, and it is worth quoting his words here in their entirety:

> Since the unity of being and nothing as the primary truth now constitutes once and for all the basis and element of all that follows, in addition to *becoming* itself, all further logical determinations – determinate being, quality, and in general all the concepts of philosophy – are examples of this unity.[98]

The unity of being and nothing, as expressed within the proposition about their sameness, is present in all the determinations that come after it, thereby making up "the basis and element of all that follows." Given the place of the *Science of Logic* in Hegel's thought as a whole, this "all that follows" could just as well be reformulated as 'all' – i.e., the subject matter of the rest of the *Logic*, the *Philosophy of Nature*, and the *Philosophy of Spirit*. If all these later determinations are "examples of" the unity of being and nothing, this means that this first unity is partially *determinative of* these later determinations, by virtue of the fact that it is present within them.[99] Additionally, the fact that the unity of being and nothing is present in all that follows means that what *takes place in the proposition* containing this first unity also takes place in *all the identity propositions that follow*.[100] Far from the proposition about being and nothing being just one example of a

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[97] While being and nothing are *explicitly* contained within it (i.e., *expressed*), everything that follows is *implicitly* contained within it.
[98] *SL* 85, translation emended.
[99] Hegel does not elaborate on precisely what he means here by "example." However, if we use the everyday sense of this word – viz., 'a specific instantiation of a general form' – and if we recall that Hegel sees all determinations as *further determinations of* (i.e., more determinate and specific versions of) the unity of being and nothing in becoming, we can catch the drift of what he means here.
[100] In this paragraph and in the pages above we have been using the word 'unity' as synonymous with 'identity/sameness.' That they are not always interchangeable for Hegel is indicated at, e.g., *SL* 91; yet, in

philosophical proposition, we can see that something like the inverse is the case: each philosophical proposition is actually an 'example' of the proposition about being and nothing.[101]

In light of this, the fact that this particular proposition is unable to express the difference of its parts means that all the others are also unable to. Put more specifically, the failure of the proposition about being and nothing to express the difference of its parts (and thus to express its own contradiction, dissolution, and movement of becoming) means that all further propositions claiming the identity of their parts – i.e., the propositions that express "all further logical determinations"[102] – also are unable to express the difference of their parts and thus their own movement of becoming. All propositions which claim the identity of their parts do so in the non-difference-expressing manner that they have inherited from the inadequate proposition about being and nothing. Thus the defectiveness of the proposition about being and nothing – viz., that it *is* something that it cannot express – is not just its own defect. Because every philosophical proposition is an example of this proposition, every philosophical proposition also contains this defect.

There is a second significant result of the failure of the proposition about being and nothing, and it finally allows us to address more directly a possible objection to Hegel which we raised above. This objection is that Hegel himself engages in the kind of

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practice he does often treat them as such. Here in this specific context we are justified in treating them as synonyms given Hegel's own synonymous usage of the phrases "being and nothing are the same" and "the unity of being and nothing," at *SL* 84-85.

[101] That is, each proposition is either an example of it, or of its opposite, "Being and nothing is *not* the same."

[102] Just to list two examples: "Quantity is quantum." *SL* 202. "Essence is sublated being." *SL* 394.

formalism and conceptual 'application' which he so strongly criticizes. This second result of the failure of the proposition is actually itself the result of the first, but is even more far-reaching in scope, viz., the form of philosophical exposition as *triadic*. Often described as Hegel's 'dialectic' or 'dialectical method,' the three-sided form of logic is probably the most widely known and most widely misunderstood aspects of this thought. We should state here upfront that Hegel is very clear in asserting that this three-sided form constitutes not simply the 'subjective' activity of thinking and its expression, but also the very nature of reality. As he asserts in his anticipatory remarks in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, the form of "the logical [*das Logische*]" is what is three-sided, and what he means by "the logical" is explained by what he says next: "These three sides do not constitute the three *parts* of logic, but are *moments of everything logically real*, i.e., every concept or every truth in general."[103] However, because of the particular focus of our current examination, we will for now confine ourselves to discussing this triadic form simply in terms of its presence within a philosophical exposition.

A summary explanation for why the form of philosophical exposition is three-sided can be formulated in a series of statements: the failure of the proposition about being and nothing is the cause of the failure of every philosophical proposition asserting an identity (i.e., every identity proposition containing speculative content); the failure of every philosophical proposition asserting an identity is the cause of the necessity of a *second* proposition to follow the first, in order to negate the first by stating its unexpressed difference; this expression of difference creates a contradiction with the first proposition,

[103] *EL* §79, translation emended.

thereby leading to the dissolution of both propositions and to the expression of their result in a *third* proposition.[104] With all this in mind, it is evident that, had the first proposition *not* failed – i.e., if it had been able to also express the difference within it – then there would have been no need for a separate proposition to be made in order to express this difference. In this non-existent scenario, the result would be that the 'third' proposition – the one expressing the result of the contradiction – would become the second, thereby making the form of philosophical expositions not *triadic*, but *dyadic*. But as we have seen, this is not the case: identity is expressed in one proposition, and then difference in another, and then their contradiction in a third. (This, of course, is not fully understood in the Doctrine of Being itself, but is more fully grasped in the Doctrine of Essence, when the first three determinations of reflection – 'identity,' 'difference,' and 'contradiction' – are exposited in precisely this order.)

To illustrate this by way of an earlier example, we can say that if the proposition 'the subjective and the objective are the same' expressed not just the identity but also the difference between the two, then this proposition on its own – without the proposition 'the subjective and the objective are *not* the same' – would give rise to its own contradiction and dissolution, and thus to the (merely second) proposition, 'The unity of the subjective and the objective is the absolute.' But, because the proposition about being and nothing fails to express the difference of its parts, so likewise does this later identity

[104] This third proposition is itself *another* identity proposition which does not express the difference within it, which means that it is also the *first* proposition in a *new* triad, insofar as there is the need for another proposition (a 'second') to follow it in order to express its difference.

proposition, as well as all the others, thereby necessitating a negating proposition and determining the form of philosophical exposition as triadic.

From this discussion of the origins of the three-sided form of philosophical exposition, it is clear that this form is not some sort of method which is 'applied' to the matter at hand, and which would therefore come from some external source. Rather, the triadic form *arises through* the first part of logic's exposition, *through* the abilities and inabilities of the language that is used, which is to say: *the triadic form of philosophical exposition arises from the first moments of philosophical exposition itself.*[105]

The importance of this form arising *immanently* can be seen by reflecting back on our earlier discussion of Hegel's critique of the formalism of the understanding (*Verstand*) in the *Phenomenology*'s Preface. As we saw, this approach is used by the understanding to try to grasp what a thing is by applying pre-determined predicates (e.g., subjectivity, magnetism) to it from a chart or schema. In the process, such an applied term is "downgraded to the status of something lifeless since it is merely predicated of another existence, and no cognizance is taken of the immanent life of this existence, nor of how it possesses its indigenous and distinctive self-production and exposition."[106] As this quote makes clear, the formalistic approach does not examine the predicate *itself* as something with its own existence, but instead merely imports it as pre-determined from some external source and then applies it to the matter at hand. In so doing, the question of the *validity* of this external source and its pre-determined terms is never addressed.[107]

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[105] While this is where the triadic form first appears, it is not *posited* until the Doctrine of the Concept, in the syllogism.
[106] *Phenomenology* §53, translation emended.
[107] This is part of Hegel's critique of Kant's categories of the understanding, as alluded to above at fn. 6.

Clearly, this description of the problems inherent in a 'formalism of predication' applies equally to the type of formalism in which a predetermined *method* is used to try to comprehend something. But, this latter type of formalism is even more problematic than the first, given that the use of a pre-determined *method* of thinking obviously raises the question of what method of thinking was used in the pre-determination process itself. It is thus no surprise that in the *Phenomenology*'s Preface Hegel specifically highlights the infeasibility of any triadic form which arises not from the living content of the matter at hand, but from some static and separate source: "Just as little is….the use of this form [of *Triplizität*] to be considered as something scientific when we see it reduced to a lifeless schema, to a mere shadow, and when scientific organization has been reduced to a tabular chart."[108]

Due to this concern and this danger, Hegel insists in numerous places that the 'method' or 'form' of his logic is something neither assumed nor brought in from an external source. As he says in the Introduction to the *Science of Logic*, "…the exposition of what alone can be the true method of philosophical science falls within the treatment of logic itself; for the method is the consciousness of the form of the inner self-movement of the content of logic."[109] Of course, simply *saying* that the method of logic is present *within* the logic itself does not make it so. But from the paragraphs above, we can begin to see why Hegel would think that he had accomplished this. As we observed, the triadic form of logic and of the exposition that expresses it is not a form brought in from an outside source and then applied to the content of the logic; rather, it comes into being

[108] *Phenomenology* §50, translation emended.
[109] *SL* 53.

immanently, out of the content of the logic itself. That is, the triadic form arises out of the failure of the proposition about being and nothing to simultaneously express both their identity and their difference. And because this proposition and its failure arise directly out of the initial attempt to articulate being, we can sum up this entire discussion by saying that *the triadic form arises out of the unsuccessful attempt to say what being is*.

Of course, in Hegel's view this attempt is only *initially* unsuccessful, and as the exposition proceeds, it becomes progressively less and less so. For, the attempt to say what being is – this is the task of philosophy as a whole.

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In this chapter on the failure of the philosophical proposition, we have provided a response to the possibility that Hegel's mode of comprehension is itself formalistic, and have seen comprehension as 'expression' in action. Specifically, we have seen how comprehending what 'becoming' is involves thinking it *out of* being and nothing, i.e., recognizing becoming as the *expression* of being and nothing. This, then, is the root of Hegel's radical anti-formalism, one which extends across the realms of logic, nature, and spirit, and which also entails that logical determinations should not be thought of as applying to the realms of nature and spirit. Rather, logical determinations receive their *expression* and *development in* the determinations of nature and spirit, and to comprehend any of these determinations requires thinking them *out of* the earlier ones.

This mode of comprehension is the one that we will – in a very limited and incomplete manner – attempt to use in much of the rest of this dissertation. Specifically, in Part II we will examine the themes of indifference, reciprocity, mechanism and life.

Then in Part III we will examine the themes of the understanding and reason by thinking them 'out of' those previous determinations. Similarly, also in Part III we will attempt to think ordinary and philosophical language out of the determinations of the understanding and reason, focusing on how these two kinds of language go about defining words, using the copula, constructing sentences, and giving accounts. Naturally, it is not actually possible to think the faculties of the understanding and reason 'out of' the logical determinations of mechanism and life, insofar as it involves skipping (among many other things) the entirety of a small book called the *Philosophy of Nature*. Nonetheless, proceeding in this manner will provide the benefit of seeing the arc of a developmental expression of philosophical determinations.

In the pages above, we have had a glimpse into the nature of the self-movement of philosophy and its language, for we saw that the proposition about being and nothing is the source of its own contradiction, dissolution, and becoming. But we have only scratched the surface of the nature of self-movement in general, and we have not given any consideration at all to its counterpart, the mechanism of externally-imposed movement. In order to better comprehend these two, so as to better comprehend how they are expressed in the realms of thought and language, they deserve their own careful investigation. So we will now give it to them.

Part II. Mechanism and Life

In order to provide an account of philosophical language consistent with Hegel's thought, it will be necessary to distinguish this language – the 'language of reason' – from ordinary language, the 'language of the understanding.' The primary way I will differentiate the two will be to focus on the different ways that they *move*. As mentioned in this dissertation's introduction, Hegel makes a distinction between "external, sensuous movement" and "internal, self-movement proper,"[1] indicating that he views the familiar sense of 'change in spatial location' (i.e., locomotion) as only one of several kinds of movement. While we will not be dealing with this 'external' kind of movement, the "internal self-movement proper" is the kind of movement that, as we will see, is involved in the operations of reason and its language.

There is a third kind of movement, then, which is involved in the operation of the understanding and its language. Loosely speaking, this kind of movement occupies a sort of middle ground between the 'external sensuous movement' of locomotion and the 'internal self-movement' involved in reason; for, the movement of the understanding is one whose origin of motion lies outside of itself (thus involving externality), yet which is a *non*-sensuous and non-spatial movement. Because of its origin's externality, the movement of the understanding resembles the movement of *mechanism*, and, as we will show, stands in contrast to the movement of reason, which is more akin to the movement of *life*.

[1] *SL* 440.

But what does it mean to say that *thought* is something that 'moves'? To start off, we can think of thought moving insofar as it changes from one topic to another. For example, now I am thinking about needing to go buy milk, now I am thinking about what else I will buy at the grocery store, now I am thinking about buying various ingredients in order to make enchiladas, etc. In addition to these sort of 'associative' movements, any act of inference would also be a movement of thought, one in which the various points which thought passes through would have a more direct logical connection.

As mentioned earlier, someone might object to this way of speaking about thought as 'moving' by asserting that it is only metaphorical. Hegel, however, claims that movement in the fullest and truest sense is in fact a movement of thought, specifically the *self*-movement of philosophical thought, i.e., of reason. And insofar as philosophical thought only proceeds in and through philosophical *language*, this language is also characterized by this movement. In Part III we will investigate both the language of the understanding and the philosophical language of reason; there, we will focus especially on how the relations between their elements – between their words, propositions, and combinations of propositions – result in these two languages moving and developing in very different ways: one of them moving in a manner contingent and externally-imposed, and the other moving in a manner necessary and immanently-arising. To set the stage for this discussion, we will devote Part II to an examination of Hegel's conceptions of mechanism and life.

4. Two Kinds of Relations: Indifference and Reciprocity

An initial way to characterize the difference between mechanism and life is to say that the movement of mechanism has its origin in something other than it (i.e., external to), while the movement of life has its origin within life itself. In the natural world, this difference would illustrated by a tractor being driven across a field, in contrast to a dog running across a field. In order to comprehend the differences between mechanism and life, we must consider that which is determinative of their respective movements, viz., the *relations* present within each of them. Put in the most schematic way: within mechanism, the relation is that of 'whole and parts,' which in turn possesses the relation of *indifference*; within life, the relation is that of 'whole and moments,' which in turn possesses the relation of *reciprocity*.

In Hegel's discussion of the relation of whole and parts in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, he states that the whole "*consists* of" the parts and that the parts are "what is independent."[2] On the next page he adds to this description and also links it up with mechanism by saying, "In its superficial form, this is just what the mechanical relation consists in: that the parts, as independent, stand over against each other and against the whole."[3] While the whole depends upon the parts, the parts are indifferent to each other and to the whole, having no need of them in order to be what they are. For this reason, the relation of indifference is what is fundamental to the whole/part relation, and thus what is fundamental to the nature of mechanism.

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[2] *EL* §135.
[3] Ibid. §136, Remark, translation emended.

As opposed to 'whole and parts,' the relation present within life is one which I will call 'whole and moments.' While Hegel himself does not use this phrase, it is a useful one in considering the relation present within the logical category of life. Hegel sometimes illustrates this relation with examples of organic life in nature, where a 'moment' is represented as a 'limb' or 'organ.' In a comment about the limitations of the whole/part relation, he says that "…the members and organs of a living body should not be considered merely as parts of it, for they are what they are only in their unity and are not indifferent to that unity at all."[4] Clearly Hegel is describing a relation that is qualitatively different from indifference, one in which the elements constituting the whole are not only dependent on each other but are just as dependent on the whole as it is on them. As such, the relation standing at the root of the whole/moment relation is one of *reciprocity*. In such a relation, the separation of the moments from each other and from the whole would bring about their passing away. Hegel speaks of the violence of such a separation when he continues the aforementioned illustration about the living body:

> The members and organs become mere 'parts' only under the hands of an anatomist; but for that reason he is dealing with corpses rather than with living bodies. []…the external and mechanical relation of wholes and parts does not suffice for the cognition of organic life in its truth.[5]

Being the corporeal version of a 'moment,' a bodily organ (say, the heart) is what it is only in its relation to the other organs and to the body as a whole. When this relation is destroyed – e.g., by the body dying – the organ becomes a mere 'part' and is indifferent

[4] Ibid. §135, Addition.
[5] Ibid., translation emended.

to that upon which it formerly depended (e.g., a dead heart is not fundamentally changed if it is removed from a dead body). Thus a corpse – and all whole/part relations, whether in nature or not – consist of indifferent parts, while a living body – and all whole/moment relations, in nature or not – consist of moments which are reciprocally dependent on each other and on the whole. With this basic difference between the indifference of mechanism and the reciprocity of life briefly sketched, we can now look more closely at the nature of indifference, since this relation will prove to be crucial not only for mechanism but also for the understanding, and for the language in which the latter operates.

a. Indifference: the Relation of Whole and Part

On the broadest of levels, we can begin by saying that indifference (*Gleichgültigkeit*) appears in a myriad of forms throughout nearly the entire course of the *Science of Logic*. In fact, the role that it plays in the *Logic* is so extensive that one of the most succinct ways of characterizing the text as a whole is to say that the *Logic* is the *process of overcoming indifference*.[6] That is, as the text proceeds, it engages in a series of acts which overcome indifference in its various forms, acts which are progressively more and more successful. To put this in terms of a topic examined in Chapter 2, we could say that as the *Logic* proceeds, what was initially in-itself is gradually and progressively posited, i.e., is no longer in-itself. This process of overcoming the in-itself and indifference continues until the very end of the book, at which point indifference in the logical/ontological sphere is done away with entirely. Characterizing this progressive

[6] "The purpose of philosophy is…to banish indifference and to become cognizant of the necessity of things, so that the other is seen to confront *its* other." *EL* §119, Addition 1.

'overcoming' more specifically, but still very abstractly, we can say that indifference in its various forms is eliminated every time that which initially appeared to be indifferent ends up, through its own doing, not actually being so.

An example of this process, and one of the first major appearances of indifference in the *Logic*, can be found in the treatment of the 'one and the many' in the Doctrine of Being. Here Hegel speaks of each of the many ones – e.g., the atomists' atoms, or Leibniz's monads[7] – as being indifferent to all the other ones. Yet, the many ones are so utterly indifferent to each other that even describing them as 'indifferent to each other' would be to go too far, insofar as this would be to say that they are in a *relation* to each other, even if this is simply the relation of indifference. While the ones stand in a plurality, "…plurality appears not as an otherness, but as a determination completely external to the one….If plurality were a relation of the ones themselves to one another, then they would limit one another and would have, affirmatively within themselves, a being-for-other."[8] Thus, at this level – the level of, say, Lucretius' atoms – entities are so indifferent to each other that to even *call* them such would be, in one's characterization, to do away with the absoluteness of their indifference and externality, to abolish their 'in-itself' character and to set up a 'being-for-other' relation.

However, there is nothing else to do *but* call them external to one another, and any attempt to give an account of one of them in a way that in no way involves the others ends in failure. From this, it becomes clear that they are in fact in a relation of otherness to each other. Thus in at least some way, the ones limit and define each other (e.g., 'part

[7] *SL* 166; *SL* 169.
[8] Ibid., 168, translation emended.

of what it is to be a one is to be *among other* ones which are external to it'), and they are therefore *not* fully external and indifferent to each other. In short, what we learn is that to call any two logical determinations 'completely indifferent' to each other is to contradict oneself.[9]

To gain a fuller picture of the nature of indifference, we will now consider a few more of its manifestations in the *Science of Logic*. We will do so only in an abbreviated way, with an eye to continue laying a foundation for grasping the whole/part relation which underlies mechanism, which in turn is the kind of movement determinative of the understanding and its language.

Indifference plays a particularly large role in Hegel's account of *quantity*, as is evident from his initial definition of it: "…quantity is the determinateness which has become indifferent to being."[10] One instance of note is found in his account of number,[11] and another is found in his account of direct ratio. Regarding the first, Hegel asserts that whereas a thing's *quality* – its qualitative limit – makes that thing just the entity that it is, the *quantitative* limit of a thing, i.e., its magnitude, does not. A thing and its magnitude stand in a relation of mutual indifference: the numbered is indifferent to the number that numbers it, and vice versa. To use Hegel's example, a field whose *quality* changes becomes something else, e.g., a meadow or a forest; but, if its *quantity* changes, it remains a field, simply a bigger or a smaller one. From this example it is clear why

[9] This echoes the opening moves of the *Logic*, where *Sein*, in being characterized as "pure indeterminacy," is in this very act given a determinacy.
[10] *SL* 185.
[11] which he also at times calls 'magnitude.'

Hegel defines the determination of 'magnitude' as that which has "a permanent substratum of being [e.g., the field] *which is indifferent to its determinateness*."[12]

A second instance of indifference within Hegel's discussion of quantity is direct ratio; here, the indifference exists between numbers themselves, insofar as the ratio is indifferent to its various expressions. For example, the ratio 1/2 (or its exponent, 2) can be expressed as 2/4, 4/8, 19/38, etc. In each expression, the initial ratio (e.g., 1/2) is self-standing, unchanging, and 'in-itself.' While any given *expression* of the ratio is *not* indifferent to the ratio, but rather depends upon it, the ratio is indifferent to and unaffected by its particular manner of being expressed.[13] Thus, indifference can be seen as present here only on *one* side of the relation, but present nonetheless.

However, as we saw above with the 'one and the many,' the various forms of indifference present within quantity are gradually overcome, or rather, gradually overcome and undo their own selves. Regarding the example of the field changing size, it turns out not actually to be the case that its quality of being a field is completely indifferent to its quantity; for, if a field were reduced to a 1 inch by 1 inch patch of grass, it would no longer be a field. Clearly, there is a point at which the qualitative determination of a thing *ceases* to be indifferent (i.e., external) to its quantitative determination. That is, there is a point at which quality no longer stands over against quantity as self-subsistent and indifferent. Such a transition takes place in section three of the Doctrine of Being, viz., in the section Hegel entitles 'measure': "Quantum is no longer an indifferent or external determination but as such is sublated and is quality, and

[12] *SL* 186.
[13] cf. the idea of 'static expression' in Chapter 2, pg. 44.

is that by virtue of which something is what it is; this is the truth of quantum, to be measure."[14] As opposed to what we saw in the category of quantity, in the category of measure a change in quantity does lead to a change in quality. In the example of the field, we saw such a disappearance of the indifference of quality to quantity, and we can see it even more plainly in Hegel's example of water changing temperature. The quality of water is often indifferent to its quantity of temperature, but when the temperature crosses either the freezing or the boiling point, this indifference is clearly eliminated insofar as the quality of the water itself changes.

Yet the pendulum swings back in the other direction, and indifference again rears its head when, at the end of the section on measure we find the category of 'absolute indifference' (*absolut Indifferenz*). While indifference has been *operative in* (as an 'in-itself') many previous categories – the one and the many, number, etc. – here it is finally *thematized* (posited and expressed) on its own terms, and in an absolute, i.e., unqualified form. Hegel initially defines it as "the indifference which, *through the negation* of every determinateness of being, of quality, and of quantity, and…measure, mediates *itself with itself* to a simple unity."[15] What he means by this becomes clearer when he says, "Any determinateness it still possesses is only a condition [*Zustand*], i.e., a *qualitative externality*, which has the indifference as a *substrate*."[16] Here we see indifference in its purest form: it is that to which any determinateness whatsoever is wholly external, i.e., it is that which is undetermined and unaffected by anything other than its own self. The

[14] *SL* 323-24.
[15] *SL* 375, translation emended.
[16] Ibid., translation emended.

Science of Logic is an exposition in which the determinations of thought are often characterizations of their *own selves*,[17] and here we observe a classic example of this: absolute indifference is what is absolutely indifferent to all else.

As Hegel points out, the fact that any and all determinateness is external to absolute indifference means that the latter is an "empty differentiation."[18] It is empty in the sense that, if we ask what its determinations are, if we ask what it *is*, the answer would simply be, 'the *negation* of any determinateness, i.e., that which exists self-sufficiently apart from any specific determination.' We can thus see that absolute indifference is a more complex version of the category of 'being,' the "pure indeterminateness and emptiness"[19] which opened up the *Logic*. The difference between the two is that, while 'being' negates determinateness *unqualifiedly* and *indeterminately*, absolute indifference negates determinateness in a specific and determinate way, viz., by making it *external* to itself, in the way that accidents are external to a substrate. This is important for several reasons.

First, absolute indifference shows itself to be self-refuting in the same way that being was: just as being turned out to *not* actually be pure indeterminacy, insofar as 'pure indeterminacy' *is* a determination, so absolute indifference turns out *not* to be the 'negation of any determinateness,' insofar as this negation just *is* its determination, and not in fact external to it.[20] And so, once again, the logical pendulum swings back away from indifference. The second reason that absolute indifference's echo of being is significant is that absolute indifference appears at the conclusion of the Doctrine of

[17] this is just one of the many ways in which the *Logic* stands in the tradition of Plato's *Sophist*, where, e.g., the category of 'other' is *other* to the same, and the category of 'same' is the *same* as itself.
[18] *SL* 375.
[19] Ibid., 82.
[20] However, this only becomes apparent in the Doctrine of Essence.

Being. That is, absolute indifference brings about the *end* of the Doctrine of Being, both in the sense of being its final determination and in the sense of being its completion. The reason that absolute difference is the final determination of the Doctrine of Being is that, while it is a kind of repetition of the first determination (viz., being, as pure indeterminacy), it adds something which that first determination did not possess: a *determinate* negation of determinacy. For this reason, absolute indifference marks the transition into the Doctrine of Essence, where we see that 'essence' is the substratum that is unaffected and independent from that which is external to it (traditionally speaking, its 'accidents,' 'properties,' etc.). That is, absolute indifference marks the coming into being of essence insofar as essence, in its initial form, is a determinate and complete indifference to something specific and determinate, viz., the *unessential*.

In our effort to comprehend the relation of whole and part that determines the mechanistic operations of the understanding, we have been investigating the nature of the indifference which underlies this relation. We have also been observing how indifference tends to undo itself by revealing, on its own terms, that it is *not* indifferent to all others. This phenomenon gives us greater insight into why Hegel finds the formalistic approach to comprehension which we discussed in Part I to be so problematic. Because this approach takes pre-set, pre-determined predicates from some table or schema and then *applies* them to the subject (e.g., animal, to human), it assumes that the predicates are *indifferent* to the subjects, in the sense that the former are not essentially changed or determined by their relation to the latter, but are merely joined to them in an external manner. For Hegel, this is simply not a legitimate assumption to make, and the

problematic nature of this assumption is illustrated by the fact that the human's 'animality' is in fact not indifferent to its presence within the human, but is fundamentally changed by it. As an example, we might think of how the so-called 'animal desires' of humans can take forms that desires in lions or dogs or chickens could never take, e.g., the nature of the desire for food, viz., the near *lack* of desire, that an anorexic feels due to the influence of the advertising, fashion, and entertainment industries.

A final appearance of indifference in the *Science of Logic* which is significant for our purposes is found within the category of difference. Despite its English etymology, indifference (*Gleichgültigkeit* or *Indifferenz*) is not the opposite of difference (*Unterschied*), yet the former can nonetheless be more clearly comprehended when considered against the backdrop of the latter. In Hegel's view, difference takes two forms, diversity (*Verschiedenheit*) and opposition (*Gegensatz*). Put briefly, diversity is that kind of difference in which the differentiated elements do not depend on each other in order to be what they are. For this reason, e.g., a giraffe and a lizard are not simply different but are also diverse, insofar as neither depends on the other to be what it is. As Hegel says in his account of diversity, "what is differentiated *subsists* as the diverse over against the other indifferently, because it is identical with itself …."[21] In diversity we thus see independent self-subsistence – by now, a familiar marker of indifference – situated here in the context of identity and difference. Thus, diversity is a kind of 'indifferent difference.' While the wordplay only shows up in English (cf. the German

[21] *SL* 418, my translation. Diversity is that "in which each of the differentiated *is for itself* what it is, and is indifferent in its relation to the other, which thus is external to it." *EL* §117, translation emended.

gleichgültig Unterschied), the coincidental implication is nonetheless apt: diversity is a difference that, for the things being differentiated, may as well *not* be a difference. That is, when two entities are diverse, their difference from each other is irrelevant to the being of each.

Within the logical sphere, however, diversity and its particular kind of indifference refute themselves. And *because* we are in the logical sphere, where determinations are often thought by means of their own selves, the diverse terms being dealt with here are *identity and difference themselves*. As Hegel says, the reason that identify and difference are indifferent to each other and self-standing is that, for each of them, "identity constitutes its ground and element…."[22] Yet, if difference is self-standing only insofar as it is self-identical, this means that it *depends on* identity, and thus is *not* self-standing. And it is not simply dependent on any old thing – it is dependent on *identity*. The result is that difference does not actually stand in a relationship of indifferent difference (viz., diversity) to identity; rather, it stands in a relationship of *dependent* difference, and this is the second kind of difference: opposition (*Gegensatz*). In opposition, the two that are different *are what they are* directly in terms of being different *from each other*.

We have seen once again, then, how a form of indifference – here, diversity – refutes its own self. Indifference shows up in many further forms in the *Science of Logic*, as well as in the *Philosophy of Nature* and *Philosophy of Spirit*, but our short discussion of it above is sufficient for our later purposes, viz., for seeing how it operates within thought and language. We should now turn to the category that stands over against indifference,

[22] *SL* 418.

that of reciprocity. From the above treatment of indifference we have already seen inklings of reciprocity, e.g., as with the oppositional relation of identity and difference. So our discussion of the category of opposition provides a helpful entry point for an explicit treatment of reciprocity, i.e., of the kind of relation which underlies the whole/moment relation operative within the category of life.

b. Reciprocity: the Relation of Whole and Moment

In some of the forms of indifference above, *both* elements in the relation were indifferent to each other (e.g., the many 'ones'). In other instances, only *one* of the elements was indifferent to the other, with the other depending on the first (e.g., a ratio and its expression). By contrast, it is also possible for two elements to be in a relation which we might call 'two-way dependence.' Just such a relation is what we saw in the category of opposition (*Gegensatz*), where each side of an opposition is constituted by being the other of what opposes it, and thus each is determined through the other (e.g., hot and cold, identity and difference, diversity and opposition themselves, etc.). A *reciprocal* relation has some resemblance to the relation of opposition, but there is an important difference; in the former, the elements are not simply what they are through negating their opposite, but rather through each one explicitly being both the cause and the effect of the other. As Hegel says of reciprocity in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, "The determinations that are maintained firmly as distinct in reciprocity are…*in themselves* the same; the one side is the cause, original, active, passive, etc. just as the other is."[23] If we ask which side of the relation is the cause and which is the effect, the answer is 'both,' for

[23] *EL* §155, translation emended.

each side is simultaneously the cause and the effect of the other. Neither is 'primary,' for both are at the same causal level and each is dependent on the other. This, in outline form, is the relation of reciprocity.

With this in mind, it is evident that whenever we saw indifference being in some way overcome in our discussions above, the relation of reciprocity was closer and closer to coming on the scene.[24] For example, the many ones in 'the one and the many' were seen to be not in fact indifferent, but rather each determinative of the other. The same can be said of identity and difference, which initially stood in a relationship of diversity but which then showed themselves to be mutually dependent (thereby bringing the determination 'opposition' into being).

We are thus now in a good position to make a closer investigation of reciprocity, and also of the relation of 'whole and moment.' In thinking these relations through, a helpful metaphor to use once again is that of a body and its heart, which, when separated by an anatomist, each become something other than they formerly were. Looking to the *Logic*, we see that reciprocity comes onto the scene when causality has been thought through in its entirety. To use the language discussed in Chapter 2, causality is *expressed in* reciprocity; that is, reciprocity is the truth and the *expression of* causality, insofar as it reveals what was implicit within causality. For, Hegel's claim is that if we look at causality closely enough, we will see it transform into reciprocity. And this is what we do see, when we consider the nature of cause and effect.

[24] that is, closer and closer to coming into being as an explicit, posited determination of thought.

In Hegel's words, cause and effect are "not only distinct, but are just as much identical too, and this is even registered in our ordinary consciousness, when we say that the cause is a cause only because it has an effect, and the effect is an effect only because it has a cause."[25] At first glance, the relation of dependence between cause and effect might seem to lie only on one side, with effect depending on cause, and cause being indifferent to and independent from effect. Yet when we consider that a cause is a cause only insofar as it *has* an effect, we can see that cause turns out to be dependent on effect.[26] Thus, each is dependent on the other. This 'seemingly one-way but actually two-way dependence' is a familiar phenomenon for readers of Hegel, as seen, e.g., in the relation of ground and grounded (in the realm of logic), and in the relation of master and slave (in the realm of spirit).

With all this in mind, it is a bit easier to interpret Hegel's more technical but also more revealing description of the reciprocal relation of cause and effect:

> The effect [*Wirkung*] is *diverse* from the cause; as such the effect is *posited-being* [Gesetzsein].[27] But posited-being is equally reflection-into-self and immediacy, and the action [*Wirken*] of the cause, its positing [*Setzen*], is simultaneously *presupposing* [Voraussetzen], insofar as the diversity of the effect from the cause is held fast.[28]

The reason why Hegel emphasizes that the effect is *diverse* from the cause is illuminated by considering the German words at play here: while a cause's action (*Wirken*) is not

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[25] *EL* §153, Addition.
[26] Naturally, we are here simply talking about cause and effect *qua* cause and effect. When dealing with, say, material things, such as a carpenter and a house, we could make the same reciprocal analysis of cause and effect, but we would need to be more specific. For example, it would not be true to say that the house is both the effect and the cause of *the human* who is this carpenter, but it would be true to say that the house is both effect and the cause of the human *qua carpenter of this house*.
[27] see Chapter 2, fn. 42.
[28] *EL* §154, translation mine.

something distinct from it, a cause's effect (*Wirkung*) is. The cause posits the effect, and the effect is a "posited-being" insofar as it is something with its own distinct identity and "reflection-into-self,: something that is *other* than the cause. But as soon as we recognize the effect as something other than the cause, standing over against it, we recognize that the cause's *causing* (i.e., positing) of the effect entails that the cause *is caused by* (i.e., presupposes) the effect. For, as we saw above, the cause is only able to *be* a cause when it has an effect. If we were approaching these matters in the mode of ordinary consciousness, we would want to say merely that the cause posits (*setzt*) the effect, and that the effect presupposes (*setzt voraus*) the cause (i.e., posits the cause as logically *in advance* [im voraus] of it). This is the usual, everyday idea of cause and effect. However, given that each of them is both the cause and effect of the other, this means that the cause not only posits *but also presupposes* the effect, and that the effect not only presupposes *but also posits* the cause. This is why Hegel says in the quote above that the cause's "positing [*Setzen*], is simultaneously *presupposing* [Voraussetzen]…"[29] In light of this mutual acting and being acted upon, we can see why Hegel would say that "causality has passed over into the relationship of *reciprocity* [Wechselwirkung]."[30] So long as the two sides are maintained as distinct, "the one side is the cause, original, active, passive, etc. just as the other is."[31] The relation of causality has passed away, and given way to reciprocity; that is, reciprocity is the *expression of* causality, insofar as reciprocity posits and makes explicit what was in-itself and implicit within causality.

[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., §154, translation emended.
[31] Ibid., §155, translation emended.

The category of reciprocity allows us to clarify two points made back in Chapter 2. In the first part of that chapter, we spoke about 'static' expression as a kind of expression in which the expression depends on the expressed, but the expressed does not depend on the expression (e.g., telling someone your academic affiliation.) We also spoke about 'developmental' expression, where the expression depends on the expressed *and* the expressed depends on the expression, insofar as the expressed becomes fully what it is only through the expression (e.g., essence as the expression of being; clarifying a thought in your own mind by expressing it to a friend, etc.). In light of what we have discussed so far in this chapter, it is clear that 'developmental' expression contains a *reciprocal* relation between what is expressed and its expression: each is the cause and the effect of the other.

A second, related point from Chapter 2 is also clarified through the lens of reciprocity. When we spoke about the relation of 'expression' and 'positing,' it was not always clear just what this relation was. For, one can say, 'when A is expressed in B, A is posited'; but, it seems one can *also* say, 'when A is expressed in B, *B* is posited.' Looking to an example of this will be helpful. In reference to Book One and Book Two of the *Logic*, one might say, 'when Being is expressed in Essence, Being is posited.' This captures the synonymous nature of 'expressed' and 'posited' that we noted back in Chapter 2. But one might *also* say, 'when Being is expressed in Essence, *Essence* is posited.' For given that Essence comes-into-being *out of* Being, it would seem that

Essence is 'laid down,' 'set down,' *gesetzt*.[32] So, which of the two formulations is correct? Both are. In light of the category of reciprocity, we can see that there is no conflict between the two formulations: when Being is expressed in Essence, Being is posited *and* Essence is posited. Being is posited by Essence insofar as Being becomes more fully what it implicitly was when it *becomes* Essence; Essence is posited by Being insofar as Essence is a development *out of* Being, i.e., insofar as thought had to think *through* Being in order to arrive at Essence. Thus, Being and Essence *each posit (*setzen*) and presuppose (*voraussetzen*) each other*.[33] So, to return to (and to rephrase) the larger point we are working with here: 'when A is expressed in B, A *and* B are posited, because they are reciprocally related.'[34]

After this brief account of the relation of reciprocity, we are now in a better position to grasp what Hegel means by a 'moment,' and how it differs from a 'part' (the latter being characterized by indifference). To do so, we will consider once more the transition from causality to reciprocity. In the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, Hegel describes causality as a "straight-line progression from causes to effects and effects to causes."[35] Placed within the largest context, such a progression would entail that everything that is could be traced from, or traced to, something like a First Cause. With reciprocity, however, Hegel says

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[32] In Hegel's initial (pre-reciprocal) description of cause and effect, he says that cause *posits* the effect (*EL* §154). This makes it clear that relation of cause to effect is one of positing. And since being in *some* sense is the 'cause' of essence, being in some sense *posits* essence.

[33] Back in Chapter 3 we noted Hegel's claim in the Second Remark on Being that 'external reflection' – a determination in the Doctrine of *Essence* – is what discerns the difference implicit within the proposition 'being and nothing are one and the same.' We also noted that this is a clear instance of Hegel's claim that the Doctrine of Essence is the "background" of the Doctrine of Essence, working silently and behind the scenes all along. This strange situation becomes slightly clearer now that we recognize that being and essence are in a *reciprocal* relation, each being both the cause and the effect of the other.

[34] Applying the same dynamic to another example, we can say that 'when the Idea is expressed in Nature, both the Idea *and* Nature are posited, each positing and presupposing the other.'

[35] *EL* §154, Addition, translation emended.

that this straight-line progression is "*bent around* and *back* upon itself."[36] Yet it would be a mistake to think that, within this 'circle' of causality, we should simply trace the relation of one cause to another cause; instead, Hegel says, "the development of this relation [of one cause to another], the reciprocity, is…itself the alteration of the *distinguishing*, now not of causes but of moments…."[37] What Hegel is stating here is that, when we comprehend what is implicit within the relation of cause and effect (effects being themselves the cause of causes, etc.), we change the way that we go about distinguishing them: we set them over against each other no longer as causes, but as 'moments.' And as we will see, while moments have a 'closer' relation to each other than causes, this does not mean that they morph into each other in an undifferentiated way. They are still *distinguished* from one another, but now as something called 'moments.'

The above quote also illuminates a claim that Hegel makes on a much broader scale: that, contrary to the 'straight-line' model of causality with its self-standing First Cause, the logical sphere is not independent and self-standing over against the realms of nature and spirit. Rather, the three are *moments* of the whole: they *posit and presuppose each other*. Uncovering some of the ways in which philosophical language not only presupposes but also posits all three of these realms will be one of our goals in Chapter 7.

Coming back down to the smaller scale, though, we need to discuss in more detail what a moment is. A helpful way to start thinking about what Hegel means by this term is to compare it with an idea used by his ancient Greek counterpart. In *On the Soul*,

[36] Ibid., translation emended.
[37] Ibid., translation emended.

Aristotle speaks of parts that are "separable only in definition."[38] He invokes this same idea in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, when he asks if the rational and non-rational elements of the human soul are distinguished "as everything divisible into parts are," or, instead, "are they two in definition [in *logos*], and inseparable by nature, as the convex and the concave are in a surface?"[39] Aristotle is implicitly asserting here that something can be separable *only* in definition/speech, and inseparable by nature. This idea is quite similar to Hegel's idea of a 'moment.' Both are referring to that which we can isolate in the way that we *speak* about it, but which, if isolated 'in reality,' would cease to be the thing it is.[40] By looking at the larger context of Aristotle's quotes above, it seems that one of his reasons for calling attention to these two ways of separating things is a concern that, since we are able to separate certain things in speech, we might erroneously believe that these things can also be separated in reality and remain what they are. Hegel shows a similar concern in the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, when working out the relation of the true to the false:

> It is precisely for sake of pointing out the significance of the moment of *complete otherness* that their expressions [viz., the expressions 'the false,' and 'the true'] must no longer be employed in the instances where their otherness has been sublated. […]…the expression of the *unity* of subject and object, of the finite and infinite, of being and thought, etc., has a certain clumsiness in that 'subject' and 'object,' etc., mean what *they*

[38] *On the Soul*, trans. Hippocrates G. Apostle (Grinnell, IA: The Peripatetic Press, 1981), 413b15.
[39] *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin, 2nd edition (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1999), 1102a30-33.
[40] This statement will need to be refined when dealing with language more explicitly, i.e., when language itself is the 'reality' of which we are speaking.

> are *outside of their unity*, and therefore in their unity, they are not meant in the way their expression states them….[41]

If two entities enter into a relation of such a kind that it changes what the two entities are, there would clearly be a problem with using the same words to signify the two entities *in* the relation that were used to signify them when not in the relation. Like Aristotle, Hegel recognizes that some relations are *constitutive* of their relata, and thus recognizes that our speaking and thinking about such relata should be done with this fact very much in mind.

To name the relata in such a 'constitutive relation,' the German language had a word readily available for Hegel's usage: '*das Moment*.' And as a language with gendered nouns, German has the means to clearly distinguish *das Moment* from the *temporal* sense of the word, '*der Moment*.'[42] Naturally the English language has no such distinguishing resources, and the fact that English translations of Hegel use 'moment' for '*das Moment'* has no doubt led untold numbers of readers into prolonged fits of despair. Yet to be fair to the translators, it is difficult to know which single word in English would actually capture the meaning of *das Moment*. Fortunately, though, a word whose meaning cannot be grasped through a single translated word *can* be grasped through multiple translated words.[43]

As a preface to looking at Hegel's specific meaning of *das Moment*, it is useful to consider the *Duden Wörterbuch*'s entry for the word: "1. crucial or determining circumstance, aspect.

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[41] *Phenomenology* §39, translation emended.
[42] but, unfortunately, not in the dative case, or when paired with certain indefinite articles.
[43] Evidence for this is that a word can be defined by means of multiple words in the *original* language.

2. (Physics) product of two magnitudes, one of which is usually a force (e.g., force x lever)."[44] While neither of these standard definitions constitutes Hegel's meaning of the word, his direct reference to them clarifies the way in which they inform his own definition. In the Remark on *Aufheben* in the *Science of Logic*, he states, "In the case of the lever, *weight* and *distance* from a point are called its mechanical *moments* on account of the *sameness* of their effect, in spite of the contrast otherwise between something real, such as a weight, and something ideal, such as a merely spatial determination, a line."[45] In the lever, a mechanical moment (e.g., weight, which is 'real') combines with something else in *contrast* to it (e.g., distance, which is 'ideal,' and also a mechanical moment); yet despite this contrast, the two nonetheless have the *same effect* with respect to the 'end product.' The fact that each of the two contributes in an *essential* way to the result of their combination connects with the first *Duden* definition of 'determining aspect' (as opposed to, say, a non-determining, nonessential aspect); and, even though Hegel's description of the moment in a lever is somewhat different from the second *Duden* definition,[46] he is clearly drawing from the same set of terms.

Despite the irony of using a *mechanical* analogy to talk about what is (in a logical sense) utterly non-mechanical, Hegel's own definition of a moment bears certain similarities to the description of the lever. His most direct statement of his own definition in the Remark on *Aufheben* reads as follows: "Something is only sublated insofar as it enters into unity with its opposite [*Entgegengesetzten*]; in this more specific

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[44] 1. *ausschlaggebender Umstand, Gesichtspunkt* 2. *(Physik) Produkt aus zwei Größen, deren eine meist eine Kraft ist (z.B. Kraft × Hebelarm)*.
[45] *SL* 107, translation emended.
[46] That is, he speaks of it not as a *product* of two entities but as an entity which is united with another entity, thus *resulting in* a product.

determination as something reflected, it can be fittingly named a *moment*."[47] We can see, then, that a moment is a.) what enters into unity with its opposite, and b.) what is therefore sublated. We can also infer from this that, in order to be a moment, something must *have* an opposite.

Furthermore, when a moment enters into unity with its opposite, there is a result. Thus, like the mechanical moment, a logical moment involves the unification of two contrasting entities resulting in a 'product,' a product to which each of the two entities essentially contributes. And of course it is no accident that Hegel chooses to speak directly about what a moment is here in the Remark on *Aufheben.* For, to comprehend what a moment is requires a consideration of the nature of *Aufhebung*, and vice versa. Back in Chapter 2 we spoke briefly of this topic in relation to 'developmental expression'; for, both a moment and 'developmental expression' involve a movement from something being 'in-itself' to being 'posited,' a process of becoming in which a previous determination passes away as an isolated (*an-sich*) determination and a *result* comes into being. In light of what we have discussed thus far in this chapter, the nature of *Aufhebung* – particularly its *two-sided* nature – begins to become more transparent. In terms of the two meanings that the word combines – "to cause to cease, to put an end to" and "to preserve, to *maintain*"[48] – we can now see that the 'ceasing' dimension takes place because the determination *as isolated and indifferent* turns out not actually to be so, but rather is *reciprocally* related to something else (viz., to something *entgegengesetzt*). That is, what was initially an indifferent 'part' – what, on its *own* terms, was a self-

[47] *SL* 107.
[48] Ibid., 107. "*aufhören lassen"* and "*aufbewahren*, erhalten."

standing whole – becomes a moment. Thus, *qua self-standing*, i.e., *qua part*, the determination is 'caused to cease.' However, because it nonetheless contributes to the *larger* whole of which it is a moment, it is not done away with completely, but rather in its contribution to this larger whole is 'preserved and maintained.' Thus the first dimension of *Aufhebung* occurs when an indifferent and self-standing part is revealed not to be so, i.e., is revealed to be a moment, and the second occurs when this part-turned-moment continues to contribute to the being of the new, larger whole.

To gain a more nuanced grasp of this process, let us examine the section on Becoming in the *Science of Logic*. The first part of this section is entitled "Unity of Being and Nothing," with the second part entitled "Moments of Becoming." Simply from this progression of titles we can see Hegel attempting to address the concern he expressed in the *Phenomenology*'s Preface about speaking of moments as being in a 'unity,' saying that "the expression of the *unity* of subject and object…has a certain clumsiness in that 'subject' and 'object,' etc., mean what *they* are *outside of their unity*, and therefore in their unity, they are not meant in the way their expression states them…."[49] Looking to the text of the section "Moments of Becoming," we see Hegel addressing this concern further, as he works through how to speak about moments in their relations without, through this very speech, portraying them as something other than what they are. He states, "Becoming, coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be, is the unseparatedness of being and nothing; [it is] not the unity which abstracts from being and nothing, but rather as the unity *of being* and *nothing* it is this *determinate* unity, or that in which both

[49] *Phenomenology* §39, translation emended.

being and nothing *is*."[50] If a unity could be abstracted away from its constitutive elements, this would mean that these elements could be properly thought *apart* from the unity, and thus would have the status of being 'parts.' The fact that this is not the case with being and nothing is indicated by Hegel when he says that being *is* (i.e., is what it is) and nothing *is* only *in* the unity. Exercising particular care in choosing his words, he emphasizes this point by stating, "…insofar as being and nothing is each unseparated from its other, *it is not*. Thus they *are* in this unity…"[51] In isolation from each other – linguistically speaking, as 'singular' – being and nothing are not what they are, but rather are what they are only as united, i.e., as 'plural.' Hegel emphasizes this with his stressed use of the grammatical singular in reference to each of them – "*it is not*" – and with his stressed use of the plural – "they *are* in this unity."

Picking back up on that sentence, Hegel finishes the paragraph by saying, "Thus they *are* in this unity, but as vanishing (*Verschwindende*), only as *sublated* (Aufgehobene). They sink from their initially imagined *self-subsistence* into *moments*, *still differentiated* but simultaneously sublated."[52] And then on the next page, "…becoming as such *is* only through their differentiation."[53] From these quotes we see the specific way in which the dual-sided nature of *Aufhebung* – a bringing-to-an-end and a preservation – is essentially intertwined with the dual-sided nature of what a moment is. What it is to *be* a moment is to have been *brought to an end* as independent, insofar as it loses its former independence within a larger whole (as we see happen with both being and nothing, in becoming); yet,

[50] *SL* 105.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid., 106, translation emended.

the other side of the nature of a moment is to be *also preserved* within that whole, insofar as the moment contributes a *continuing differentiation* in the whole. Such a preserved differentiation is what we see in becoming, insofar as it has the determination of coming-to-be (a movement from nothing to being) *and* ceasing-to-be (a movement from being to nothing). One might be tempted to say that, when parts lose their self-subsistence within a unity, this unity is then an *undifferentiated* unity, a 'pure one'; but, this is precisely is not the case due to moments, which are non-self-standing *and yet* maintain differentiation within the whole. This is what Hegel means when he says that "what is sublated is simultaneously something preserved; it has lost its immediacy but is not for this reason annihilated."[54] A moment is what is sublated, and what is sublated is what joins with its opposite: what both *determines* and is *determined through* its opposite. So, it has "lost its immediacy" due to mediating and being mediated by its opposite. This reciprocal determination, however, does not reduce either of the moments to nothing. Rather, the *result* of the two moments – i.e., what comes into being through their sublation – "has the *determinateness out of which it originates still within itself*,"[55] namely, the determinateness *of the two moments*. In light of this, we see Hegel addressing, at least partially, his concern about improperly naming being and nothing by using the same words to name them *outside of* their unity as *in* their unity. In short, we no longer refer to them as 'being' and 'nothing,' we refer to *the two together* as 'becoming.'

To see a more concrete example of how an *Aufhebung*'s result – a whole with its moments – preserves its moments within itself, we can look to the manner in which

[54] Ibid., 107.
[55] Ibid., my translation.

becoming itself *becomes*. As mentioned several times above, the determinations in the *Logic* are involved in thinking the other determinations in the *Logic*. This is so because, in this work, thought is thinking through the different possible determinations of its own self, i.e., is thinking through its own self. Thought is an activity: things are *happening within* thought, and thought is thinking about them.[56] Thus, thought does not import any of its various contents or its various forms from outside of itself (i.e., from outside of the *Logic*). Rather, as Hegel mentions several times in the *Science of Logic*'s Introduction, the forms of thought *are* the content of thought.[57] That is, the progression of the *Logic* is a continuous oscillation of some specific content of thought *becoming* some specific form of thought,[58] and of some specific form *becoming* some specific content.[59] For this reason, all of the various determinations of thought are thought *by means of other* determinations of thought. This is, in part, what Hegel means when he says that in the logical sphere, the Idea is 'within itself' or 'at home' with itself, a point which becomes clearer when we contrast it with his claim that, in the sphere of *nature*, the Idea is 'outside itself.'[60]

A further dimension of logic's 'being within itself' involves specific thought determinations being thought in terms of their *own specific selves*. To list a few

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[56] e.g., after the differentiation of the thought determination 'identity' and the thought determination 'diversity,' thought recognizes that they are in a relation of opposition; *in this recognition*, thought is thinking 'opposition,' and the thought determination 'opposition' has therefore appeared. Ibid., 424.
[57] Ibid., 43, 49-50.
[58] e.g., after 'Dasein' is thought through in Chapter One of "Quality", 'Fürsichsein' is thought *in terms of* Dasein, in Chapter Two. Ibid., 158.
[59] e.g., in the Doctrine of the Concept, the form of the Concept thinking itself *becomes* the content of it thinking itself, in the transition from 'The Syllogism' to 'Mechanism' (i.e., from the section "Subjectivity" into the section "Objectivity").
[60] To illustrate this further, we can note that the self-reflexive, 'within itself' dynamic of the logical sphere exemplified in fn. 59 above simply does not occur in the natural sphere. E.g., the determination 'plant' is not a *form* of thought which then becomes the *content* of thought in a later determination.

examples: 'difference' is that which is *different from* identity; 'something' (*Etwas*) is itself *a* something, a something which is contrasted over against an 'other'; 'other' is that which is *other* than 'something'[61]; and, at the culmination of the *Logic*, the Idea is *thought through its own self*.[62] While this phenomenon takes place throughout the *Science of Logic*, it is not posited and *accounted for* until the Doctrine of the Concept, where one sees that, and how, the universal (via its differentiation in the particular) *becomes* the individual. Nevertheless, it is a regular occurrence throughout the work that a determination is thought in terms of its own specific self.

Let us now relate this 'self-reflexivity' of the logical sphere to the issue of becoming, i.e., to the double determination of ceasing-to-be and coming-to-be. First, we note that it was due to being and nothing *ceasing to be* the self-standing parts which they initially were that becoming itself *came into being*. Furthermore, becoming not only comes into being; *it also itself ceases to be*, i.e., ceases to be what it is in its isolation. This is what we observe in the third and final part of the section on Becoming, "Sublation of Becoming [*Aufheben des Werdens*]." Here Hegel explains that, first of all, becoming "rests on the difference between" being and nothing (as we have already seen in some detail); yet, secondly, becoming is also "the vanishing of being in nothing and of nothing in being…."[63] That is, when we fully grasp what being and nothing are as moments of becoming, we can no longer distinguish them *as* being and nothing. "Their vanishing,"

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[61] *SL* 116-122.
[62] Ibid., 825. To be precise, the Idea is not actually thought *in terms of* its own self (as is the case, e.g., with 'Etwas'); for, to speak of 'the Idea *of* the Idea' would be precisely to introduce the differentiation within the Idea that was *overcome* through the first two chapters of "The Idea," viz., the chapters "Life" and "The Idea of Cognition."
[63] *SL* 106.

says Hegel, "is therefore the vanishing of becoming or the vanishing of vanishing itself. Becoming is an unstable unrest which collapses into a restful result."[64] Thus, after becoming *becomes* by coming-into-being, it becomes again by vanishing, i.e., by ceasing-to-be. (And the "restful result" here is, of course, *Dasein*, 'determinate being.'[65])

This conceptual self-reflexivity at work within becoming is captured nicely in the double genitive of the title that Hegel uses for the final section on becoming, "Sublation of Becoming." The *objective* genitive signifies that becoming is *being* sublated: becoming ceases to be self-standing, and becomes a moment within *Dasein*. The *subjective* genitive signifies that becoming is *enacting* its sublation: the ceasing-to-be of becoming and the coming-to-be of *Dasein* are possible only as a result of the two sides of *becoming itself*, viz., ceasing-to-be and coming-to-be. The fact that becoming both *is* sublated, and *sublates*, along with the fact that both becoming and *Aufhebung* are so similarly double-sided,[66] reveals the intimacy of these two determinations. For Hegel, *Aufhebung* is the inner activity of becoming, its beating heart.

Yet in all of this, we still have not fully addressed what becomes of the *moments* of becoming. First, as we have already seen, being and nothing *as isolated* ceased to be, and yet were preserved within becoming as its two moments, coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be. Second, in the sublation of becoming, being and nothing *as those two specific moments* also cease to be. Hegel describes this process in detail in the Remark on *Aufhebung*, and also speaks directly to the issue of the *changing meaning* of being and nothing:

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[64] Ibid., my translation.
[65] This is a premonition of what will occur in the Doctrine of Essence, when contradiction – which turns out to be the means by which all *Aufhebung* and all becoming have been taking place – collapses into ground.
[66] in becoming, 'ceasing-to-be' and 'coming-to-be'; in *Aufhebung*, 'caused to cease' and 'preserved within a new result.'

> The more precise meaning and expression which being and nothing receive, now that they are *moments*, is to emerge in the observation of determinate being, in which they are preserved. Being is being and nothing is nothing only in their differentiation from each other; but in their truth, in their unity, they have vanished as these determinations and are now something other.[67]

Clearly, the phrase "in their differentiation from each other" is referring to the two as moments of becoming. But, now that becoming has been sublated, they have vanished *even as those two moments*. Resuming the above quote, Hegel sums up this two-step process one more time, ending the Remark on *Aufhebung* and the entire chapter on being by stating the following:

> Being and nothing are the same, but *just because they are the same they are no longer being and nothing* and have a different determination; in becoming they were coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be; in determinate being, as a differently determined unity, they are again differently determined moments. This unity now remains their foundation, out of which they no longer proceed in the abstract meaning of being and nothing.[68]

After having become coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be, being and nothing – as both essentially altered and yet preserved – are *again* essentially altered and yet preserved in *Dasein* ('determinate being'). In the new unity of *Dasein*, "they are again differently determined moments" (which, we later learn, are the moments of 'something' and 'other').

Throughout the entire *Science of Logic* we continue to see the effects of being and nothing as, in the form of different moments in new unities, they continue to shape

[67] *SL* 107-8, translation emended.
[68] Ibid., 108, translation emended.

thought's determinations. And of course the same can be said for these later moments as well, such as 'something' and 'other,' which are also brought to an end and yet whose influence continues to be present, insofar as their ceasing-to-be contributes to the specific nature of the result that come-to-be. When a new immediate determination – e.g., finitude – comes into being and then comes face to face with its opposite – e.g., bad infinity – it turns out not to be immediate, not to be indifferently self-standing, but rather to be a moment of its opposite, and vice versa. Staying with this particular example, we can note that Hegel's description of finitude and bad infinity equally applies to *every* moment and its opposite: "Therefore in *each lies* the *determinateness* of the *other*…"[69] To reference another example, we see this description of the reciprocity of moments in the two moments of difference, diversity and opposition: "they are sides of difference, one determined only through the other, and therefore only moments…"[70] And finally, to take an example from the Doctrine of the Concept:

> …the moments of the Concept cannot be separated; the determinations of reflection are *supposed* to be grasped and to be valid each for itself, separated from the one opposed to it; but since in the Concept their *identity* is *posited*, each of its moments can only be grasped immediately out of and with the others.[71]

Thus, in thinking through the Concept, one is thinking through the determinations of reflection (from back in the Doctrine of Essence) now as moments and in their genuine unity.

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[69] Ibid., 143.
[70] Ibid., 431, my translation.
[71] *EL* §164, translation emended.

With this, our investigation of Hegel's view of a 'moment' is adequate for the tasks ahead. In this chapter thus far, we have been investigating two pairs: indifference and reciprocity, and 'part' and 'moment.' To close out this section, it seems appropriate to note what kind of relations exists *within these pairs themselves*, i.e., to note the relation between indifference and reciprocity, and between 'part' and 'moment.' It is not difficult to see that the relation in both pairs is one of *reciprocity*, such that, within each pair, each side is a *moment*. To spell this out in self-reflexive terms: 1.) indifference is *not* indifferent to the 'indifference-reciprocity' relation; 2.) reciprocity is reciprocally involved in the 'indifference-reciprocity' relation; 3.) 'part' is a *not* a part (but rather a moment) of the 'part-moment' relation; 4.) 'moment' is itself a moment of the 'part-moment' relation. Given that 'part' and 'indifference' are posited (i.e., explicitly expressed) *earlier* in the *Logic* than 'moment' and 'reciprocity' are,[72] what these four self-reflexive descriptions illustrate more broadly is something we have spoken of several times in the pages above: that the progression of the *Logic* is the decreasing of indifference and the increasing of reciprocity, and that the work as a whole enacts the overcoming of indifference. Said otherwise, the work as a whole involves indifference *undoing its own self*, for it is its *own negation*. This can be seen now even more clearly, given that indifference turns out to be not even indifferent to reciprocity.

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[72] Because the account given of a moment very early on in the *Logic* is located in the Remark on *Aufhebung*, not in the body of the exposition, it is an account given with the advantage of having already gone through the *Logic*, and thus is not genuinely comprehensible in terms of the exposition leading up to this Remark. For example, he refers to a moment as "something reflected [*ein Reflektiertes*]," and the issue of reflection does not arise until the Doctrine of Essence. It is thus not a surprise that the category of a 'moment' does not receive a *systematic* exposition until the section on Reciprocity, toward the end of the Doctrine of Essence.

We are now a step closer to the task of looking at Hegel's view of the languages of the understanding and of reason, and, specifically, at the way in which they move. As another orienting step before doing so, we will now look at the kinds of movement present within mechanism and life. In the context of our discussion of indifference and reciprocity, the movements of mechanism and of life – one whose origin lies outside of itself, and one whose origin lies within itself – can be better comprehended.

5. Two Resulting Kinds of Movement: Mechanism and Life

a. Mechanism: Externally-Imposed Movement

In an Addition to the section on mechanism in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, Hegel says that, although he draws the word 'mechanism' from the realm of nature, he is re-appropriating the word for the realm of logic to describe what is solely a logical determination.[73] What then does he mean by 'mechanism' in the logical sphere? One part of what he means is related to a topic we have discussed above, viz., causality.

Above we saw how, in the initial causal relation, cause and effect are *distinct* entities (as Hegel calls, them, "substances"), with the effect being dependent on the cause for its being but not vice versa. This relation of causality is one that Hegel associates closely with 'mechanism.' In his account of reciprocity – viz., the determination which causality *becomes* – he makes a specific note of how the reciprocal relation is *not* present in mechanism, because mechanism involves a relation that is still merely causal. Specifically, this causal relation of distinct entities is one that is *finite*, and *external*:

[73] *EL* §195, Addition.

> In finite causality it is substances that are actively related to each other. *Mechanism* consists in this *externality* of causality, that the *reflection* of the cause in its effect *in itself* is at the same time a repelling *being*, or that, in the *identity* which the causal substance has in its effect *with itself*, it [the causal substance] equally remains something immediately external, and the effect has passed over into another substance.[74]

For Hegel, what is finite is what has an other; as he puts it, "…a finite being is one that relates to an other."[75] Thus, because cause and effect stand over against each other as *separate* substances – repelling and external to each other – the relation of causality is 'finite.' This finitude of the causal relation involves an *externality* of causality simply due to the fact that the cause, as a substance separate from the substance of the effect, is external to the effect. More specifically, the action (*Wirken*) that the cause has on the effect (*Wirkung*) is given by the cause *to* something external to it and, likewise, is received by the effect *from* something external to it. This dynamic – the externality of causality – is what Hegel is associating here with mechanism.

He continues the above quote by saying, "Now in reciprocity this mechanism is sublated; for, it contains *first* the *vanishing* of that original *persistence* of the *immediate* substantiality…."[76] This, of course, is what we saw in our discussions above: initially, the cause seems to be self-standing and indifferent to the effect, and it is an 'immediate' substance insofar as its being is not mediated by its relation to the effect (to which it is indifferent). However, the cause's immediacy and indifference vanish when we realize

[74] *SL* 569, translation mine.
[75] Ibid., 86, translation mine.
[76] Ibid.

that its being *is* mediated by the effect, that it is only able to be a cause insofar as it *has* an effect. This vanishing, he says, is the sublation of mechanism.

While Hegel makes these brief comments about mechanism here in the section on reciprocity, he does not give anything like a full account of it until the beginning of Section Two of the Doctrine of the Concept, "Objectivity." Because of the great complexity of the section on mechanism, to even summarize it in an intelligible way would require an extensive discussion of Section One, "Subjectivity," which consists of the enormously complex chapters on the concept, the judgment, and the syllogism. Thus, in what follows, we will only examine a few points about mechanism, ones that are relevant for the larger purposes of this dissertation. As a brief background for that brief treatment, we should first say a few words about the "Subjectivity" section of the Doctrine of the Concept.

Speaking at the broadest level, the "Subjectivity" section deals with the subjective or *formal* side of the concept's thinking of its own self.[77] This formal dimension can be seen by looking at the basic outline of the section as a whole: the chapter on "The Concept" consists of the universal, the particular, and individual; the chapter on "The Judgment" consists of various kinds of judgments, i.e., various ways of combining (by means of the copula) the universal, the particular, and individual; and, the chapter on "The Syllogism" consists of various syllogisms, i.e., various ways of combining the various kinds of judgments. The very last form of the syllogism, the "Disjunctive Syllogism," marks the end of the "Subjectivity" section. With this final syllogism, all

[77] *SL* 702-3.

possible *form* determinations of the concept are accounted for. Or, better put, this final syllogism *contains* all possible form determinations of the concept, as its moments. In Hegel's words, it is the "totality of form determinations."[78] He goes on to say that, in light of the coming-to-be of this totality, "the *formalism of the syllogistic process*, and with it the subjectivity of the syllogism and of the concept in general, has sublated itself."[79] The consummation of the syllogism, therefore, marks the transition to "Objectivity," for the unified totality of the *form* of the concept thinking itself passes over into – itself becomes – the *content* of the Concept thinking itself.

As is always the case in sublation, the sublation of the syllogism and thus of the whole "Subjectivity" section leads to a result, a result which is characterized by *immediacy* (insofar as it does not have anything standing over against, through which it could be mediated). Hegel says, "As objectivity is the totality of the concept returned into its unity, something immediate [*ein Unmittelbares*] is thereby posited that is in and for itself…."[80] This immediate result, constituting the first determination of the "Objectivity" section, is mechanism. And, in Hegel's first in-depth description of mechanism in the *Science of Logic*, it starts to become clear why, as mentioned above, he has plucked this particular word from the realm of nature and redefined it for the realm of logic. In the introduction to the mechanism section, he says, "what are differentiated [*die Unterschiedenen*] are *complete* and *self-subsistent objects* which consequently, even in their relation, comport themselves to each other only as *self-subsistent* things and remain

[78] Ibid., 703.
[79] Ibid., 702-3.
[80] Ibid., 711, translation emended.

external to one another in every combination."[81] Once again, then, we see that the elements within mechanism do not depend on each for their being, but rather in their mutual externality are self-standing. Still in this introductory section, Hegel goes on to speak, not of the relations between the various self-subsistent entities, but of the relation of these entities to the *totality*:

> This is what constitutes the character of *mechanism*, namely, that whatever relation occurs between the things combined [*den Verbundenen*], this relation is one extraneous to them that does not concern their nature at all, and even if it is accompanied by a semblance of a one [*Schein eines Eins*], it remains nothing more than *composition* [Zusammensetzung], *mixture*, *heap* [Haufen], etc.[82]

The self-subsistent entities are external to each other, and also external to the relation of the whole. Despite the fact that their 'gathered-together-ness' might suggest otherwise, this whole – this 'totality,' as he has called it earlier – is not actually a 'one.' Rather, it is a *Zusammensetzung* – literally a 'setting together' – and a *Haufen*, which might also be translated as a 'cluster.' In the *Encylopedia Logic* he refers to this kind of whole as an "*Aggregat*," saying that "its activity [*Wirksamkeit*] upon another remains an external relation."[83] Thus mechanism lacks an actual 'oneness,' and, furthermore, any effect it has on another will be inessential to that other. Furthermore, this lack of oneness strongly implies that mechanism's *own* principle of organization is just as extraneous to *it* as it is to both its own elements, and its *effects*.

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[81] Ibid., translation emended.
[82] Ibid., translation emended.
[83] EL §195.

This is in fact just what we find Hegel describing in part one of the section on mechanism, entitled "The Mechanical Object." Here, he says that the object "…points through its own self *outside and beyond* itself to other objects for its determination; but to these others it is in the same manner *indifferent*…. Consequently, a principle of self-determination is nowhere to be found…"[84] The relation of indifference between the elements and the whole of a mechanism entails that the whole 'points' beyond itself to others for the cause of its organization and determination. To explain why it is also indifferent to these 'others' would require a much longer discussion of mechanism than we have space for here (including Hegel's comparison of the mechanical object to the Leibnizian monad); what is important for our purposes is to note that mechanism *lacks a principle self-determination*. That is, it is not the source of its specific structure and organization. Like a 'heap' – say, a heap of sand – the principle of its determination is external to it, i.e., other than it.

While the way that mechanism appears in the realms of nature and spirit is not the same as its logical determination, in his Remarks on the latter Hegel provides some helpful examples of mechanism from nature and spirit:

> Just as pressure and impact are mechanical relationships, so we [can] know mechanically as well, *by rote*, inasmuch as the words remain without meaning for us and external to sense, representation, and thought; the words are in like manner external to themselves: they form a meaningless sequence.[85]

[84] *SL* 713.
[85] *EL* §195, Remark.

Mechanical memory, which marks the transition from language to thought in the *Philosophy of Spirit*, consists of words being recited which are indifferent both to the speaker and to each other. If one is singing a song in a foreign language, or reciting by rote a poem one has memorized (i.e., without any consideration for the actual meanings of the words), the relation of the words to each other and to the person is an external one. Additionally, the act of putting the words together in these instances does not contain its *own* principle of determination, as it would if the speaker were forming the words on the basis of her comprehension of their *meanings*. Instead, its principle of determination lies in something other than itself, viz., in the reproduction of the relations of mere *sounds*.

Hegel provides a further example of a mechanical relation in the realm of spirit when he speaks about 'piety' – what Kant would refer to as heteronomy. Piety, Hegel says, is a mechanical action "inasmuch as what a person does is determined for him by ceremonial laws, or by a director of conscience, etc., and his own spirit and will are not in his actions, so that they are external even to himself."[86] In this example, the action is mechanical insofar as it is external to the actual personhood – the spirit and the will – of the actor, with their particular movements originating instead from a source outside of themselves and outside of the actor. The *externality* of the source of determination is what is crucial; it is, as we saw above with logical mechanism, what makes mechanism a mere *Zusammensetzung*, a *Haufen*, a heap. And mechanism's lack of *self*-determination is what stands most in contrast with the logical determination Hegel calls "life."

[86] Ibid., translation emended.

b. Life: Immanently-Arising Movement

Earlier in this chapter we made reference to the first two sections of the Doctrine of the Concept: "Subjectivity" (the formal side of the Idea thinking its own self: the concept, the judgment, the syllogism), and "Objectivity" (the content side: mechanism, chemism, teleology). The third section, called "The Idea," consists of the determinations "Life," "The Idea of Cognition," and "The Absolute Idea." Life, then, is the first determination of the Idea, and as such, it is the *result* of the sublation of the sections on "Subjectivity" and "Objectivity." That is, the first two sections of the Doctrine of the Concept cease-to-be, and what comes-to-be – i.e., the result – is the determination Hegel calls life. Life therefore contains the "Subjectivity" and "Objectivity" sections as its moments, and, as the first determination of "The Idea," life is the *immediate* Idea. To start to fill out this very abstract initial description of life, let us turn to an analogy with nature that Hegel himself uses.

Near the beginning of the *Logic*'s chapter on life, Hegel differentiates the logical determination of life from life as it is found in nature and as it is found in spirit.[87] Given the subject matter of the *Science of Logic* – the Idea thinking itself[88] – it is no surprise that Hegel does not see the logical determination of life as referring to or describing life in the natural or the spiritual realms. Nonetheless, he sees a certain similarity between the three, and in the *Logic* he focuses specifically on the similarity between logical and natural life. He says, "In nature, life appears as the highest stage, a stage that nature's externality attains by withdrawing into itself and sublating itself in subjectivity. In logic

[87] *SL* 762-3.
[88] *EL* §236.

it is simple being-within-itself [*Insichsein*], which in the Idea has attained an externality that genuinely corresponds to it…."[89] Hegel is stating here that both natural life and logical life come-to-be when what is 'inner' and what is 'outer' attain a genuine unity. In the *Philosophy of Nature*, this is first seen in the determination 'plant,' with the 'inner' being 'the organic' and the 'outer' being 'the organism.' In Hegel's words, "…*subjectivity*, according to which the organic is as *singular*, develops itself in an *objective* organism…."[90] In the *Science of Logic*, an analogous process brings about the logical determination of life; as we saw in the quote above, 'simple being-within-itself' attains an externality appropriate to it. Thus, Hegel uses the word 'life' to designate the Idea in its immediacy because, like natural life, logical life is a reciprocal relation of its mutually constitutive moments. Additionally, both kinds of life involve the realization of subjectivity (in logic: the concept; in nature: the organic) within objectivity (in logic: externality; in nature: the organism).

Hegel further describes this process within the logical sphere by saying, "…the concept that earlier appeared on the scene as a subjective concept is the soul of life itself; it is the urge that mediates for itself its reality throughout objectivity."[91] This "subjective concept" which is the "soul" of life is the Doctrine of the Concept's section on "Subjectivity," which, he says, "mediates for itself its reality" through the section called "Objectivity." That is, the subjective (*formal*) concept, which *resulted in* objectivity (as we saw in the discussion of mechanism), now comes into an immediate *unity with*

[89] *SL* 762, translation emended.
[90] *Philosophy of Nature* §343, translation mine.
[91] *SL* 762.

objectivity (i.e., the *content* of the concept). The result is the Idea in its immediacy, i.e., life, and this is why Hegel calls the Idea "the objective or real concept."[92]

But what does Hegel mean when he speaks of the subjective concept as being the "soul" of life? As with the term 'life' itself, with the word 'soul' Hegel is taking a word that is more familiar in other contexts and reappropriating it for a logical one. In the *Encyclopaedia Logic* he does the same thing with 'body' as well, "The concept is realized as soul, in a *body*."[93] He goes on to describe the way in which the concept is realized in objectivity, claiming that each of them is what it is *through* the other. Speaking of this unification, he says that "the body expresses no differences within itself other than the determinations of the concept."[94] He picks this theme up again when he says that "all of the body's members are mutually both *means* and purposes for each other…and…life, while it is the *initial* particularizing of the members, becomes its own *result*…."[95] Clearly, 'body' and 'soul' – by which he here means 'objectivity' and 'the subjective concept' – are *moments* within life, standing in a *reciprocal* relation (as opposed to the indifference of mechanism and its parts).

In an initially confusing move, Hegel compares the relation between the soul (subjective concept) and the body (objectivity) of logical life not to the relation between soul and physical body, but to the relation between the *members of* the physical body. Perhaps he does this because an audience in a largely Christian culture might assume that the relation of a physical body to its human soul is one of indifference (on the side of the

[92] Ibid., 755.
[93] *EL* §216.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid., translation emended.

soul, at least). Whatever the case, the analogy is largely the same one we examined at the beginning of this chapter, where Hegel speaks of the difference between studying a corpse and a living body. There we saw him claim that the dissection of the physical body turns its members and organs into "mere parts," and that "the external and mechanical relation of wholes and parts does not suffice for the cognition of organic life in its truth."[96] In the section on life in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, he again takes up the analogy of the physical body to shed light on life in its logical determination, speaking of how a moment of what is living is reduced to a part when separated from the whole: "The single members of the body are what they are only through their unity and in relation to it. So, for instance, a hand that has been hewn from the body is a hand in name only, but not in actual fact, as Aristotle has already remarked."[97]

As we will see in our treatment in Part III of the faculty of the understanding, the attempt to comprehend what is living by (mentally) separating it into parts guarantees that we will comprehend neither the members of the whole nor the whole itself. Hegel continues the quote above about the severed hand by saying, "From the standpoint of the understanding, life is usually considered to be a mystery, and in general as *incomprehensible*. But here the understanding only confesses its finitude and nullity. In fact, life is so far from being something incomprehensible [*ein Unbegreifliches*] that, in fact, we have in life the concept [*der Begriff*] itself before us, i.e., the *immediate* Idea as the existing concept."[98] The finitude of the understanding (i.e., its having an other) leads

[96] Ibid., §135 Addition, translation emended.
[97] *EL* §216, Addition.
[98] Ibid., translation emended.

it to attempt to comprehend things in terms of *causality* (i.e., causes and effects as separate from each other) and in terms of mechanism. Understandably, the understanding is thus unable to comprehend the reciprocal relations characterizing life (whether in nature or in logic), viewing it instead as a mystery.

In his discussions of the non-mechanical nature of life, Hegel further specifies the difference between the two by contrasting mechanism's relation to its concept with life's relation to its concept. In this very fertile passage he asserts that, with regard to the objective moment within life,

> the earlier determinations of the object – the mechanical or chemical relation, and still less the abstract relations of reflection of whole and part, etc. – do not pertain. As externality, it is indeed *capable* of such relations, but to that extent it is not a living being; when the living thing is regarded as a whole consisting of parts, or as a thing operated on by mechanical or chemical causes, as a mechanical or chemical product…then the concept is regarded as external to it and it is treated as a *dead* thing. Since the concept is immanent in it, the *purposiveness* of the living being is to be grasped as *inner*….[99]

The objectivity present in life was formerly characterized by mechanism (as we saw in the section "Objectivity"), and thus at that point it was something *dead*. That is to say, *the concept was external to it* – an important characteristic of mechanism that we are now able to see better in hindsight. Additionally, we can now give a more specific description of the process which we described above as the 'subjective concept uniting with

[99] *SL* 766, translation emended.

objectivity': this process involves the concept – as formerly *external* to[100] objectivity – *becoming immanent within it*.

But we need to say more about this objectivity in which the concept becomes immanent. For it is through the specific character of its objectivity – i.e., of its 'externality' – that Hegel distinguishes logical life most clearly from life as found in nature. Speaking of natural life, he says that it "possesses a *determinateness of its externality*...through its presuppositions which are other formations of nature…."[101] Then, speaking of logical life, he says, "The idea of life for itself is free from this presupposed and conditioning objectivity…."[102] So, with life in nature, the externality within which a concept becomes immanent is one which *already* had a certain determination *before* this unison. For example, the material which becomes the stalk and leaves of a plant is material which *already* had a *chemical* determination (e.g., as nitrogen, oxygen, etc.). Of course, since a plant is a living thing with members and not parts, the determinateness that a plant receives from other elements of nature (e.g., the nitrogen from the soil) is *changed by* its relation to the 'subjectivity' immanent in the plant. But the fact remains that the plant has received something pre-formed and pre-given from outside itself, something which did not originate in its own self, and which it thus *presupposes*. With logical life, by contrast, its subjectivity has *generated* its objectivity, a point which we saw above in our treatment of mechanism. The result is that logical life does not presuppose its objectivity, in the sense of receiving it from an

[100] i.e., *other* than it.
[101] *SL* 763.
[102] Ibid.

external source. The objectivity (body) of logical life is more appropriate to, and more at one with, its subjectivity than any given body and soul in nature can possibly be. For, logical life is not conditioned by anything other than and external to itself; rather, it is a self-standing unity whose moments are wholly appropriate to each other because one has sprung out of the other.[103]

Above we mentioned that, for the logical category of life, Hegel borrowed the word 'life' from the realm of nature. However, the difference between natural and logical life described in the previous paragraph leads us now to a surprising conclusion. As we saw, the unity of body and soul which the word 'life' signifies in nature is fulfilled to an even *greater* degree in logical life. For, unlike natural life, the objectivity of logical life has originated directly *out of* its subjectivity, making their unity in logical life a more perfect one than could ever exist in nature. We can thus now see that, while the word 'life' is drawn from natural life, it turns out to be *more fitting* to *logical* life. Said otherwise, logical life is *more properly life* than natural life.

i. Contradiction, Movement, Self-Movement

Having sketched out the logical determination of life, we are now in a position to talk in more detail about three aspects of this determination which will be most relevant for our treatment of philosophical language. These dimensions are the interconnected themes of contradiction, movement, and self-movement. To relate them in an initial and schematic way: contradiction is what drives all movement, and contradiction *itself* turns out to be *logical self-movement*.

[103] This is a good illustration of the fact that the realm of logic – unlike that of nature or spirit – is 'within itself.'

Before fleshing this formulation out, a bit of review is in order. As we saw briefly in our introduction, Hegel frequently describes logic as living and as self-moving. Speaking of logical determinations in general, he says that "their self-movement is their spiritual life, and is that through which philosophy constitutes itself and of which it is the exposition."[104] Conversely, he describes traditional, formal logic as being "a disordered heap of dead bones."[105] Logic in the past, he says, has generally been formalistic and full of "empty, dead forms of thought,"[106] thus making his own description of logic as *living* seem rather counterintuitive. The forms of thought (i.e., 'categories') in formal logics are "empty" insofar as they do not inherently contain content, but rather are *applied* to things and thereby *'filled'* with content. That is, they are applied to content to which they are external and indifferent. Additionally, the categories of formal logics are indifferent to *each other*; in Hegel's words, they "are accepted in their unmoved fixity and are brought only into an external relation with each other."[107] Because the 'soul' and the 'body' of formal logics are not reciprocally constitutive – both at the level of the forms themselves, and in the application of the forms to external content – the result of such logics is a 'thinking' that is mechanistic and dead. By contrast, we have seen that logic in Hegel's sense of the word is living insofar as its forms are thought *in terms of each other*, making it both its own form and its own content. In his words,

> What we are dealing with in logic is not a thinking about something which exists independently as a base for our thinking and apart from it….on the contrary, the

[104] *SL* 28.
[105] Ibid., 31.
[106] Ibid., 761.
[107] Ibid., 52.

> necessary forms and self-determinations of thought are the content and the ultimate truth itself.[108]

Because the content of logic *is* its own forms, logic has a soul and a body which – as moments – reciprocally determine one another such that the result is something living.

Despite the fact that life only receives a full account – i.e., is only fully *posited* – toward the end of the logic, it has been *present* as a not-yet-posited 'in-itself' from the beginning. Of course, *every* determination in the *Logic* (aside from 'being') is present from the beginning as a not-yet-posited in-itself. But it is helpful to note how this is the case with life in particular: the reciprocal determination of form and content has been occurring from the beginning, playing itself out in the regular alternation of certain content giving rise to certain forms and those same forms giving rise to other content. This process of 'X giving rise to Y' involves what we described in Chapter 2 as "X *being expressed in* Y," and what we described in the discussion on *Aufheben* above as "X *becoming* Y" (with X being sublated, and Y being the posited result). In one sense, then, it is correct to say that *Aufhebung* is what drives the logic, i.e., what drives the continual *becoming* taking place within the logic, as thought moves from one determination to another. But in another sense, this is a very incomplete description, for we cannot fully comprehend what *Aufhebung* and becoming *actually are* without recognizing what they *become*, i.e., without recognizing the role that contradiction, self-movement, and life implicitly play within them.

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[108] Ibid., 50.

Hegel brings all of these topics together in several paragraphs of the Introduction to the *Science of Logic*. After stating that the dead bones of formal logic need to be "quickened by spirit," he says that "the method [of philosophical science] is the consciousness of the form of the inner self-movement of the content of logic."[109] Clearly, this self-movement must have some close connection with *Aufhebung*, given that the latter has arisen explicitly *within* the logic, and is involved with the logic's internal becoming. But what is this connection? We can start to see its outlines in this extremely illuminating passage, where Hegel reveals more about how *Aufhebung* is rooted in contradiction:

> All that is necessary *to achieve scientific progress*…is the recognition of the logical principle that the negative is just as much positive, or that what is self-contradictory [*das sich Widersprechende*] does not dissolve [*sich auflösen*] into a nullity, into abstract nothing, but essentially only into the negation of *particular* content, in other words, that such a negation is not all negation [*alle Negation*] but the *negation of a determinate subject matter* [bestimmte Sache] which dissolves, and thus a determinate negation, and therefore the result essentially contains that out of which it results….[110]

When two opposing determinations dissolve and thus cease-to-be *qua* indifferent parts (e.g., being and nothing, or cause and effect), they are the "particular content" and "determinate subject matter" which is being determinately negated. And, instead of going into nothing, the dissolution of the opposing determinations leads to a result which

[109] *SL* 53.
[110] *SL* 54.

contains them as moments (e.g., the result of 'becoming,' or of 'reciprocity'[111]). This is a helpful elucidation of our previous discussion of *Aufhebung*, but not much more than that. What the passage above adds to our discussion is a specification of the way that contradiction is at work in *Aufhebung*.

The relation of causality [*Kausalitätsverhältnis*] is a good place to look for an example of how contradiction drives *Aufhebung*. Earlier we saw that cause and effect standing over against each other as separate substances are sublated, with the result being 'reciprocity.' Now we can describe this act of sublation in more detail. In its third and final section, the relation of causality appears in the form of "Effect and Counter-Effect," and here it becomes entirely evident that having an effect is what allows the cause to *be* a cause, which means that the cause is dependent on the effect and that the effect is not merely secondary to the cause.[112] Thus, cause and effect are interdependent, i.e., they are

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[111] More accurately, it is 'the relation of substantiality' and 'the relation of causality' (which includes 'cause and effect') which are sublated into reciprocity, but we did not go into this level of detail in our discussion of reciprocity above.

[112] *SL* 566. In fn. 26 above we noted that this analysis seems counterintuitive if we try to apply it to the example of a carpenter and a house, without distinguishing between the human, and the human *qua* 'carpenter of this house.'

What we have discussed in between that footnote and this one allows us to get a better handle on why the *Logic*'s logical determinations and 'everyday' logical determinations can be so very different, and why the *Logic* seems so utterly foreign upon first approaching it (and many hundreds of times afterward).

In general, it seems that we humans tend to derive (usually unconsciously) our 'everyday' or 'common sense' logical determinations #1) by abstracting from our experiences with the workings of everyday objects, and #2) by often conflating what a given object is (or is doing) in the mode of a *logical* determination with what that object is *as a whole*. So, e.g., we might derive our view of cause and effect from our experiences with things like "carpenter and house" and "mother and child." And, since we see (correctly) that the house did not cause the *human* who is the carpenter to be, and that the child did not cause the *woman* to be, we assume (falsely) that an effect is not the cause of a cause. For, we fail to see the house *is* the cause of the human *qua* 'carpenter of this house,' and the child *is* the cause of the woman *qua* 'mother of this child.'

A primary reason, then, why the *Logic* is so foreign to everyday consciousness is that it is 'within itself,' i.e., it consists of thought thinking itself, which means that its forms *are* its contents. One result of this is that – in contrast to the *carpenter* who is a cause – the *logical determination* 'cause' *has no dimensions to its being other than its simply being a cause*. Thus – and again in contrast to the carpenter who is a cause –

each other's mutual cause and effect. However, because the relation of causality had presupposed[113] that cause and effect are (independent) substances, the newly discovered *inter*dependence of cause and effect reveals that they are *not* actually substances, and thus cannot be something like 'parts,' but rather are *moments* (i.e., still differentiated, yet having their being only through each other). Thus, in terms of the block quote in the paragraph above, the relation of causality is "what is self-contradictory [*das sich Widersprechende*]," because it has made directly opposing claims about what a cause is and what an effect is.

Retracing the above block quote a bit further in terms of our example of causality, we see that the relation of causality, as self-contradictory, "does not dissolve into a nullity, into abstract nothingness." If it had, then the *Science of Logic* would have come to its conclusion at the end of the section on causality,[114] because we would have been delivered back to its first pages, where abstract nothing appears. That is, if the negation within causality's self-contradiction were the sort of negation seen when +1 and -1 negate each other, abstract nothing would be the result. Instead, what is negated and done away with is this: cause and effect in the form of *mutual* cause and effect which are *nonetheless still separate substances*. The specific negation of the relation of causality, then, is a '*determinate* negation,' one that leads not to nothing, but to a positive result, viz., to reciprocity. Causality has been *sublated*, and has *become* reciprocity, because of

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the fact that 'effect' is the cause of the logical determination 'cause' means that 'effect' is the cause of its *entire being*, clearly revealing that the independence of 'cause' from 'effect' has been done away with.

[113] from "The Relation of Substantiality," the previous section.

[114] If contradiction led to a nullity, the *Logic* would have ended with being and nothing.

contradiction. And such is the case whenever *Aufhebung* and becoming occur: they occur through contradiction.

In a Remark on "Quantitative Infinity," Hegel emphasizes the role of contradiction in all becoming. He begins by mentioning how Kant solves certain antinomies in the *Critique of Pure Reason* by asserting that the contradictions in question are located not in the world but only in consciousness. In an extremely amusing passage, Hegel then says that this attempt to 'save' the world from contradiction by pushing all contradiction over into the realm of human thought reveals that Kant had an "excessive tenderness for the world."[115] Having thus implied that he too has tenderness for the world, simply not an "excessive" one, Hegel goes on to make this dramatic claim: "…the so-called world…is never and nowhere without contradiction, but it is unable to endure it and is, therefore, subject to coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be."[116] He refers to the world as "so-called" here in order to include what *Kant* means by 'world,' but the point relevant for our purposes is his claim that the world, as containing contradiction that it cannot endure, is *therefore* subject to coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be. That is: what cannot endure contradiction, becomes. And, as Hegel indicates in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, contradiction is not only ubiquitous, but also contains the moments which lead to *Aufhebung*: "There is *nothing at all* anywhere in which contradiction – i.e., opposed determinations – cannot and should not be exhibited."[117] Becoming, as we saw back in Hegel's Remark on *Aufheben*, takes place when something "has entered into unity with its opposite."[118] Contradiction *also*

[115] *SL* 237.
[116] Ibid., 238.
[117] *EL* §89, Remark.
[118] *SL* 107.

consists of opposed determinations, i.e., determinations in a relation not of diversity (indifferent difference) but *opposition* (mutually constitutive difference). This intimate connection between becoming and contradiction is hinted at even by the *Logic*'s table of contents, in its listing of the opening determinations of the Doctrine of Being and of the Doctrine of Essence: being, nothing, becoming; identity, difference, contradiction.

Thus, contradiction was 'present within' becoming from the beginning, but was not able to be *accounted* for until much later in the *Logic*. That is, contradiction was 'in-itself' and implicit in becoming all along, but only later – after identity and difference had been accounted for – could it be *posited*. Thus we could say that contradiction is the determination 'becoming' *made more transparent*. And this is just what we would expect, insofar as the Doctrine of Essence (where contradiction is found) consists of the Doctrine of Being in a *recollected (erinnert)* and *mediated* form.[119] That is, the Doctrine of Essence was, all along, the "background"[120] of the Doctrine of Being, such that the exposition of essence is "the completed return of being into itself."[121] In the same way and for the same reasons, contradiction was, all along, the 'background' of becoming. That is, contradiction was *taking place* back in becoming, something we can see in hindsight once we comprehend contradiction in the Doctrine of Essence. But, back at the beginning of the Doctrine of Being, thought did not have the resources available to it in order to *think* this contradiction, in order to make contradiction explicit to itself and thus to think it as a determination of its own self.

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[119] Ibid., 389.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid., 390.

But an important qualification must be made. Saying that contradiction plays an *implicit role* in becoming should not be taken to mean that contradiction was present in becoming *as fully formed.* For – as is the case with *all* logical determinations[122] – contradiction is not fully what it is *until it is posited*. Thus, while it is not incorrect to say that 'contradiction is implicit in becoming,' we can avoid the possibility of miscommunication by also saying that 'becoming is implicit contradiction.' This is, in fact, to say the same thing.

Having briefly discussed contradiction's relation to becoming, we are now in a better position to address its relation movement, to self-movement, and to life. And this means we should now speak directly and in some detail about an issue central to this dissertation, viz., what exactly Hegel *means* when he talks about 'movement' within thought. This issue is particularly challenging given that the *Logic* contains no logical determination entitled "*Bewegung*," either as a chapter, a section, or even a sub-section. Where does he *account for* the nature of this 'logical movement' about which he speaks? To what does this phrase even refer? I believe that what Hegel means in the *Logic* by the word 'movement' is what he means by the word 'becoming.' In what follows I will present a number of passages in support of this interpretation.

In the section "With What Must Science Begin?" Hegel makes the claim that beginning a scientific (i.e., presuppositionless) investigation with something that is *mediated* would not be a proper beginning, insofar as something about the specific nature of this mediation would have to be presupposed. Thus, science must begin with what is

[122] as we saw back in Chapter 2, section c.

immediate, i.e., what is *abstract*, as opposed to beginning with something concrete (*ein Konkretes*), because what is concrete contains mediation. He then says,

> The expression and exposition of such [i.e., of something concrete] is…a mediated movement which begins from *one* of the determinations and advances to another…. Thus, what such an exposition *begins* from is not the concrete itself, but only the simple immediacy from which the movement goes forth.[123]

Clearly, this "simply immediacy from which the movement goes forth" is the "indeterminate immediacy" with which Hegel begins the *Logic* and which he gives the name 'being.'[124] Thus, the *movement* that goes forth from being – the movement of the exposition – is nothing other than *becoming* itself.

This same point can also be seen in the introductory note to the chapter on Being, in which Hegel states that the chapter will consist of sections on quality, quantity, and measure. First he emphasizes that this division is simply preliminary, insofar as it has not yet been *shown* to be true. For as he says, these determinations in the chapter on being "…first have to arise from the movement of being itself, and in so doing define and justify themselves."[125] As the opening pages of the actual exposition indicate, the "movement of being itself" is, quite simply, becoming.

So let us look once again to these opening pages of the exposition. In the first section on becoming, entitled "The Unity of Being and Nothing," Hegel states that being and nothing are the same (viz., they are both indeterminate immediacy); he then says that, because of their sameness, they have passed over into each other while nonetheless still

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[123] *SL* 77-8, translation mine.
[124] Ibid., 82.
[125] Ibid., 79, translation emended.

being differentiated in thought (as revealed by the fact that we have said '*they* pass into *each other'*). In reference to being passing over into nothing and vice versa, he says, "Their truth is thus this *movement* of the immediate vanishing of one into the other: *becoming*, a movement in which both are differentiated, but through a difference which has equally immediately dissolved."[126] As we discussed in Chapter 3, what is happening in this quote is this: within thought, being *becomes* nothing and nothing *becomes* being; with these 'becomings,' the logical determination 'becoming' has thus been posited. Equally, though, 'movement' has been posited in the *Logic*, as the above quote makes clear. Thus, unless we wish to claim that *two* determinations arise out of being and nothing's passing into each other, it seems Hegel is using the words 'movement' and 'becoming' synonymously here.

Hegel connects becoming and movement in a similar way in the Second Remark after the section on becoming. Speaking of the proposition 'being and nothing are the same,' and of how it *expresses* their sameness but *contains* them as different, he says, "we see that here a proposition is posited which, observed more closely, has a movement through which it itself vanishes. But with this there takes place in the proposition that which should constitute its actual content, namely, becoming."[127] Although neither are explicitly set forth by the proposition itself, the proposition "has" a *movement* within it, and *becoming* "takes place" within it: the movement implicit in the proposition *is* the becoming implicit within it, and vice versa.

[126] Ibid., 83.
[127] Ibid., 90.

As we saw back in Chapter 3, this movement/becoming is *explicitly* set forth when the proposition about being and nothing is combined with the proposition 'being and nothing are *not* the same.' In this context, Hegel says, "the determinations which are expressed in the two propositions [viz., the sameness, and the difference of being and nothing] are supposed to be in a complete union – a union which can only be stated as an *unrest* of *incompatibles*, as a *movement*."[128] The unrest of incompatibles which movement *is* – this is clearly also what becoming is. Calling movement an unrest of incompatibles also makes a direct connection between movement and contradiction. Contradiction, consisting of the opposed determinations of identity and difference, is the *fuller* account of what such an unrest of incompatibles actually is.[129] That is, it is a fuller account of what *movement* is, in the same way that it is a fuller account of what becoming is. This is the case, I would argue, because movement simply is becoming.

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[128] Ibid., 91.

[129] More accurately, contradiction consists of the opposed determinations of 'the positive' and 'the negative.' As we mentioned above, the category of opposition comes onto the scene in the form of the opposition between identity and difference. For reasons too involved to discuss here, Hegel comes to call these terms within opposition 'the positive' and 'the negative.' Simply in an everyday sense, we can see that these two terms – like identity and difference – are in a relation of opposition, possessing an internal and co-constituting relation of difference. But now we notice something strange about the positive and the negative. If the positive and the negative are what they are only through each other, this means that the positive *contains* the negative within itself, and the negative *contains* the positive within itself. But when we step back, we realize that the larger situation is this: the positive depends on something *other* than it for its being (viz., the negative), and the positive does *not* depend on something other than it for its being, because the negative is *not other* to the positive, but rather *an essential part of* it. The same can be said for the negative: it both depends on its other (the positive) for its being, and it does *not* depend on its other for its being, for it does not truly *have* an other external to it, given that its other has proven to be an essential dimension of it. Put otherwise, the positive and the negative are each *dependent* on each other *as* an other, insofar as each *excludes* the other; and, they are each *independent* of each other – "self-subsistent" (*SL* 431) – insofar as each *includes* the other, because this 'inclusion' makes it such that each *has no* other upon which it could possibly depend. At this point we might be thinking to ourselves with no small degree of frustration, "What? The positive and the negative each exclude each other, *and* include each other? That is an outright contradiction!" To which Hegel would respond, "Yes, exactly!" Or, to be more precise, he would say, "This is not just *a* contradiction, it is *contradiction itself*. We have now encountered and *experienced* contradiction in its own being, and grasped it for what it is."

Let us look at two more brief passages on this theme, from the beginning of the Doctrine of Essence. In his introductory remarks on the relation of the Doctrine of Essence to the Doctrine of Being, he says, "Essence comes out of being; it is in this respect not immediate in and for itself, but rather a *result* of this movement."[130] The language of 'result' is of course familiar to us as connected with *Aufhebung* and becoming, and the 'movement' referred to is the movement from being to essence. That is, it is the movement of being *becoming* essence: being (taken as a whole, in the Doctrine of Being) ceases-to-be, and essence comes-to-be. Hegel makes a similar point, but now from a wider perspective, when he says, "Essence stands between being and the concept and constitutes the middle of these two, and its movement constitutes the *transition* from being to the concept."[131] The 'movement' of essence from the Doctrine of Being to the Doctrine of the Concept takes place through the coming-into-being and the ceasing-to-be of the various determinations of essence, from *Schein* all the way to *Wechselwirkung*. Thus this 'movement of essence' is essence as a whole coming-to-be fully what it is (in *Wechselwirkung*), and then ceasing-to-be when it passes over into the Doctrine of the Concept.

At this point a somewhat obvious question stands before us: if Hegel means 'movement' when he says 'becoming,' why does he not simply say 'becoming'? Although there are likely multiple reasons, two possibilities come to mind. The first stems from a consideration of *where* in the *Logic* he uses the word 'movement' most often: he uses it with great frequency in the Preface, in the Introduction, and in the

[130] *SL* 393.
[131] Ibid., 391.

various introductory sections and remarks scattered throughout the work, and he uses it with much less frequency in the exposition proper. That is, he uses the word much more frequently when he is describing the *Logic* from a bird's eye (i.e., non-scientific) view than when he is describing the *Logic* up close and in detail, accounting for the coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be of specific logical determinations. One reason for this, I believe, is that the word 'movement' is most often associated with *spatial* movement, and the connotation of spatial movement – much more than 'becoming' – suggests that what is moving is in some sense *enduring* in the midst of change. So, for instance, when he talks very broadly about the 'movement of being' or the 'movement of essence' (in the sense of the whole Doctrine of Being, and the whole Doctrine of Essence, respectively), the word 'movement' works to communicate that being and essence are in some sense enduring *in spite of* various becomings taking place within them.[132] The same could be said with his talk of the 'movement of the exposition'[133] in the *Logic*'s Introduction, and of the 'movement of the concept' toward the *Logic*'s very end.[134] So while he could have spoken of, e.g., the 'becoming of the exposition,' this would have been a less immediately clear way to talk about how the exposition *as a whole* involves one determination, and then another, and then another, etc. This is not to imply that 'becoming' could not also be used in all of these various cases, but it seems that Hegel often uses the word 'movement' when he is making generalizations about the overall structure of the *Logic*.

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[132] which is true, insofar as 'Being' and 'Essence' (understood as referring to Book One and Book Two of the *Logic*) refer to a particular way in which the determinations within each of the books relate to each other: in the former, as immediate, in the latter, as reflected.
[133] *SL* 77.
[134] Ibid., 826.

A second factor that might have motivated Hegel to use the word 'movement' as a synonym for 'becoming' has to do with a preparation for speaking about *later* determinations. Specifically, he might use the word 'movement' early on in the *Logic* because he is laying the terminological groundwork for his account of *self*-movement in the "Reflection" section of the Doctrine of Essence. The German language does contain the (less-commonly used) term *Selbstwerden*, but if Hegel had used this word in the section on "Reflection," he would not have laid the terminological groundwork for talking about *life* in the Doctrine of the Concept. For, another element of 'life' – one which we will examine in a moment – is self-movement.

As a small step toward returning explicitly to the issue of 'life,' we should now consider more closely the relationship of contradiction and self-movement. Earlier we saw how contradiction turns out to have been implicitly present within becoming, i.e., implicitly present all along in the *Logic*, despite the fact that only in the Doctrine of Essence does the *Logic* have the resources to explicitly account for and posit contradiction.[135] Contradiction is the 'truth of' and *expression* of becoming: what becoming was 'in-itself,' contradiction is as posited.[136] A further significance of this point is that, if I am correct in claiming that 'movement' means 'becoming' in the *Logic*, contradiction would be the 'truth of' *movement* as well. And this is what Hegel does seem to assert in several comments in Third Remark of the section on contradiction, comments which also further illuminate the relation between becoming and contradiction.

[135] viz., the resources of 'identity' and 'difference.'
[136] On the 'small scale,' determinate being (*Dasein*) is the truth and expression of becoming, insofar as this is the determination which *follows* becoming. So, I say 'contradiction is the truth of becoming' in a sense similar to the one which Hegel uses when he stands back from the exposition as a whole and (with the benefit of hindsight) says, 'essence is the truth of being.'

In this Third Remark Hegel states, "External, sensuous motion itself is contradiction's immediate determinate being," and a few sentences later he adds, "….movement is existent [*daseiende*] contradiction itself."[137] This, of course, is a reference to movement within *space* (and, incidentally, it is the basis for his claim that Zeno was right to say that movement involves contradiction, but wrong to conclude that there is therefore no movement). After calling spatial movement 'existent contradiction,' he says, "Similarly, internal, actual [*die innere, die eigentliche*] self-movement, *impulse [Trieb]* in general…is nothing else but the fact that something is, in one and the same respect, *within itself* [in sich selbst] and the deficiency, *the negative of itself*."[138] Since what comes after the copula in this sentence is a definition of contradiction, we can rephrase the quote as such: 'internal, actual self-movement is nothing else but contradiction.' If contradiction is self-movement, then it is *self-becoming*; thus, my claim that 'contradiction is the truth of becoming' can be rearticulated as '*self-becoming is the truth of becoming*.' Put otherwise: becoming 'comes into' its truth – i.e., is expressed, posited, and becomes more fully what it is – when it is *reflected back upon itself*. And this is just what occurs in contradiction. Thus, Hegel's claim that contradiction is self-movement reaffirms our previous claim that contradiction is the truth of movement, and – what is the same – the truth of becoming.

This conclusion also makes a great deal of sense in light of the larger structure of the *Science of Logic*. We noted above that the Doctrine of Essence consists of the Doctrine

[137] *SL* 440.
[138] Ibid.

of Being in a recollected *(erinnert)* form,[139] i.e., Essence is the "return of Being into itself."[140] Hegel refers to this explicitly *self-reflexive* nature of essence when he says, "Essence is reflection, the movement of becoming and transition that remains internal to itself...."[141] Said otherwise, Essence is Being *reflected into itself*. And *one* of the ways in which this is true is with respect to our current discussion: the determination 'contradiction' – as *self*-becoming – is the determination 'becoming' *reflected into itself*.

The idea that contradiction is self-becoming has another important connection to the overall structure of the *Logic*. For the *Logic* to genuinely consist of the Idea thinking itself, and thus to genuinely be 'within itself,' its movements (its becomings) cannot take place as a result of something 'outside' itself, i.e., as a result of something *other* than itself. Yet the account of the determination 'becoming' at the beginning of the *Logic* does not specify what the ultimate *cause* of becoming is – it simply remains silent on the matter. Thus, in order for the *Logic* to establish itself as truly 'within itself,' it has to establish that the becoming which takes place within it takes place due to what is *internal* to itself. This is just what contradiction as *self*-becoming begins to establish. Throughout the *Logic*, thought is becoming its various possible determinations not because some external force is causing it to do so, but rather because thought, of its own accord, is actively thinking through itself. Put otherwise: thought is not merely moving, but self-moving.

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[139] Ibid., 389.
[140] Ibid., 390.
[141] Ibid., 399.

To complete our sketch of contradiction as logical self-movement, we should now say a few words about the role that contradiction plays in logical *necessity*. Earlier in this chapter we discussed the difference between the two kinds of difference, diversity (*Verschiedenheit*) and opposition (*Gegensatz*). Two things that are diverse are 'merely different,' with no inherent connection between them (e.g., a bird and a desk); they are thus indifferent (*gleichgültig*) to each other. Two things that are *opposed*, however, have an inherent connection (e.g., hot and cold), insofar as they are defined *through* each other; they are thus reciprocally constitutive of each other. Contradiction, as we have seen, involves *opposed* determinations,[142] and these are the very opposed determinations which unite as moments when *Aufhebung* occurs. Clearly, in order for becoming, *Aufhebung*, and contradiction to occur at all in the *Logic*, the determinations involved must not be diverse from each other, but *opposed*. Said otherwise, they must not be mere 'parts,' but moments. It is difference as *opposition* which leads to contradiction, and therefore to logical self-movement. In a very lucid passage, Hegel speaks of this connection between opposition, contradiction, self-movement, and life:

> Thinking reason…sharpens, so to speak, the blunt differences of what is diverse [*Unterschied des Verschiedenen*], the mere manifold of pictorial thinking, into *essential* difference, into *opposition*. Only when the manifold elements [*die Mannigfaltigen*] have been driven to the point of contradiction do they become active and lively towards one another, receiving in contradiction the negativity which is the indwelling pulsation of self-movement and liveliness [*Lebendigkeit*].[143]

[142] *EL* §89, Remark.
[143] *SL* 442, translation emended.

Opposition leads to contradiction and self-movement, and also makes *life* possible within an exposition.

Furthermore, difference as opposition leads logical self-movement to go down a specific 'path.' As we saw back in Chapter 3, regarding the origins of the *Logic*'s triadic form, the unfolding of the *Logic* involves a repetition of this basic process: two determinations are initially separate and independent; then they become related as moments; then they vanish into a result; then the result, upon being observed more closely, is seen to imply a determination separate and independent from *it*; then the process begins again. If the pairs of determinations were merely *diverse* (*verschieden*, like a bird and a desk), the self-movement of *Aufhebung* and contradiction would not occur, nor would the movement be a *necessary* one, i.e., following a particular path. But because all of the differences involved turn out to be what Hegel refers to in the above quote as "*essential* differences" (i.e., oppositions), the self-movement of the *Logic* proceeds in a necessary manner. Self-movement, then, *inherently* involves movement which is necessary, insofar as a.) self-movement takes place only through oppositions (which constitute contradiction), and b.) a string of oppositional pairs can only lead down one path. Above, we mentioned Hegel's discussion in "With What Must Science Begin?" about science needing to begin with what is abstract (i.e., what is immediate, viz., being), in order to avoid the presuppositions that come with what is concrete (i.e., what is mediated). Once the exposition has begun, however, it is "a mediated movement which begins from *one* of the determinations and advances to another,"[144] a clear

[144] *SL* 77-8.

reference to the movement through oppositions. The way that oppositions – and the moments they make possible – bring about the necessity of the *Logic*'s self-movement is addressed in the following passage:

> The relation contained in something concrete, in a synthetic unity, is *necessary* only insofar as it is not just found but is produced, through the movement proper to the moments [*durch die eigene Bewegung der Momente*] returning into this unity – a movement which is the opposite of the analytic procedure, of an activity external to the subject matter [*Sache*] itself and which belongs [only] to the subject [*Subjekt*].[145]

Whether we translate '*eigene*' as 'proper to' or 'appropriate' or 'own,' it is clear that the movement of the thought thinking itself is movement belonging to and springing from the moments due to their relation of *essential* difference, i.e., opposition. It is also clear that the relation of opposition is what makes the movement of the exposition a necessary one. By contrast, when the determinations of an exposition are merely diverse from each other, i.e., merely 'parts,' then the movement of that exposition can be neither a *self*-movement nor a necessary one. Said otherwise, an exposition whose individual determinations are in a relation of *mechanism* will be a *contingent* one which is not self-moving, i.e., one whose origin of movement is external to itself.

In the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel further clarifies the point that diversity – *inessential* difference – leads to a contingent and mechanistic exposition, while the essential difference of opposition leads to a necessary and a living exposition. In this specific passage he is speaking of the operations of formal mathematics, which

[145] Ibid., 74-5, translation emended.

deals with "magnitude alone, the inessential difference"[146]; however, any exposition proceeding according to inessential differences could be described in the same way:

> Precisely because it does not move itself, what is dead does not make it all the way to the differences of essence, nor to essential opposition or disparity, and thus not to the transition of one opposition into its opposite, nor to qualitative, immanent self-movement.[147]

Because opposition is what leads to immanent self-movement, any investigation which attempts to proceed according to inessential differences will be a dead one. That is, it will be unable to move of its own accord, because the source of self-movement just *is* the essential difference of opposition. Any exposition proceeding in such a matter will be a contingent one, and its movements will come from outside of itself. Speaking of the "fixed, dead propositions" of formal mathematics, Hegel says that "one can call a halt to any of them, but the next begins anew on its own account without the first itself having moved on to another and without any necessary connection arising out of the nature of the thing at issue."[148]

So now back to life. Clearly the self-movement of contradiction is intimately connected with the logical determination of life. To close out our treatment of life, we should thus articulate this connection more precisely. In Remark 3 on contradiction in the *Science of Logic*, Hegel gives us a helpful clue when he says that "contradiction is the root of all movement and livingness [*Lebendigkeit*]; it is only insofar as something has a

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[146] *Phenomenology* §45.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.

contradiction within it that it moves, and has an urge [*Trieb*] and activity [*Tätigkeit*]."[149] This *Trieb* – sometimes translated as 'impulse' or 'desire' or 'instinctive urge' – plays a prominent role in the *Logic*'s treatment of life. As mentioned above, life is the first stage of "The Idea," and "The Idea" is the final section of the Doctrine of the Concept and of the *Logic* as a whole. This means that life is the first stage of the Idea finally fully and explicitly coming to think itself, for life is the unifying of first two sections of the Doctrine of the Concept – "Subjectivity" and "Objectivity." As such, the section on life consists of the subjective concept attempting to forge a complete unity with 'the object.'

It is within this context that Hegel refers to the subjective concept as the "soul" of life, as its "self-moving principle"[150] and its "urge."[151] More specifically, he says that, in the relation of the subjective concept to objectivity, the former is "the *urge* to sublate this separation."[152] That is, it is the urge to sublate the difference of subject and object, such that the Idea can think itself *without* this separation. This sublation begins to occur in life, and the 'inwardizing' that this sublation effects helps us better grasp why Hegel describes life as "internal purposiveness," as opposed to the external purposiveness of mechanism.[153] As we saw earlier, within mechanism "the concept is regarded as external to it and it is treated as a dead thing."[154] That is, the 'urge' of the movement of mechanism is external both to it and to its indifferent parts, while the urge of life is *immanent* in it, such that its purposiveness is also inner. Speaking of the relation of the

[149] *SL* 439.
[150] Ibid., 765.
[151] Ibid., 770-1.
[152] Ibid., 759.
[153] Ibid., 737.
[154] Ibid., 766, translation emended.

subjective concept to its objectivity, Hegel says that the former "essentially relates itself to it [objectivity] through its own self – thus it is its own end [*Selbstzweck*] and urge."[155] What all of these passages point to is that the self-movement of contradiction which propels the *Science of Logic* forward in a necessary manner finds its even *fuller and more transparent* expression in the urge immanent within life. In the way that contradiction is the truth and expression of becoming, life is the truth and expression of contradiction. For, in the form of the subjective concept, the urge of life has *itself* as its goal; its goal is its own realization in and through a sublation of the difference between it and objectivity. Thus the Idea – and also the faculty of reason, as we will later see – is living insofar as its movement is based on the transition from opposite, to opposite, to result, and back again. That is, it is living insofar as its process of becoming fully itself is of its *own accord*, and insofar as its movements are *self*-movements, originating necessarily from – and only being directed toward – its own self.

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Here in Part II we have focused on the way in which the determinations 'part' and 'indifference' find a particularly clear expression in the determination 'mechanism,' and how the determinations ''becoming,' 'reciprocity,' moment,' 'self-movement,' and 'contradiction' find a particularly clear expression in the determination 'life.' However, the reality is that *every* determination in the *Logic* is an expression of *all* earlier ones, insofar as each later determination contains each earlier one as one of its moments. What it is to *be* a determination in the Logic is to be a determination which thought necessarily

[155] Ibid., 758.

passes through; thus, each earlier determination plays a role in the coming-to-be of later ones. So, e.g., even though in the pages above we have *contrasted* mechanism and life, the progression of the *Logic* makes it very clear that life would not be possible without mechanism: life is the unity of "Subjectivity" and "Objectivity," and the latter could not be without mechanism. For, mechanism is *taken up into* life, in the same way that we saw indifference (as reciprocally related to reciprocity) being taken up into reciprocity. In Part III, we will see something similar, as we observe the understanding being taken up into reason, and ordinary language being taken up into philosophical language.

Part III. Philosophical Language

"Knowing what we say is much rarer than we think, and it is with the greatest injustice that the accusation of not knowing what one says is taken to be the most severe."[1] With this statement, Hegel is stating that the meaning of a person's words might exceed their intentions, that the reference might exceed the one doing the referring. This possibility is, in his view, partially explained by the fact that the expression of words always involves the expression of concepts, and in many cases the concepts expressed are not the ones which the speaker intended to express. In fact, though, Hegel's claim is much stronger: *all* human beings *except* those who have thought through the totality of philosophical determinations do not fully comprehend the words that come out of their mouths. To grasp why Hegel would hold such a position requires a grasp of how he views the language of philosophy.

At this point it would be helpful to do a brief review of the previous two parts of this dissertation. In Part I, we looked at Hegel's critique of the mode of comprehension which proceeds by *applying* predicates or categories to the subject matter. We then looked at his own mode of comprehension, one which proceeds by following the determinations which lead up to the subject matter, and which then comprehends the subject matter as the 'expression' of those prior determinations. In contrasting these two modes, we saw Hegel describe the application mode as 'standing above' the subject

[1] G.W.F. Hegel, "Solgers nachgelassene Schriften und Briefwechsel," in *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik,* Jahrgang 1828, Erster Band, hg. Societät für wissenschaftliche Kritik zu Berlin (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1828), 848. Translation mine. I am grateful to John McCumber for directing me to this passage through the epigraph of his *The Company of Words: Hegel, Language and Systematic Philosophy* (Evanston, IL: Northwest University Press, 1993).

matter and surveying it from a distance, while the proper mode of comprehension 'enters into' and 'gives itself over to' it.[2] In Part II, we followed, in a very abstract and schematic fashion, a number of logical determinations – becoming, indifference, contradiction, etc. – which ended up being expressed in mechanism and life.[3] Now, in an even more abstract fashion, we will attempt to follow those two determinations into their expressions in the understanding, reason, and ordinary and philosophical language. This approach will, of course, only vaguely resembles the sort of systematic mode of comprehension that we looked at in Part I; nonetheless, highlighting how earlier, sublated determinations continue to make their presence felt in later determinations can give us a better context for looking into these later determinations. And while it is true that every philosophical determination is always the expression of *all* earlier determinations, it is also true that oftentimes a certain earlier determination will make, so to speak, a 'reappearance' in a later one in a way that is particularly illuminating (as we have already seen with, e.g., contradiction and life). And so we turn now to an investigation of the understanding and of ordinary language, an investigation guided by the fact that the logical determination of mechanism finds particularly vivid expression in the realm of spirit in these two determinations.

6. Ordinary Language

What I am referring to as 'ordinary language' is the kind of language which is guided primarily by the understanding. As we will see, the language of philosophy *also* involves

[2] *Phenomenology* §53.
[3] with mechanism itself being expressed in life.

the understanding in an essential way, but ordinary language – in its defining of words, in its relating of those words, in its relating of sentences, etc. – is dominated through and through by the understanding. And because this faculty is the power of *abstraction*, and its primary logical category is that of formal identity, it is not surprising that the sort of language which is the expression of this faculty is also characterized by these qualities. Thus, as a preparation for coming to better grasp the nature of ordinary language – but also the nature of philosophical language – we will now consider the way in which the understanding operates.

a. Understanding: Thought as Mechanistic

i. Finitude and *Gegenstände*

One way that the understanding is an especially clear expression of mechanism is that this shape of consciousness is the sort of thing that it is through its having *objects*. That is, the understanding has *Gegenstände*, things that 'stand over against it,' of which it is conscious.[4] A result of this that is especially relevant for our discussion is that the understanding is characterized by *finitude*. Back in Chapter 5 we spoke briefly of finitude with regard to causality, and because the relation of causality also helps illuminate the understanding, this discussion is worth recapping here. As we saw, causality involves entities that are distinct substances (viz., the cause, and the effect), and because they are distinct the cause acts on the effect from 'outside' of it. This externality of cause and effect from each other entails that they are finite, for Hegel holds that what is finite is *what has an other*.[5] That is, when something has an other, there is a limit

[4] *Philosophy of Spirit*, §422.
[5] *SL* 86, translation mine.

[*Grenze*] between the two, and what has a limit is finite. Clearly, then, the fact that the understanding is defined in part by having objects which stand over against it means that these objects are 'others' to it, and that it is characterized by finitude.

The finitude of causality characterizes the understanding in two ways: understanding functioning a cause, and understanding functioning as an effect. We have already seen an excellent example of the understanding operating finitely as a cause back in our discussion of Hegel's critique of formalism in Chapter 1. There we saw that, instead of following the self-movement and the self-ordering of the subject matter (*Sache*) where *it* leads, the understanding itself takes over the ordering role, attaching external predicates to the *Sache* and arranging the latter how it sees fit.[6] The understanding, then, is the cause, and its conclusions about the *Sache* are the effect, with the two standing in an external and finite relation.

The understanding operates as an *effect* in a closely related way. Because it attempts to grasp matters that are external to and other than it, it is *influenced by* various external elements. For example, when the understanding chooses predicates from a schema or chart and then applies them to its object of investigation, this schema or chart is acting as a cause on the understanding, insofar as the understanding is being affected in its conception of things by this schema or chart. The same dynamic is at work when the understanding is influenced by *anything* which is other to itself.

[6] *Phenomenology* §53. Naturally, the understanding *believes* it is arranging the *Sache* correctly, but Hegel says that the conclusions which it comes to about it say more about the understanding that they say about the *Sache*.

But the understanding in its mode as 'cause' and the understanding in its mode as 'effect' cannot be strictly separated from one another. For example, the particular way in which the understanding decides to arrange the *Sache* (e.g., 'human being') in its attempt to comprehend it would be influenced by the schema or chart that it draws from to guide its arranging activities (e.g., Kant's categories, or some chart with the categories 'animal' and 'thinking'). That is, the understanding acting as a *cause* would act in the particular way it does *because of* how it had been *affected* by something. This, of course, immediately raises the problem of beginnings, i.e., of how one should get started in one's investigations without begging the question. The finitude and the causal mode of the understanding – an extension of the fact that it has *objects* (*Gegenstände*) – entails that it cannot overcome this problem.

The finitude of the understanding exhibits itself not only in the understanding being 'other than' its effects and its causes, but also in a third way: its view of the *relations within* its objects. For, it views the elements within its objects not as moments but as parts, not as reciprocally-related but as indifferent to each other, as *standing over against* each other, and thus as finite. Hegel's discussion of the whole/part relation in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, which we have referred to several times, also addresses the operation of the understanding. After presenting the body/corpse metaphor, Hegel states that "the external and mechanical relation of wholes and parts does not suffice for the cognition of organic life in its truth," and then continues on by saying,

> This is the case to a much higher degree with the application of the part-whole relationship to spirit and to the configurations of the spiritual world. Even if in

> psychology one does not speak expressly of 'parts' of the soul or of the spirit, nonetheless the representation of that finite relationship [of part and whole] underlies the treatment of this discipline from the point of view of the understanding, and the various forms of spiritual activity are enumerated one after another and are only described in their isolation, as so-called particular powers and capacities.[7]

The idea that the soul has parts which can be isolated from each other is an idea which assumes the differentiations within the soul to be *finite* ones, standing over against each other indifferently. Hegel claims that this view of the soul stems from approaching the soul from the perspective of the understanding, i.e., from the perspective of that faculty which, by its very nature, sees parts even where there are moments, indifference even where there is reciprocity.

Since the understanding views the determinations which it comes across as separate from (other than) itself and separate from each other, it is not surprising that Hegel often describes the understanding as operating 'mechanically.' One such description appears in an Addition in the *Philosophy of Nature*, where he is discussing various processes of animal digestion. After some very amusing remarks about the chemical content of horse dung and tiger urine, he says,

> The understanding will always adhere to mediations as such and view them as external relations, mechanically and chemically comparing what is nonetheless entirely subordinate to free liveliness [*Lebendigkeit*] and self-feeling. The understanding wants

[7] *EL* §135, Addition, translation emended.

> to know more than speculation and looks down from on high at it; but the former always remains in finite mediation and cannot grasp liveliness as such.[8]

Because it assumes that the relations within and between things are external ones, the understanding tries to grasp things in terms of finite interactions. One result is that – as we noted back in Chapter 5 – it is unable to comprehend life. And it is unable to do so regardless of whether the life in question is logical, natural, and spiritual. Like the anatomist standing over the dismembered body, confused about why it does not move, the understanding's finite, mechanical, and formalistic approach ensures that it will never comprehend what is living.

At the beginning of this section we noted that the understanding 'is what it is by having *objects*.' In the meantime we have seen how this translates into the understanding operating in a mechanical fashion. But we have not yet addressed this question: *why* is this faculty defined by having objects? Hegel sheds light on this in a well-known passage from the Preface to the *Phenomenology*, where his main topic is the nature of analysis. The kind of analysis he is dealing with involves representations being broken up into their constituent parts, and here he identifies what is responsible for this 'breaking up': "The act of separating is the force and labor of the *understanding*, the most astonishing and the greatest of all the powers or, rather, that which is the absolute power."[9] Applying this to our discussions above, we can see why the understanding is finite, why it has objects, and why – within and amongst its objects – its sees only finite relations. As a

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[8] *Philosophy of Nature* §365, Addition, my translation.
[9] *Phenomenology* §32.

separating force, it separates its objects from itself, itself from its objects, its objects from each other, and the elements *within* objects from the objects' other elements.

This 'separating' aspect of the understanding further illuminates its formalistic approach which we discussed back in Part I. When that which it is trying to comprehend has been reduced to indifferent parts, these parts are not in a relation of *opposition*, but in a relation of *diversity*. As we saw in Chapter 5, the nature of becoming, contradiction, self-movement, and life are all dependent on the relation of opposition, of 'essential difference.' It is thus no wonder that Hegel asserts that the formalistic approach is unable to enter into the self-moving, self-ordering life of the *Sache*: the *Sache* of the understanding *has no* self-movement. Rather, it is dead and inert, and as a result the understanding must itself take on this ordering role. In the "Force and the Understanding" section of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel is discussing how the understanding forms laws of nature out of its own self; while the context here is somewhat different than the treatment of formalism in the Preface, his point nonetheless reveals the same principle at work: "…within this tautological movement, the understanding steadfastly insists on its object's unity at rest, and the movement just takes place in the understanding itself, not in the object."[10]

At this point we are able to be more precise about the understanding's connection to mechanism, i.e., its connections to the relation within which a collection of indifferent parts possesses a principle of determination which is external to it. One way the understanding does so is with respect to *itself*, and another way is with respect to the

[10] Ibid., §155.

objects it is attempting to grasp. It does so with respect to itself insofar as its own movements over various subject matters are not necessary but rather contingent, thus indicating that these movements are dictated by what the understanding happens across or arbitrarily encounter in its particular experiences. Hegel describes this in the *Phenomenology*'s Preface as follows:

> Having the knowing subject apply the one unmoved form to whatever just happens to be on hand and then externally dipping the material into this motionless element contributes as much to fulfilling what is demanded as does a collection of purely arbitrary impressions about the content. Rather, what is demanded is for the shapes to originate their richness and determine their distinctions from out of themselves.[11]

Clearly, that the understanding goes about its movements based on "whatever happens to be on hand" means that its movements are *not self-determined*. Its movements are not necessary ones, but rather are contingent, uncertain, and dictated by something external to it.

Another way that the understanding illustrates mechanism is with respect to its objects. Strictly speaking, its objects – as separated off from their contexts by the "most astonishing and the greatest of all the powers" – are inert, dead, and not moving. But, in an *exposition* undertaken by the understanding in an attempt to account for something, the movement of mechanism appears quite clearly. For, the movement of that exposition – i.e., the transition from one determination to the next – is one externally-imposed by the understanding itself. Hegel speaks of something similar in his Remark on the principle of sufficient reason in the *Science of Logic*, referring to Leibniz' own critique of a

[11] Ibid., §15.

mechanical mode of arranging what one is trying to comprehend: "But Leibniz opposed the *sufficiency* of ground mainly to causality in its strict sense as the mechanical mode of action. Since this is an altogether external activity…the determinations posited by it are externally and contingently conjoined…."[12] Thus, while an exposition produced by the faculty of the understanding might have the appearance of a living and self-moving unity, it is in fact only a reconstructed corpse, one whose ordering and whose movements arise not from within itself but from the external hand of the understanding.

ii. Its Fundamental Category: Formal Identity

Above we mentioned that the understanding operates according to the categories of diversity (as opposed to opposition) and indifference (as opposed to reciprocity). The reason it does so is this: its most basic assumption is the category of formal identity. In the *Philosophy of Spirit* Hegel refers to formal identity as the understanding's "principle,"[13] and in the *Philosophy of Nature* as its "ground category [*Grundkategorie*]."[14] It must be emphasized the kind of identity which underlies the operation of the understanding is *formal* identity, i.e., *abstract* identity. For, the *concrete* identity which is grasped in the *Logic* when formal identity is seen to *contain difference within it* is something which the understanding is unable to recognize.

To describe the difference between abstract and concrete identity, we can trace the way in which the former gives way to the latter. In its abstract shape, identity is

[12] *SL* 446.
[13] *Philosophy of Spirit* §573, Remark.
[14] *Philosophy of Nature* §246, Addition.

characterized as "inward reflection"[15] and "relation to self."[16] The result of this complete 'inwardness' of formal identity is that "otherness and relation-to-other has vanished in its own self into pure equality-with-self."[17] Putting it in Greek terms, formal identity could be described as what is *auto kath auto*, 'itself the same as itself,' for it does not contain otherness within itself in any essential way. Identity *is*, in its own self, and is not constituted by an other. But while identity is a wholly self-standing 'relation-to-self' in which otherness has supposedly been banished, the *description* of identity as 'relating itself to itself' reveals that otherness has not been banished. For, the very act of using the word 'itself' *twice* reveals that some sort of *distinction* is being drawn. As Hegel puts it, identity is "a distinguishing of itself from itself."[18] Thus, difference has appeared on the scene, and has done so *in* and *through* identity.[19] Furthermore, when the relation between identity and the newly-appeared difference is considered, difference appears in a specific form: "Identity *falls apart* within itself into diversity…."[20] But – as we noted back in Chapter 4 – one soon realizes that the relation between identity and diversity is *itself not* one of diversity, but rather one of opposition: the two are what they are *through* each other. And now identity is no longer being thought abstractly and formally, but concretely, i.e., *together with* what essentially constitutes it.

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[15] *EL* §113.
[16] Ibid., §115.
[17] *SL* 411.
[18] *EL* §116, Addition.
[19] More specifically, identity contains *reflection*, as seen by the descriptions of identity as 'relating to itself' and 'identity-with-itself' (*SL* 411). Reflection contains negativity (insofar reflection is a movement back and forth between two opposing elements), and difference just *is* this negativity within reflection (*SL* 417).
[20] *SL* 418.

The understanding, however, cannot grasp this concrete identity, for reasons addressed above: its operation as a *separating* power cannot grasp the fact that identity 'in its truth' is in a relation of *dependent opposition* with diversity. Thus, it views identity abstractly, cut off from diversity. Because it sees identity as merely 'relation to self,' it sees it as that in which otherness has vanished. It is this view of identity – formal identity – which undergirds the understanding in its entire approach to knowing. And as we will see in the next section, one significant result of this is that, when the understanding sees the statement "being and nothing are one and the same," it reads the *copula* in terms of formal identity.

The fact that formal identity is wholly indifferent to others helps to clarify what we saw earlier about the understanding, viz., that it views things not in terms of moments but in terms of parts. The fact that the understanding views things through the lens of formal identity means that it cannot properly comprehend opposition and reciprocity, which means that it also cannot comprehend the *very basis* of self-movement, contradiction, and life. As mentioned above, the understanding deals only with dead and lifeless objects, and one reason why this is so is that its fundamental principle, formal identity, is itself inert, still, unopposed, lifeless. Viewed as they are through the lens of formal identity, the understanding's objects cannot be self-moving. For, contradiction – the inner negativity which makes self-movement possible – can only be comprehended when one has seen the *incompleteness* (the abstractness) of formal identity, which allows one to

move on to concrete identity, to opposition, and then to the relation of identity of difference *as* contradiction.[21] In Hegel words,

> Abstract identity is not as yet a livingness, but the positive, being in its own self a negativity, goes outside of itself and undergoes alteration. Something is therefore alive only in so far as it contains contradiction within it, and moreover, insofar as it is this power to hold and endure the contradiction within it….[22]

The positive which is "in its own self a negativity" is a reference to contradiction, and this is what enables something to 'go outside of itself' and 'undergo alteration.' As we said in Part II, contradiction is what drives *becoming*, and it itself *is self*-becoming. But abstract identity, as the 'positive' which is wholly indifferent to its negative (viz., difference), does not allow for such living self-becoming. Hegel's description of formal identity in this passage applies equally well to all the objects of the understanding: "For as against contradiction, identity is merely the determination of the simple immediate, of dead being."[23]

In this same passage Hegel stresses the consequences of the difference between formal identity and contradiction by connecting the former with all non-philosophical approaches to knowing the world. He states, "But it is one of the fundamental prejudices of logic up to this point and of ordinary thinking [*gewöhnliche Vorstellen*] that contradiction is not so characteristically essential and immanent a determination as identity…."[24] Thus the rather dramatic claim which Hegel is making is that not only

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[21] See Chapter 5, fn. 129.
[22] *SL* 440, translation emended.
[23] *SL* 439.
[24] Ibid.

ordinary thinking, but *all previous conceptions of logic* give priority to formal identity in their attempts to comprehend things. In light of our above discussions, we can make the addition that both ordinary thinking and all previous logics have operated according to the mode of the understanding, dealing with *Gegenstände*, and dealing with them under the assumption that formal identity is the category through which the truth of things is known.

The flip side of this principle of the understanding is the view that contradiction is not actually found *in* things, i.e., in unified entities. For it believes that contradiction exists only *between* things, and that when this happens the things are completely done away with. Said otherwise, the understanding rejects the possibility of *Aufhebung*, for it views contradiction not as leading to a *result*, but as leading to *nothing*. This difference between the mode of the understanding and the mode of philosophy (i.e., the mode of reason) with regard to the nature of contradiction is one of extraordinary significance for Hegel. In the following passage – one which ties together a great deal of what we have discussed thus far in this dissertation – Hegel highlights how these contrasting views of contradiction (stemming from contrasting views of formal identity) constitute the difference between two fundamentally different ways of trying to comprehend the world:

> Speculative thinking consists solely in the fact that thought holds fast contradiction, in its own self, but does not allow itself to be dominated by it as in ordinary thinking, where its determinations are resolved by contradiction only into other determinations or into nothing.[25]

[25] *SL* 440-441.

In Hegel's view, the contradictions that one encounters when thinking something through just *are* the self-movement of that something, i.e., the self-ordering capacity of the *Sache* that we discussed back in Part I. But when one is proceeding in the mode of the understanding, the contradictions that one encounters lead instead either to other, wholly separate determinations or simply to a return to nothing. Why it does this is clear: its principle of formal identity demands that things are what they *in themselves*, merely as 'self-related' and not as essentially 'other-related.' Thus the understanding views a contradiction as resulting either in the coming to be of something wholly other (an entirely new self-identical entity), or in nothing (such as when two self-related entities cancel each other out, e.g., +1 and -1).

But in Hegel's view, the understanding's favoring of abstract identity and its aversion to contradiction and to *Aufhebung* lead it *itself* to engage in contradiction. For example, its aversion to contradiction results in its embrace of the principle of the excluded third, i.e., the principle that with respect to two opposed predicates, only one can apply to a given thing. However, in its very formulation of this principle, the understanding expresses precisely the opposite of what it *means* to express:

> The principle of the *excluded third* is the principle of the determinate understanding, which wants to keep itself away from contradiction and, in so doing, commits it. A is supposed to be either +A or –A; thus the third, the A which is *neither* + *nor* –, and which is *also equally* posited as +A and as -A, is already expressed.[26]

In an attempt to avoid contradiction, the understanding tries to define what *can* be the case – *either* +A or –A – and what *cannot* be the case – the excluded third of an A that is

[26] *EL* §119, Remark, translation emended.

both (or neither) +A and –A. But to be able to engage in the *act of excluding* this third, the understanding must *think* the third; indeed, its *very act* of excluding it *is* a thinking of it. Put otherwise, in the saying of what *cannot* be thought, the understanding *has* thought it. It thus refutes and contradicts itself, for its words and its deeds are in direct opposition.[27] Additionally, it has contradicted itself *by thinking contradiction itself*, i.e., by thinking 'A that is both +A and –A.'

Nonetheless, the understanding does not realize it has done this. And one likely reason for this is that it is not attempting to think contradiction *itself* (i.e., as a logical determination), but rather simply as something that one *applies* to things. In the mode of application, especially to material objects, a rejection of contradiction is certainly understandable. To take a quotidian example, either my computer contains parts made of plastic, or it does not contain such parts. And, my *thinking* of my computer as both containing and not containing such parts does not bring such a computer into being (even though it does create the *thought* of such a contradictory computer). But when we are attempting to do philosophy, we are attempting to think through philosophical determinations (e.g., 'finitude,' 'plant,' 'the state,' 'art,' etc.), which is to say: what one is dealing with in philosophy *are thoughts*. Of course, 'thoughts' in this context are precisely *not* contingent abstractions from, e.g., the computer sitting in front of me, but rather determinations of the Idea, i.e., all the determinations in logic, nature, and spirit which are involved in the Idea coming to think itself. But putting that to one side, from the discussion above we can see that the understanding's view of contradiction and its

[27] This is not the first time that Hegel has borrowed a move from the Eliatic Stranger's critique of Parmenides.

privileging of formal identity are what lead it to operate in the 'application' mode of comprehension discussed in Part I. Conversely, it is also evident why the understanding would eschew the 'expression' mode of comprehension, given that the foundation of this mode is precisely the *Aufhebung* and contradiction (and the self-movement they enable) which the understanding rejects. The understanding proceeds according to the external and mechanical mode of 'application,' and the *formalism* of its mode stems from its privileging of *formal* identity.

iii. Philosophical and Non-Philosophical Abstraction

In the previous section we saw that the power of the understanding is the power of *separating* things, and we observed this separating ability in its dealings with the category of formal, abstract identity. Even though identity 'in its truth' is intertwined with difference, the understanding is capable of separating identity off from difference, and, what is more, of viewing the whole world – including its *own self*, as separated off from this world – through the lens of this abstraction. But an issue we have not yet addressed in any depth is Hegel's view that the understanding – while making possible the errors of formalism – also makes possible the activity of philosophy. In this section we will thus investigate these two very different dimensions of the understanding, focusing especially on the understanding's role within philosophy, i.e., on what I will call 'philosophical abstraction.'

'Non-philosophical abstraction,' then, is the term I am using for what the understanding engages in when it is operating not within the larger activity of philosophy, but separated off on its own terms. This is what Hegel is referring to in the *Logic*'s

Introduction when he talks about the point in history when "*reflective* understanding"[28] came to dominate philosophy. In ancient metaphysics, he says, the view was that thinking is not alien to what it thinks; rather, thinking "is its essential nature…things and the thinking of them (our language too expresses their kinship) are in and for themselves in agreement, thinking in its immanent determinations and the true nature of things forming one and the same content."[29] This prior mode of philosophizing was one which was not characterized by finitude and which, strictly speaking, did not have *Gegenstände*; rather, its thinking through of the nature of things was a thinking through of *itself*. But this view of philosophy was rejected by the 'reflective understanding,' which Hegel describes as "the understanding as abstracting, and hence as separating and remaining fixed in its separations. Directed against reason, it behaves as ordinary common sense…."[30] This kind of understanding, then, is *itself* abstracted away from reason. Additionally, it operates in the mode of common sense, i.e., in the mode of having objects, objects which in the mode of formal identity stand fixed and independent over against each other.

Shortly after Hegel's discussion of 'reflective understanding,' we find him speaking further about the way that the abstraction of logical determinations from one another leads to a 'dead' logic: "When they [logical forms] are taken as fixed determinations and consequently in their separation from each other and not as held together in their organic unity, then they are dead forms and the spirit which is their living concrete unity does not

[28] *SL* 45, translation emended.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.

dwell in them."[31] Determinations which are held fixed in place by the understanding – held fixed because of its aversion to contradiction – are unable to be thought in their unity, i.e., as concrete. Put otherwise, the understanding takes moments to be parts, and thus believes that by thinking them merely in their separation, it is thinking them in their truth. On the other hand, "…logical reason is the substantial or real being which holds together within itself every abstract determination and is their substantial, absolutely concrete unity." [32] As we will see below, reason brings into a living unity not only every determination in the logical sphere, but also every determination in nature and in spirit.

But to prepare ourselves for examining reason itself more closely, let us consider the understanding in terms of what I am calling 'philosophical abstraction.' By this I mean the abstraction which the understanding brings about when working *in conjunction with* reason. This kind of understanding is what Hegel describes in the famous passage in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* in which he presents the three-sided form of the logical: "α) *the side of abstraction* or *of the understanding*, β) the *dialectical* or *negatively rational side*, γ) *the speculative* or *positively rational* one."[33] In the Remark he notes that these three sides

> do not constitute *parts* of logic, but are *moments of everything logically real*, i.e., of every concept or of everything true in general. All of them together can be put under the first moment, that of the understanding, and in this way they can be kept separate from each other, but then they are not considered in their truth.[34]

[31] Ibid., 48.
[32] Ibid.
[33] *EL* §79.
[34] Ibid., Remark.

What is particularly fascinating is that, in order to abstract the understanding away from the two forms of reason, one must use the understanding itself to do so. Doing this is, for Hegel, not a problem, so long as one *recognizes* that one is treating moments as if they were parts, and so long as one reunites them in their concretion. But it is more than a little ironic that the understanding – as we saw in the mode of 'reflective understanding' – is able to abstract *itself* away from its moments, reduce itself to a part, and *view* itself as such. This means that 'reflective understanding' is not only an anatomist, but also an organ within the very body it is dismembering. It is an organ which has cut itself out of its own body.

Clearly, though, Hegel sees the understanding as a necessary moment of philosophical activity, and we need to say more about why this is so. In short: this is so because the Idea in its totality – logic, nature, and spirit – *contains differentiations*. As opposed to a 'Parmenidean' One, the Idea contains moments. Because of this, the way that the Idea *thinks itself* (in the form of the philosopher, doing philosophy) is to differentiate itself into parts and moments and unite them back into itself. As a separating, abstracting power, the understanding is what makes these differentiations possible (e.g., between 'something' and 'other,' between 'identity' and 'difference'). Putting all of this in more detail: the Idea goes about the process of thinking itself by separating off one of its determinations from that determination's '*diverse* other' (via the understanding), then by seeing these abstractions *as* abstract and thus recognizing them as moments, by uniting those moments through *Aufhebung* into a result (i.e., a new determination), by separating this *new* determination from *its* 'diverse other,' and then

repeating. Thus, this process is a continual pendulum swing between abstraction (as separation) and concretion (as unification). At the broadest level, this swinging of the pendulum is what constitutes the movement that takes place between the determination 'being' at the beginning of the *Logic* and the determination 'philosophy' at the end of the *Philosophy of Spirit*. For, philosophy *begins* with what is *most abstract* – 'being' – and, after a 1,500 page series of abstractions and concretions, it *ends* with what is *most concrete*, viz., its own self.[35] As the final determination of the Idea, philosophy is the most concrete because it is that *into which* all previous determinations are gathered, i.e., it is the *result* which arises out of all previous determinations being sublated. In this way, philosophy has thought through its own self, and, because philosophy is the final determination of the Idea, the Idea has through *its* own self as well.

But let us returning to the matter of the understanding. Whenever a differentiation takes place – e.g., between being and nothing, between finitude and bad infinitude – it takes place through the abstractive understanding. In this very lucid passage, Hegel further clarifies the intimate connection between the abstracting, separating, finite activity of the understanding, and formal identity: "*Formal* identity or identity of the *understanding* is this identity, insofar as one holds onto it firmly and *abstracts* from difference. Or rather, *abstraction* is the positing of this formal identity, the

[35] The philosophizing act that *begins* with 'being' is, however, not identical to the determination 'philosophy' that is accounted for at the *end*; for, the former is 'philosophy in action but not yet accounted for,' while the latter is 'philosophy in action *and* accounted for,' and thus the *full expression and being* of philosophy.

Additionally, the description above of the movement from 'most abstract' to 'most concrete' should not be taken to imply that 'later' determinations in the encyclopedia are *inevitably* more concrete than 'earlier' ones. Cf., e.g., the Absolute Idea at the end of the *Logic*, and 'space' at the beginning of the *Philosophy of Nature*.

transformation of something inwardly concrete into this form of simplicity…."[36] Any act of abstraction, then, is an assertion of the formal identity (independent self-relation) of that which has been abstracted. Back in Chapter 5 we noted that Hegel sometimes describes the difference between abstraction and concretion in terms of *mediation*: what is *wholly* abstract contains *no* mediation (viz., 'being'), and, in general, what is abstract is less mediated than what is concrete. We can see this situation in action with regard to formal identity, insofar as abstraction takes what is "inwardly concrete" – in this case, the unity of identity and difference as mutually-mediating and reciprocal moments – and turns it into something simple, abstract, and immediate, viz., formal identity. With regard to the Idea, then, the understanding separates its moments by abstracting them away from the whole in which they have their being, reducing them to mere parts, and fixing them as self-standing entities in the mode of formal identity. As such, the abstracted moments stand indifferently over against each other and over against the whole. Yet, as we have seen, this process is a *necessary* one for philosophy, because the Idea is able to think itself only if it thinks through the differentiations within itself.

Hegel puts this last point very well in the *Logic* when he says, "…we must recognize the infinite force of the understanding in splitting the concrete into abstract determinateness and grasping the depth of difference, which at the same time is alone the power that effects their transition."[37] Taken at the very broadest level, 'the concrete' is

[36] *EL* §115.
[37] *SL* 610, translation emended.

'the whole,' i.e., the Idea,[38] and the understanding splits all of its moments into parts such that the difference within the Idea can be known by the Idea. Furthermore, despite the fact that the understanding fixes determinations, making them inert, dead, and indifferent to each other, it is only *because* the understanding does so that there can be movement and self-movement within philosophy. Hegel alludes to this in the previous quote, when he refers to the *transition* between the various abstract determinations. If the understanding did not fix determinations over against each other as finite and diverse (i.e., as *verschiedene*), it would not be possible for dialectical (negative) reason to then recognize them as opposed (i.e. *entgegengesetzt*) and as interdependent moments, or for speculative (positive) reason to then recognize their transition into the unity of a new determination. Thus, when Hegel says that the "struggle of reason consists precisely in overcoming what the understanding has made rigid,"[39] we can see that the struggle and the work of reason would not be possible *without* the understanding having made things rigid. To give an example: if the understanding did not abstract and separate 'finitude' and 'bad infinity' from each other, dialectical reason could not recognize that bad infinity is what it is only insofar as it is *not* finite (which means that it *is* finite, insofar as it has a limit), and speculative reason could not recognize the dissolution of these opposed determinations into 'affirmative infinity.'

It is thus not surprising that Hegel at times comes to the defense of the understanding, e.g., saying in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* that it "must unquestionably be conceded its right

[38] As will be discussed below, it is more accurate to say that the Idea *in the form of philosophy* is 'the whole,' for, the Idea as found at the end of the *Logic* is an *abstraction* away from nature and spirit, depending upon these two for its development and expression. see, e.g., *SL* 592
[39] *EL* §32, Addition.

and merit," because of its important isolating powers. Even in our favorite passage about the anatomist and the corpse, where Hegel sternly critiques such an abstractive approach, he qualifies his critique by adding that "this is not to say that this kind of dissection should not happen at all, but only that the external and mechanical relation of wholes and parts does not suffice for the cognition of organic life in its truth."[40] His reasons for qualifying his critique of dissection/abstraction are clear. Such a dissection is absolutely necessary after every act of *Aufhebung* in order to set the stage for the next *Aufhebung*, i.e., for the next self-moving advance of thought thinking through its own self.[41] Thus, the progress of thought throughout the entire encyclopedia consists of the Idea continually dissecting and reunifying, killing and revivifying itself. This process continues until, finally, through its own living activity, the Idea becomes wholly itself in philosophy's account of its own self.

b. The Being of Ordinary Language

But the understanding both as working alone and as working in conjunction with reason are only possible through language. When it is working alone, it produces a different kind of language than when it is working with reason. However, the language of reason will turn out to be dependent upon the language of the mere understanding, and we therefore must provide an account of the latter. The language of the mere understanding is what I am referring to as 'ordinary language,'[42] i.e., the philosophical

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[40] Ibid., §135, Addition.
[41] Additionally, an act of abstraction is necessary for the *Science of Logic* to begin in a presuppositionless manner, given that such a beginning requires starting with what is unmediated and *wholly* abstract, viz., being. See *SL* 77-78.
[42] I should immediately admit that, in lumping all non-philosophical language into the category of 'ordinary' language, I am doing a serious injustice to the rich possibilities of language, both *qua* language

determination which Hegel simply calls "*die Sprache*." His most extensive treatment of this 'language *qua* language' is found in the third part of "Subjective Spirit" in the *Philosophy of Spirit*, entitled "Theoretical Spirit" and also often referred to as "intelligence" [*Intelligenz*].[43] Before our discussion of his treatment of language, we should say a word about the overall structure of this part of the *Philosophy of Spirit*.

Hegel presents intelligence as existing in three primary forms – intuition (*Anschauung*), presentation (*Vorstellung*), and thought (*Denken*). Presentation, in turn, itself has three different forms – recollection (*Erinnerung*), imagination (*Einbildungskraft*), and memory (*Gedächtnis*) – and the production of language takes place within imagination. Because keeping all these terms and their relations straight is rather challenging, an outline will be useful:

I. Theoretical Spirit – Intelligence
  α. Intuition
  β. Presentation
    1. Recollection
    2. Imagination
      a. Reproductive
      b. Associative
      c. Phantasy
        i. Symbolic
        ii. The Sign
        iii. Language
    3. Memory
  γ. Thought

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and *qua* Hegel's own views of language. This is especially so with respect to *poetic and religious* language, whose powers of expression are not only far from 'ordinary,' but which – given the place of art and religion for Hegel – are seen by him as modes of expression which are genuinely *about* the Idea. However, in terms of this dissertation's goal of giving an account of philosophical language, my decision to treat only one other form of language has to do with the particularly helpful way in which ordinary language will illuminate philosophical language, as well as with practical considerations of time and space.

[43] *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, trans. M. Petry, §455.

Hegel emphasizes that, in contrast to a common view, the powers of recollection, imagination, and memory are not independent of presentation, standing over against it; rather, they are the three *forms* of presentation.[44] To comprehend the nature of presentation is thus to comprehend the connections between these three forms, and to trace the way that intelligence develops in and through them.[45] For, intelligence is the more general determination that here – through the development of its various forms and sub-forms – is *itself* being developed.[46] This is helpful to know because, when Hegel is describing what is happening he will often switch back and forth between the 'local' and the 'general,' i.e., between describing a specific form (e.g., presentation) or sub-form (e.g., imagination) of intelligence doing something, and intelligence *itself* doing something.

In what follows we will give only brief consideration to the first and third form of presentation (recollection and memory), and we will focus primarily on the second form, imagination, because it is this power which engages in the production of both symbols and signs. Beginning with the issue of recollection will be important, however, because doing so will allow us to appreciate the contribution of intuitions that *nature* makes to the existence of linguistic signs. Nature does this by means of both the images that intuition gives rise to *within* intelligence, and the 'material' of intuition that nature provides the imagination for the production of symbols and signs *external* to intelligence (e.g., spoken or written words). These latter, external intuitions are what function as an 'other' to

[44] Ibid., §451, Addition.
[45] Ibid.
[46] This is somewhat analogous to how, in the Doctrine of Essence, essence as a whole is being developed *through* the coming into being of its many various forms.

intelligence so that intelligence – particularly by means of the sign – might fully become itself by giving rise to *thought*. In grasping how signs are produced, we will begin to understand why Hegel claims that "we only know of our thoughts, only have determinate, actual thoughts, when we give them the form of *objectivity*,"[47] viz., objectivity in language.

i. The Coming into Being of Ordinary Language
Recollection

After Hegel has given an account of the first form of intelligence, viz., sensory intuition, he turns his attention to its second form, presentation. The first form of presentation, recollection (*Erinnerung*), creates an image (*Bild*) from an intuition. In Hegel's words, the image is "contingently isolated in general from the external place, the time, and the immediate context in which it stood."[48] An example would be someone seeing a rose, and then having an image of that rose within their intelligence. The image is what is inwardized (*erinnert*) and thus present within consciousness, but the nature of this inwardization is that the image is, in Hegel's specific terminology, "no longer existent [*nicht mehr existierend*]"[49] because it no longer has any kind of 'external' form by which consciousness can be aware of it. Thus, the image is "*unconsciously preserved*."[50] By this Hegel also means that recollection is *not in control of* its images, and he describes them as "sleeping within the deep well of my inwardness,"[51] unable to

[47] Ibid., §462, Addition.
[48] Ibid., §452.
[49] Ibid., §453.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.

be called forth at will. Because such an image is wholly inwardized and covered over, intelligence at this point is an "*unconscious* abyss,"[52] and is merely "in itself," [53] which is to say that it is not posited and not *expressed* by the image that it has created, due to the latter being so completely inwardized.

However, a more developed form of recollection comes into being when an image lying hidden in the depths of consciousness is, through the help of an existing intuition with the *same content*, recognized as an intuition that one previously had. Hegel's example is an image of someone's face lying 'unconsciously preserved' in my consciousness, one which I have totally 'forgotten' (e.g., a student one had for a single semester five years ago). Nevertheless, when I happen to come upon this person in a large crowd, the presence of this preserved image in my consciousness allows me to immediately pick the person out as someone I have seen in the past.[54] And, my ability to do this is the evidence that the image was in fact previously lying unconsciously within me. When this sort of situation occurs, the image moves from lying 'merely present' and hidden in consciousness to being *differentiated from* the intuition to which it is related, and it is this differentiation which allows intelligence to have actual possession and control over the image. Intelligence can now present the image to itself on its *own* power, and the fact that it can *place* it *before* itself shows how the power of '*Vor-stellung*' is becoming more properly what it is. Furthermore, the image now has *externality* from intelligence, i.e., from the unconscious abyss in which it previously lay;

[52] Ibid., §453 Remark.
[53] Ibid., §453: "*Ansichsein*."
[54] Ibid., §454, Addition.

yet because it is an image, its externality is still, in another sense, *internal* to intelligence To put this in plainer terms: when I, of my own volition, recall the image of someone's face, this image is *external* to my intelligence in *comparison* to the lack of externality which characterized this same image when it was merely lying in my unconscious; but, on the other hand, the image as recalled is *internal* to my intelligence in *comparison* to the intuition of the person's face which I have when I actually see them.

Pre-Symbolizing Imagination

Intelligence's ability to present an image to itself of its own accord marks the transition from recollection to imagination (*Einbildungkraft*). It also marks a transition in which

intelligence becomes even more active; in Hegel's words, "the intelligence active within its possession [viz., within its image] is the reproductive imagination, the *going forth* of images out of the proper inwardness of the I which is now their power."[55] As we saw in the previous paragraph, the fact that the intelligence can now – via the imagination – externalize the image *apart from an intuition* means that it can grant the image an *existence* within the intelligence itself, by *presenting* the image to itself. In this way, the intelligence has, through the imagination, gained some manner of independence from the externality of intuition. Because intelligence no longer needs an intuition to call forth its images, it no longer needs intuition to help it find *expression* – it can now find its expression and externality *within itself*. This freeing of itself from being wholly determined by intuition is important for our particular focus here on language; for, it is a

[55] Ibid., §455.

preview of what we will soon see in the intelligence's relation to the specific intuitions which (whether sounds in the air or words on the page) are involved with linguistic signs.

An even more crucial aspect of the imagination's role in freeing intelligence from intuition is its ability to *relate* images to each other. This marks the transition from the *reproductive* imagination, to the *associative* imagination. In Hegel's words, the imagination "does not simply call forth the images present within it, but rather *relates* them *to each other* and in this way elevates them to *universal* presentations [allgemeinen *Vorstellungen*]."[56] So, for example, from the images of a rose and an oak tree which it can recall at will, imagination creates the universal presentation 'plant.' A universal presentation is produced, then, when the intelligence, via the imagination, brings images into an "associative relation."[57] And, the reason that this is produced is that the intelligence's *act of relating* them to each other just *is* the act of bringing them under a universal, a universal which comes from intelligence itself. Thus, when the associative imagination relates images to each other, the fact that the "I" is what is providing this relation means "the intelligence gives the images, in place of their *objective* bond, a *subjective* one."[58] This subjective bond, then, is simply what the universal presentation (e.g., 'plant') *is*. So it is precisely because the force relating the various images is the universal "I" that the result is the production of a *universal* presentation. The intelligence, says Hegel, is the "universal form,"[59] and, in the form of the associative

[56] Ibid., Addition.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid., Addition.
[59] "*allgemeine Form*" – Ibid., §456.

imagination, it "lifts the universality out of"[60] the images through the act of giving them determinations "which correspond to the I."[61] While Hegel does not mention *Verstand* specifically in his discussion, it is clear that the 'lifting the universality out' of the images involves *abstracting* features from them which are deemed to be held in common.

Before examining the way in which the imagination produces symbols, we should make a general point about the previous paragraph. While intelligence in the form of recollection simply *contained* images – images of which it was unaware and *by* which it was thus *determined* – intelligence in the form of reproductive imagination was able to recall the images of its *own accord*. Then, in the form of associative imagination, it was able to produce its *own* content from these images, viz., the universal presentation. Clearly, this constitutes a further increase in the power of intelligence over the images present within it, and in the intelligence's capacity for *self*-determination. Nevertheless, the universal presentation (e.g., 'plant') still finds its existence within intelligence, and is only *conscious to* intelligence, because of its differentiation from, and externalization into, the *images* from which it has been derived (e.g., of a rose, and of an oak tree). Put more directly: despite the intelligence's ability to create a universal presentation, the images derived from intuitions still hold great sway over the intelligence. For without these images, the universal presentation would be present within intelligence in the same way that the image of recollection (e.g., the image of a face seen long ago) was without its corresponding intuition (e.g., seeing that face again, in a crowd). That is, it would be

[60] Ibid., §451, Addition.
[61] Ibid.

merely *contained within* the intelligence, in its "universal well [*allgemeiner Schacht*],"[62] as *unconsciously* present.

The Symbol

Through a form of the imagination which Hegel calls "*phantasy*,"[63] the imagination moves beyond simply giving the universal presentation an existence within internal images. Now, it is able to give the universal presentation an existence within something more external to itself, viz., within an intuition. When this is done, a *symbol* is produced. An example Hegel gives of this process is intelligence expressing the universal presentation 'Jupiter's strength' in the image – here an *external* image, an intuition – of an eagle (e.g., the image of an eagle painted on a shield). Through this act, the content of intelligence becomes the *meaning* of the intuition: the image of the eagle on the shield comes to *mean* 'Jupiter's strength.' Hegel describes the universal presentation as the "substantial power over the image."[64] And, in an illustration of the in-itself/for-another/for-itself dynamic we discussed back in Part I, he says that the universal presentation "makes itself into the image's soul, becomes *for-itself* in the image…manifests itself in it."[65] That is, the universal presentation within intelligence (e.g., Jupiter's strength) becomes more fully what it is through its expression in an other, viz., the external image (e.g., the eagle).

Yet crucially, in the act of symbol production, the intelligence does not in fact have full control over the external image (the intuition) into which it has placed its content, and

[62] Ibid., §455.
[63] Ibid., §456.
[64] Ibid., Addition
[65] Ibid.

thus it does not have full control over *which specific* image it can place its content within. The reason for this is that the image *itself* has content, its *own* content (e.g., the content of the image of an eagle is simply: an eagle), and this content exists *independently* of the content of intelligence which is to be expressed (e.g., Jupiter's strength). An eagle is chosen to express the strength of Jupiter because an eagle is *seen as strong*, and this 'appearance of strength' belongs to the content of the image itself, a content existing quite apart from any content or action of the symbolizing, phantasizing imagination. Thus, Hegel calls the symbol-making activity of the intelligence "still *conditioned*, only *relatively* free…"[66] Intelligence is limited in its control over its expression, for it is consigned to express itself and its own content through images that already have a pre-given content, a content which continues to assert itself[67] even *after* the image has received its 'meaning,' i.e., the content of intelligence.

Nevertheless, the symbol is an important advance for intelligence in that it serves as an *expression* of intelligence, i.e., an *other* of intelligence into which the latter is in some respect able to externalize itself. As Hegel says, "Because the content which intelligence has taken out of itself has an imaged existence, intelligence is to this extent, within phantasy, perfected into the self-intuition within itself."[68] When the universal presentation 'Jupiter's strength' gains an imaged existence in the symbol of the eagle, intelligence has an 'intuition of itself.' That is, in the insertion of 'Jupiter's strength' within the image of the eagle, intelligence *sees its own self.* And the reason it does so is

[66] Ibid.
[67] and which, in a sense, is *competing* with the content of intelligence.
[68] Ibid., §457.

that, in this unity of symbolized and symbol, intelligence *sees its own work*. When intelligence sees one of its universal presentations in an image, it sees that presentation as something *it* has produced, insofar as the presentation possesses a determination of universality *not possessed by the image itself*.[69] In being expressed in an other (the symbol), intelligence sees its own work and thus sees its own self, allowing it become more of what it implicitly is. For, just as is the case with the Idea, what is implicit within intelligence, and what it must actualize in order to fully become itself, is to *know itself*.

The Sign

And yet, the kind of externality which the intelligence finds in the symbol turns out to be not external enough, i.e., not external enough for it to see and know itself fully. Intelligence needs to externalize itself in a way that it can see itself *and only itself* in the externalization, but in the symbol, it cannot do this. For while it does see its own work and own self in the intuition of the symbol, it *also* sees the content of the intuition itself (e.g., the eagle, *qua* animal), due to the latter's continuing to express itself. As opposed to this partial expression of itself in the symbol, intelligence accomplishes a full expression of itself in 'the sign,' by means of the "self-externalizing, intuition-producing, sign-making phantasy."[70] As with the production of a symbol, in producing a sign the intelligence brings a universal presentation and an intuition into a unity, one in which the material of the intuition is "initially indeed something taken up, something immediate or given."[71] What makes a sign a sign, however, is that the degree to which the intuition

[69] Ibid., §451, Addition.
[70] Ibid., §457.
[71] Ibid., §458.

presents its *own* content is either reduced or eliminated. An example of this would be wearing a particular color to symbolize one's support of a certain political movement. In Hegel's words, "the intuition in this identity [of presentation and intuition] does not count as positive and as presenting its self, but rather as presenting *something other*. It is an image which has received into itself a self-sufficient presentation of the intelligence as its soul, its *meaning*. This intuition is the *sign*."[72] A sign is thus an intuition whose own content has been replaced with the content of intelligence, viz., a universal presentation.[73]

An example that Hegel gives of the sign is a cockade, an ornament usually made out of ribbons and worn on the hat or lapel; a modern day version of this would be the color green worn by members of the contemporary opposition movement in Iran. Unlike the *symbol* which consisted of the image of an eagle, the color green acting as a *sign* does not, in presenting something else, also assert itself. So, while the image of an eagle could never be used, e.g., as an expression of weakness, there is nothing in the color green which would inherently prevent it from being used as an expression of, say, the *anti*-opposition forces in Iran.[74] (And the color green is in fact used by the anti-opposition, 'loyalist' forces in Libya.) In the sign, then, intelligence has gained a certain independence in its expression of itself, for it can choose *whatever intuition it wants* to serve as its expression. As Hegel puts it, the universal presentation has become "freed

[72] Ibid.
[73] See Hegel's contrast of the "content proper to the intuition" and "the content whose sign the intuition is," where the latter is the content of intelligence, viz., the universal presentation (§458, Remark).
[74] except, of course, the history of that color within Iranian society.

from the content of the image," and "makes itself something intuitable in an external material *voluntarily* [willkürlich] selected by it."[75]

It should be emphasized, though, that Hegel is not claiming that intelligence does not need an intuition to externalize itself into. Rather, his claim is that the more that intelligence is able to shake itself free from the imposition of the *pre-given* content of intuition, and the more it is able to provide the intuition with the content of *itself alone*, the more it is *able* to externalize itself, without interference from the content of the intuition itself. This is the advantage of the sign, for in it, intelligence "is finished with the content of the intuition, and gives the sensual material a meaning that is *foreign* to it as its soul."[76] In stark contrast to the symbol, whose content *qua* intuition (e.g., an eagle) *needed* to be very similar to its content *qua* expression (to its meaning, e.g., Jupiter's strength), the sign's content *qua* intuition (e.g., green) is ultimately irrelevant to its content *qua* expression (e.g., the Iranian opposition movement).[77] This irrelevance is, in fact, the advantage of the sign. For, the relation of relative *indifference* between what is being expressed and the content of the sign's intuition means that intelligence is *not limited* by the intuition in its expression: "As *designating*, the intelligence thus proves to be a freer willfulness [*Willkür*] and mastery in the use of an intuition than it does in symbolizing."[78]

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[75] Ibid., §457, Addition.
[76] Ibid.
[77] "The sign is distinguished from the symbol, the latter being an intuition whose *own* determinateness, according to its essence and concept, more or less is the content which the symbol expresses; in the sign as such, on the other hand, the content proper to the intuition and the content whose sign the intuition is [viz., the content of the presentation] are irrelevant to each other [*geht einander nichts an*]." Ibid., §458 Remark, my translation.
[78] Ibid., §458, Remark.

Because the point is an important one, it is worth clarifying further why the indifference of the intelligence to the intuition of the sign is not an absolute one. While the universal presentation (e.g., the Iranian opposition movement) is indifferent to the *specific content* (e.g., green) of the intuition of its expression, it is *not* indifferent to the intuition of its expression *qua intuition*. In order for the universal presentation to be fully expressed, the expression must *be* an intuition, for it is only then that intelligence can have an 'intuition of itself' by means of seeing itself in an other. Put otherwise: in finding expression in a sign, intelligence and its universal presentation (i.e., the meaning of the sign) are indifferent to the particular nature of the intuition in which they end up; but, they are *not* indifferent to ending up *in an intuition*.

The Linguistic Sign

When the intuition which intelligence endows with its content is a *tone*, the resulting sign is a *linguistic* one. In this kind of sign, intelligence gains even more control over the intuition, for it expresses its universal presentations in an intuition by "*using* the filled space and time of the intuition as its *own*."[79] For example, when we say 'lion,' we make the air vibrate in a particular way, and these sounds have their own content *qua* intuition. Into these sounds, intelligence places its universal presentation of a lion (which it has created from various images of lions), thereby using these sounds as its own, insofar as it causes them to express itself. In this way, the content (*qua* intuition) of the sounds 'lion' is *replaced* with the content of intelligence. Hegel describes this replacement in rather

[79] Ibid.

striking terms, saying that intelligence "erases the immediate and proper content of it [the intuition], and gives it another content as its meaning and soul."[80]

Of course, this 'erasure' does not mean that the content of the sounds themselves – i.e., the way they vibrate in the air and affect the eardrums – is done away with; if this were the case, the sign would no longer be a sign. Yet in a certain respect the content of the sounds *qua* sounds does disappear to the person who is speaking or hearing them, something which we see quite clearly when we are learning a foreign language. Early on in this process, the *meanings* of the words are not familiar to us, i.e., are not very 'present' to us, and the result is that the *intuitions* of the words *are* very present to us; that is, we are very conscious of how the foreign words *sound*. But over time, as we learn and use the meanings of the words, the meanings become dominant in our experience of the words, such that the words *qua* intuitions become less and less noticeable to the point where, eventually, we no longer hear the sounds of the words *as sounds* at all. In the same way and for the same reasons, when we are very young children learning our native language, we are very aware of the sounds of the words we hear and say (think of how a 2-year-old will often playfully say the same word over and over and over….and over and over); but, as we grow older and become more fluent in the language, we become less and less aware of the sounds of the words due to their slowly being covered over by their meanings. Incidentally, this also explains why, later in life, with the help of poets and poetry teachers, we must *relearn* how to hear the sounds of words once again.

[80] Ibid.

The same sort of process can be seen in a written alphabetic language. Hegel says that written letters refer to tones; e.g., the letters combined as 'cat' refer to the *sounds* combined to make the sound 'cat.' Since the sound 'cat' itself refers to something – viz., the universal presentation of 'cat' (created from various images of cats), Hegel calls letters "the signs of signs."[81] Even still, when one is learning a new alphabet of a new language (e.g., Arabic), the *intuitions* of these written signs will be much more present to the consciousness of the reader than either the sounds or the universal presentations to which they directly or indirectly refer. That the content of these initially foreign intuitions (viz., the foreign written letters) begins to fade over time can be seen by a consideration of how one views letters when reading in one's native language. Just as the content of intelligence comes to be more dominant than the content of *sounds in the air*, so it eventually does with the content of *marks on the page*.

So, as indicated above, the 'disappearance' of the content of the sign *qua* intuition indicates that intelligence is now in control of the intuitions into which it is externalizing itself. Unlike with the symbol, in the case of the sign the intelligence is able to have a 'self-intuition' in which it sees itself *fully*.[82] Thus, Hegel would say that, as I write the words of this dissertation, I am having an intuition of myself, i.e., I am seeing myself in and through the intuitions of the words on the computer screen. That such an externalization is *necessary* in order for thought to come fully into being is something Hegel is very emphatic about, as seen in this passage that we excerpted from above:

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[81] Ibid., §459, Addition.
[82] Or, *hears* itself, when the sign is an acoustic one.

> …words become a determinate being animated by thoughts [*Gedanken*]. This determinate being is absolutely necessary for our thoughts. We only know of our thoughts, only have determinate, actual thoughts, when we give them the form of *objectivity* [Gegenständlichkeit], of a *being-different* from our inwardness, and thus the form of externality [*Äußerlichkeit*] – indeed of *such* an externality which simultaneously carries the character of the highest *inwardness*.[83]

To put this quote in terms of categories dealt with back in Chapter 2, Hegel is describing how 'linguistic' expression is *one kind* of 'developmental' expression, and that language in its essence is *not* 'static' expression.[84] That is, language *qua* philosophical determination is that which, by expressing its content, *develops* that content, by making it *actually* be what it only implicitly was initially. To refer to three other terms discussed back in Chapter 2, we can say that when the 'in-itself' of the contents of intelligence find their *Äußerung* in the 'for-another' of language, these contents can then become 'for-itself.' These contents of intelligence are given the form of *Äußerlichkeit* when they are placed into intuitions (e.g., the sounds 'lion'). And this *Äußerlichkeit* carries the highest *Innerlichkeit* precisely because the content of the intuitions has been replaced by the contents of intelligence, thereby allowing intelligence to *see* itself, and *become* itself, i.e., to become *thought*.

To use an inadequate but still useful analogy, we could imagine intelligence as being something like a person's 'bodily self-image' (i.e., one's concept of one's physical

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[83] Ibid., §462, Addition.

[84] That is, although ordinary language *can* serve as static expression, this is not what ordinary language is in its *philosophical determination*. (This coming-together of 'linguistic' and 'developmental' expression should not, however, be confused with their *complete convergence* in philosophical language. See Chapter 2, pg. 63.)

appearance), and both signs and symbols as being like mirrors. One's bodily self-image is based at least in part on how one visually sees oneself, and the degree to which a given mirror *allows* one to see oneself will determine *how* one sees oneself. Thus, the more that a given mirror disappears in terms of its *own* visual content – i.e., the better a pure reflector it is – the better one will be able to see only oneself *in* it, and the more accurate will be one's bodily self-image. A symbol would be something like a mirror with dark spots or warpage in the glass, which prevent one from seeing oneself accurately. A sign, on the other hand, would be like a well-made mirror, having a definite visual appearance of its own yet allowing a person to see themselves fully in it, such that the mirror itself disappears. Of course, this analogy is imperfect given that what intelligence sees itself in is something it *produces*, and given that it can see itself in *any* externalization provided that this external factor is indeterminate enough (e.g., sounds, as opposed to the image of an eagle). But the need to shape one's inwardness by means of inserting it into something external – by means of seeing oneself in another – is absolutely central to Hegel's view of the relation between language and thought.

Memory: The Transition to Thought

Before taking a brief look at the way that ordinary language goes about using the copula and relating words, it is important to address the transition of language into thought. This transition takes place through memory (*Gedächtnis*), and what memory does is very similar to what recollection (*Erinnerung*) does, but on a more complex level. As we saw, recollection takes an intuition and makes an *image* out of it, one which is then stored and which, in certain cases, can be brought forth at will, associated with other

images, etc. Memory involves a similar inwardization of something external. But, instead of inwardizing an *intuition*, it inwardizes the *connection that constitutes the name*, viz., the connection between the universal presentation (e.g., 'lion') and the intuition into which it has been placed (e.g., the *sounds* 'lion'). This first form of memory is called the "name-retaining memory,"[85] and it constitutes the memory of what certain words *mean* despite the fact that one does not have the intuition (e.g., the sounds of the word 'lion') currently appearing to one's senses.

As we saw above, reproductive *recollection* was the ability to recall images which were previously held only unconsciously. The next form of memory – "reproductive memory" – is very similar: it is the ability to call to mind names and their meanings which it has stored. While this may seem like a rather quotidian activity, its significance lies in the fact that intelligence has made something which formerly constituted itself in an external form – its universal presentation as inserted into an intuition – into something that is now more internal, *and* over which it has control. This is why Hegel calls the name "the externality of its [the intelligence's] self in its self."[86] That is, what was formerly a more external externalization of intelligence (viz., the word as an intuition, as sounds in the air) is now more internal (viz., the word within one's memory). However, this process of the internalization of the connection between the meaning (the content of intelligence) and the name (the intuition imbued with the content) continues even further. According to Hegel, the content of intelligence that is connected to the word is "taken

[85] Ibid. §461.
[86] Ibid. §462.

up" into intelligence.[87] That is, it is *taken back into* intelligence, from whence it had come. Better put, what the content of intelligence has *become* through its externalization is taken back into intelligence. But what is the evidence that intelligence is able to 'reclaim' its content in this way? For Hegel, the evidence is the third form of memory, "mechanical memory."

This form of memory is the kind which can reproduce a series of words, but words for which *no meaning is guiding their ordering* or their recapitulation, due to the fact that the meaning has been snatched out of the words and taken back up into intelligence. An example of this can be seen when a person meditates upon and then memorizes a poem, or, say, the U.S. "Pledge of Allegiance." The fact that it is possible to recite these in a *rote* fashion without having any of their meanings present to mind is an illustration of the operation of mechanical memory. From our discussions of mechanism above, it is clear what Hegel means by the memory being 'mechanical': the relations between the words are ones of *indifference*, as opposed to the *reciprocal* relations which existed between them when they were endowed with the content of intelligence, i.e., with the meaning that *brought the words together* into a meaningful series in the first place. Now that the meaning has been removed, they are "senseless words [*sinnlose Worte*]."[88] Recalled as they are simply in a rote fashion, it becomes clear that they are held together by nothing more than the abstract 'I,' a "spiritless holder of words"[89] acting as an "empty bond which fixes the sequence [of the names] within itself and in a stable order."[90] Instead of a

[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid., §462.
[89] Ibid., Addition.
[90] Ibid., §463.

living connection between the words, one animated by the actual meanings of the various words having a genuinely rational relation to each other, now the words are connected only by the fact that the subject abstractly holds them together. That is, the words are no longer held together by intelligence in terms of the specific 'content of *intelligence'* (i.e., meaning) within each one; instead, the words are held together by intelligence only in terms of their 'content of *intuition*,' i.e., merely in terms of what they *sound* like. The fact that one can do this with the words of a poem which, in the past, one has genuinely comprehended is, for Hegel, evidence that intelligence can 'reclaim' its contents back into itself. In a passage that will prove crucial for our later discussion of philosophical language, Hegel states:

> The more familiar I become with the meaning of the word, the more it unifies itself with my inwardnesss, the more the objectivity and thus the determination of the meaning of the word can disappear, hence the more memory [*Gedächtnis*] itself, simultaneously with the word, becomes something abandoned by spirit [*etwas Geistverlassenem werden*].[91]

This notion that words formerly *animated* by spirit have been *abandoned* by spirit is a powerful image. It illustrates how mechanical memory is what is 'left over' after the content of intelligence has been drawn out of the words, back into intelligence itself. The words remain, yet only like the buildings of a deserted mining town, standing still, empty, and lifeless.

Originally, the contents of intelligence (the universal presentation) and the sign were in a reciprocal relation, the sign being dependent on the intelligence for its being *as* a sign, and the intelligence being dependent on the sign for its self-externalization and

[91] Ibid., §462, Addition.

increase in self-knowledge. But now in mechanical memory, the relation between the contents of intelligence and the sign is one of indifference. The words have ceased genuinely being words, and, *qua* intuitions, do not depend on intelligence. And because intelligence has reclaimed its contents out of the words and taken it back into itself, it is no longer in a relation of dependence upon the words.

This transition to the self-reflexivity of intelligence marks a crucial transition within the "Intelligence" section of the *Philosophy of Spirit*: the transition from "Presentation" to "Thought" (*Denken*). For, thought is defined as "simple identity of subjectivity and objectivity,"[92] a definition which Hegel rephrases when he says of thought, "It *is* as its content and object."[93] Language has played an essential role in enabling intelligence to achieve the form of thought, for language was the 'other' of intelligence through which it developed. As we saw, language helped intelligence to *know* itself by being an externality into which intelligence could insert itself and see itself. Now, however, the work of language in this regard is over, and thought is its result. Thus at this point we can be more precise about the *kinds of expression* that have been taking place. Language, as the expression of the forms of intelligence called 'intuition' and 'presentation,' has been engaging in *both* 'linguistic' and 'developmental' expression. And the specific manner in which language *develops* these first two forms of intelligence is, eventually, by causing their *dissolution*: intelligence becomes thought.[94] Thought, then, is the 'developmental' expression *of language*, for thought is that in which what was implicit

[92] Ibid. §465.
[93] Ibid., italics mine.
[94] see the outline on pg. 182 above.

within language comes to fruition, viz., intelligence making *itself* its own object and content. We can sum all of this up by saying that, for what Hegel specifically means by these terms in this part of the *Philosophy of Spirit*, language (what I am calling 'ordinary language') does not express thought. Rather, it is the other way around. *Language is the expression of earlier forms of intelligence, and thought – the final form of intelligence – is the expression of language*.

ii. Meaning, Copula, Proposition

Using the normal, everyday meanings of the words 'expression' and 'truth,' one would likely want to say that language is the 'expression' of thought, and that the linguistic proposition is what has the possibility of being characterized by 'truth.' But as we saw back in Chapter 2, Hegel has his own particular meanings for 'expression' and 'truth.'[95] And it is these particular meanings which lead him to say – counterintuitively to their everyday meanings – that thought is the expression, and truth, of language.

This situation suggests that, in his account of ordinary language, Hegel is not himself using ordinary language. Of course, there is nothing particularly novel about using words in a manner at variance with ordinary conventions. All philosophers have most likely done this. But my claim is that Hegel's language about ordinary language diverges from ordinary meanings because he is using philosophical language, conceived of in a particular way. Back in Chapter 2, I made the assertion that one essential feature of philosophical language is that it expresses philosophical determinations,[96] i.e., those determinations which Hegel views as essential moments of the Idea's coming to know

[95] see pg. 44.
[96] see pg. 28.

itself. This claim could be reversed as well, to say that philosophical determinations can *only* be accounted for through philosophical language. And since ordinary language (i.e., *Sprache*) is clearly a philosophical determination for Hegel, insofar as philosophy could not come into being without it, this entails that ordinary language must be accounted for by using philosophical language.

But with regard to Hegel's claim that thought is the expression and truth of language, we can see that his meanings of the words 'expression' and 'truth' are ones that he has developed immanently from within his philosophy as a whole. We will discuss this theme in more detail in the next chapter, but at this point we can say that another feature of philosophical language is that it uses words which have been endowed with meaning *through the activity of philosophy*. As we saw in Chapter 2, the word 'expression' (*Ausdruck*, *Äußerung*) for Hegel – what I have been calling 'developmental' expression – involves a long series of determinations including 'in-itself/for-another/for-itself,' *Kraft*/*Äußerung* (force/expression), *Innere*/*Äußere* (inner/outer), and *Äußerlichkeit* (externality), etc.[97] Thus, although this sense of 'expression' as found in the *Logic* is certainly operative within 'human' and specifically 'linguistic' affairs, it is first of all an *ontological* category (this despite the fact that it *itself* later receives a *further* expression in the realm of spirit, in the being of ordinary language and, finally, in the being of philosophical language). The primary point here is that Hegel accounts for the nature of ordinary language not through its own self, but through words whose meanings he has developed out of previous philosophical determinations.

[97] e.g., pg. 47.

To return to the nature of ordinary language itself, how does *it* derive the meanings of *its* words? As we saw in our treatment of language's coming-into-being, linguistic signs are formed when intelligence places a universal presentation into an intuition, thereby substituting its own content for the content of the intuition *qua* intuition. But what is the origin of the universal presentation? We spoke earlier about how it is formed by the 'associative imagination' when it relates images it has stored and, *in this relating*, "elevates them to *universal* presentations [allgemeinen *Vorstellungen*]."[98] The example we gave was the association of the images of a rose and an oak tree to create the universal presentation 'plant'; another, simpler example would be associating the images of *various* roses to create the universal presentation 'rose.' Intelligence gives these images a 'subjective bond' when, as Hegel says, it "lifts the universality out of"[99] them; that is, because the 'I' has a universal form, it is able to grant its *own* status to the images, by associating them with each other and then with the universal presentation that it has constructed out of them. And it is this constructed universal presentation which becomes a 'meaning' (*Bedeutung*) when it is placed within an intuition.

The result of this process, however, is that the meanings of the words of ordinary language have only a tenuous relation to that which the words are naming. More specifically, there is no guarantee that the universal presentation which intelligence creates, and which it then places into an intuition, has an actual existence *outside of* the intelligence itself. Hegel's description of how the meanings of ordinary words come into being is, indeed, extremely similar to a general nominalist view of language and

[98] *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, §455, Addition.
[99] Ibid., §451, Addition.

universals. This is no accident, for he does not believe there *is* such a thing as, e.g., the 'eternal essence' of a rose, as indicated by the fact that he does not view 'rose' as a philosophical determination. Put otherwise, philosophy could still have come into being even if there were no roses. It is thus not surprising that he would describe the way that the universal 'rose' and its name come into being as a *subjective* process, i.e., one taking place merely within consciousness. It must be stressed that this 'subjective' nature of the process does not in any way detract from the central importance of the process for intelligence; for, although it is only a construct of intelligence, the universal presentation which is placed into an intuition still is what allows intelligence to see its products outside of itself and thus *see itself*. That what intelligence is seeing outside itself does not actually exist beyond itself and its words is, therefore, irrelevant to the crucial role that ordinary language plays in the development of intelligence into thought.[100]

But what about the universal presentation 'plant'? As we have mentioned, Hegel *does* see 'plant' as a philosophical determination. However, what ordinary language *means* when it says 'plant' is not what philosophy means. The reason for this is clear, and using a bit of Kantian terminology is helpful here. Ordinary language's meaning of this word comes into being *a posteriori*, through intelligence *abstracting* from various *images* within it, i.e., from a large collection of all the plants it has seen, heard about, etc. Thus its meaning of the word 'plant' is based on – and limited by – the particular experiences it has had of what it ends up considering to be individual plants.

[100] A more nuanced account of these matters would need to address the fact that these 'merely' subjective meanings often have enormous 'objective' consequences, e.g., the way that botanists go about investigating nature, or – to take an example from the realm of spirit – the shared universal presentation 'democracy' amongst a population which overthrows a dictatorship and puts a democratic government in its place.

Philosophy's meaning of the word, on the other hand, comes into being through an *a priori* investigation[101] which begins in the *Science of Logic* and proceeds through the *Philosophy of Nature*, up to the point where the result and expression of all the previous determinations is given the name 'plant.' In light of this, Hegel would view the ordinary language meaning of the word 'plant' as a contingently and abstractly constructed one, not expressive of the essence of what 'plant' really is. Of course, philosophy too – as necessarily involving the abstraction of the understanding – has used abstraction to come to *its* definition of plant. But the mode of abstraction used by intelligence in coming to its definition is that of the understanding as separated off from reason. Because this kind of understanding operates according to the category of *formal identity*, ordinary language's definition of 'plant' is formulated through this lens, and thus is formulated as something which is – and which can be *comprehended* – on its *own* terms. 'On its own terms,' quite literally.

Of course, this does not mean that the perspective of ordinary language does not realize that its definitions also contains words which themselves must be defined. Take, for example, the definition of plant as "any member of the kingdom Plantae, comprising multicellular organisms that typically produce their own food from inorganic matter by the process of photosynthesis and that have more or less rigid cell walls containing cellulose." Clearly, this definition contains words which must themselves be grasped in order to grasp its definition of the word 'plant.' But the way in which such a definition is nonetheless abstract is that it does not include any claims about, e.g., the logic,

[101] *a priori* in Kant's sense of the term, i.e., with regard to *intuitions*. However, as we will discuss below, it is in fact *experiential* in that thought experiences *itself* .

mathematics, and physics which are presupposed by its terms. That is, someone operating in the mode of ordinary language would not think that they would need to first do logic, mathematics, and physics before being able to grasp this definition of 'plant.' Rather, such a person would view 'plant' as something self-standing, both in terms of its definition and in terms of its being. Even though, of course, no one would deny that individual plants depend on other things (water, air, sun, etc.) in order to survive, the meaning of 'plant' – when defined by intelligence through a process of abstraction under the category of formal identity – would be seen as having its being within itself.

Furthermore, because this definition of 'plant' is formulated simply in terms of what humans have *currently* come across and experienced, it is neither necessary nor universal. The contingency of this definition can be seen by the fact that, if humans were to discover some other solar system with a planet containing life in the form of plant-like entities with leaves and stems whose cell walls do *not* contain cellulose, the definition of 'plant' would then be adjusted accordingly. Because intelligence forms universal presentations by making abstractions from images, it is limited to forming these presentations from those images *that it possesses*, i.e., that it has happened to come across.

That the meanings of the words of ordinary language are characterized by both formal identity and contingency allows us to make a number of connections with our previous discussions. To put this in terms of the themes we discussed in Part II, the language that intelligence creates is one characterized by the relation of *whole and part*, and of *indifference*. For the universal presentation – i.e., the *meaning* – which intelligence

places into an intuition is not one that is reciprocally dependent upon its other, as a moment would be; rather, it is a 'part,' one which certainly can be placed in relation to other parts, but which does not have an opposition (*Gegensatz*) which essentially determines it. Because the meaning of the word (e.g., 'plant') does not have an opposite, the relation between various words is one of diversity (*Verschiedenheit*), and thus one of indifference. When all the words are taken *as a whole*, one clearly has a language characterized by the relation of whole and part.

Additionally, both the coming-into-being of ordinary language as a whole, and any *accounts* that are given by means of it, operate in the mode of *mechanism*. In our discussion of mechanism in Part II we saw that its movements do not arise immanently but come instead from some source which is *other* to it. This is just what we see with the coming-into-being of ordinary language, whose words stand in the relation of 'parts,' and which comes into being not of its own accord but from some *external* source, viz., intelligence. We can also see a mechanistic dimension to *accounts* that are given in ordinary language: any such account will be one whose arrangement and movement originates in something external to it, for something external must put its words into motion. With ordinary language, this external other is the *person making use* of the language, arranging the words in the manner he or she deems correct because of the fact that these words cannot arrange themselves. *Why* these words cannot do so is clear: their meanings lack the essential difference (opposition) necessary for their mutual contradiction and their living self-movement.

Implicit within the mechanism of ordinary language and the externality of its source of movement is the matter of the *Gegenstände* of the understanding. Intelligence *stands over against* the words and arranges them as it sees fit. One could object to this claim by pointing out that the meanings which intelligence has placed within the intuitions are in one sense external to it (in that they are in the intuitions), but in another sense are *not* external, insofar as they are *created by* it, and are its 'content.' What is important to note here, though, is that intelligence *believes* its meanings are external to it: it *believes* there is an 'essence' out in the world which it is naming 'rose.' Therefore, similar to the understanding in "Force and the Understanding," intelligence believes it is making claims about the world, but it is actually only making claims about itself. This is also analogous to the workings of the 'reflective understanding' which we discussed earlier. Although it *views* itself as separated off from reason whenever it makes claims about reason (e.g., 'I am separate from reason'), it is *unknowingly* making claims about itself, insofar as the understanding is genuinely and essentially determined by its relation to reason. Nevertheless, the understanding and the intelligence's *belief* in the *gegenständlich* nature of what they are considering does, in a very real sense, *make it so*. For, we are dealing with consciousness here, and the *being* of consciousness is determined in part by how it *conceives* of itself. Thus, the relation of the intelligence to the meanings of the words of ordinary language which it arranges into an account is genuinely an external one. And the result is that any account given through ordinary language operates *mechanistically*: the meanings of the words are external to each other, and their movement is imparted to them by an external force.

We can shed further light on these workings of ordinary language by again considering the influence of the category of *formal (abstract) identity*. Specifically, we should consider the influence of this category on one particular word, the word 'is.' Back in Chapter 3, on "Being and nothing is one and the same [*Sein und Nichts ist ein und dasselbe*]," we discussed at length Hegel's view that any proposition 'A is B' expresses the sameness of the two, and contains as unexpressed their *difference*. While we are unable to grasp the reason for this in the Doctrine of Being, we come to see in the Doctrine of Essence that identity and difference are *moments* – mutually-determining and inseparable – and then we are able to look back and grasp *why* the 'is' contained the (unexpressed) difference of being and nothing. Clearly, ordinary language comes to no such conclusion about the relation of identity and difference, and the practical result is that it views the copula solely in terms of identity, i.e., solely in terms of *formal* identity. From another angle, then, we see once again why ordinary language is not self-moving but rather dead and lifeless, moving only when something *other* than it acts upon it. For when terms are viewed in terms of formal, abstract identity, those terms cannot be oppositionally-related, cannot be contradictory, and thus cannot dissolve in an *Aufhebung* into a result. As we quoted above, Hegel asserts that "abstract identity is not as yet a livingness,"[102] and that "identity is merely the determination of the simple immediate, of dead being."[103] This was the reason why, if external reflection had not discerned the difference implicit in "being and nothing are the same" such that the difference could be expressed (in "being and nothing are not the same"), the self-movement of the *Science of*

[102] *SL* 440, translation emended.
[103] Ibid., 439.

Logic would have come to a halt.[104] Ordinary language, operating under the assumption of formal identity, has no self-movement which even *could* come to a halt.

In raising the issue of the copula, we are now dealing directly with the *propositions* of ordinary language. And we can apply much of what we said above about how the *words* of ordinary language are related to how its propositions are related. Because ordinary language is *formed* and *utilized* by a mode of consciousness which views itself as having *Gegenstände*, its tendency is to view not only the universal presentations (meanings) of its words but also the meanings of its *propositions* as self-standing. A case in point is what we were just discussing, identity statements. From the point of view of ordinary language, the proposition "A monkey is an animal" is a statement that is independent and self-standing; that is, it needs no other statement to 'assist' it in order for its contents to be expressed. Hegel, on the other hand, would assert that the *very nature* of the proposition is such that no single proposition can express its contents, because no single proposition can express both identity and difference. But given that formal identity is the structural underpinning of ordinary language, we can see why someone working in the mode of ordinary language would view single propositions as being able to express their contents. Hegel speaks of this indirectly in the *Philosophy of Spirit*'s account of language, when he says, "The *formal* element of language [*Das* Formelle *der Sprache*] is the work of the understanding, which informs it with its categories; this logical instinct brings forth the grammar of language."[105] Just previously he had spoken of the 'material'

[104] self-movement which – at that point – consists merely of being transitioning into nothing and back again.
[105] *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* §459, Remark.

element of language, i.e., the intuitions of the sounds used, so it is evident that by the 'formal' element he is referring to how the material of the intuitions is *structured*. And his statement on this is unequivocal: it is structured by the understanding, which "informs [*einbildet*] it with its categories." Philosophical language, as we will see, also has a formal element, but because it is informed by both the understanding *and* reason, it operates with different categories and a different grammar. But because the understanding alone determines the formal element of ordinary language, and because its fundamental category is formal identity, we can see now even more clearly why ordinary language is oriented around this category. The understanding literally shapes or builds or forms (*bildet*) the category of formal identity *into* (*ein*) ordinary language, and in so doing it determines its grammar. The relations *within* propositions and the relations *between* propositions – *all* relations in ordinary language – are seen through this particular logical lens. Thus, if any kind of language is able to give a proper account of the world, it is not going to be ordinary language. It will rather have to be some language whose structuring force does not cling to the enormously powerful but lifeless category of formal identity, but which instead sees this formal category as merely one moment of the whole.

7. Philosophical Language

a. Reason: Thought as Living

From the discussions above we have already had the opportunity to sketch an outline of reason, particularly in its differences from the understanding. For example, we alluded to the fact that, in contrast to the understanding, reason is a *non-mechanical* knowing

insofar as a.) it is not a *cause*, given that it does not have 'objects' which are other to it and which it thus might externally arrange according to its own particular movements, b.) it is not an *effect*, again because it does not have objects, which – from an 'outside' perspective – could cause *it* to be constituted in a particular way, and c.) it does not view the determinations it is dealing with as external and indifferent to each other, because the determinations it is dealing with are those of its *own self*. Additionally, we have examined how the understanding is, nonetheless, intimately involved in the activity of reason, and how reason is able to think *concretely* insofar as it is able to think *contradiction*. About this last point, more will be said below.

But Hegel uses the word 'reason' in a number of different ways and contexts, so we should first clarify which one is most important for our investigation. In short, the reason which is involved in creating philosophical language is the one which Hegel describes as *speculative thinking*, as in this passage: "Speculative thinking consists solely in the fact that thought holds fast contradiction, in its own self, but does not allow itself to be dominated by it as in ordinary thinking…."[106] As we know, speculative thinking is that which has "speculative content,"[107] i.e., content which cannot be expressed in a single proposition insofar as it "expressly contains the very oppositions at which the understanding stops short….sublated within itself."[108] Speculative thinking is able to comprehend such content because, unlike the understanding, it can think through these oppositions and their ensuing contradictions. This is what we see Hegel describing when,

[106] *SL* 440-1
[107] *EL* §82, Addition.
[108] Ibid.

in his description of 'the three forms of the logical,' he states that the "*speculative* or *positively rational* apprehends the unity of the determinations in their opposition, the *affirmative* that is contained in their dissolution and in their transition."[109]

But, is this 'speculative thinking' the *Vernunft* which Hegel is describing in the *logical* sphere, or is it the *Vernunft* which shows up in the second section of "Subjective Spirit" in the *Philosophy of Spirit*? Or alternately, is it the *Vernunft* which appears at the very *end* of the *Philosophy of Spirit*, in the definition of philosophy itself? One way to address this issue, and to sort out these different senses of reason, is to investigate reason under the aspect of infinitude and self-knowing.

i. Infinitude and Self-Knowing

Hegel addresses the first two of these three senses of reason – the ones in the *Logic* and "Subjective Spirit" – in a Remark on *Denken* in the *Philosophy of Spirit*:

> In the *Logic*, thinking is, as it first is, *in-itself*, and it develops itself as reason in that oppositionless element. It also appears as a stage in *consciousness*. Here, reason is as the truth of opposition, as it had determined itself within spirit itself. Thinking emerges repeatedly in these different parts of science because these parts differ only on account of the element and form of the opposition; yet, thinking is one and the same center into which the oppositions return as in their truth.[110]

We thus see that these two senses of reason involve either *no* oppositions, or oppositions that are *overcome*. Let us examine them more closely, then, by means of the descriptions in this quote and in several others.

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[109] Ibid., §82.
[110] *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* §467, Remark, translation emended.

First, thinking in the *Logic* is thinking in the form of reason which, out of its initially mere 'in-itself,' *develops* itself by *thinking* itself.[111] Hegel refers to this element as 'oppositionless' in the quote above because the *Logic* is 'within itself,' i.e., is directed toward nothing but its own self, and also because the end of the *Logic* marks the overcoming of *even that* opposition (i.e., relating itself *to itself*), in the Idea. As he states near the end of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, "The Idea can be comprehended as *reason* (this is the proper philosophical meaning of *reason*)…because all the relations of the understanding are contained in the Idea, but in their *infinite* return and identity in themselves."[112] In our treatment of the understanding above we saw that *finitude* (i.e., having an other) characterizes all of the understanding's operations, due to the fact that the nature of the understanding is to *separate* its objects from itself, from each other, and *within* each object.[113] Reason, then, as the Idea, *contains* all of the separations of the understanding within itself; it does not, however, contain them in some still-separated form, but rather "in their *infinite* return" to themselves. This 'infinity' clearly indicates that the finitude – the otherness – of the separations of the understanding has been overcome. These separations are the abstractions which the understanding makes throughout the *Logic* every time it sets the result of an *Aufhebung* over against what first comes onto the scene an indifferent other (e.g., 'finitude' vs. 'bad infinitude'). The role of reason, then, is to show (in the form of 'negative' or 'dialectical' reason) that this relation is not one of diversity but one of opposition, and to show (as 'positive' or 'speculative'

[111] see also *EL* §181, Remark, where Hegel speaks of the syllogism as "the determination through which thinking is reason."
[112] *EL* §214.
[113] Taking this process to its logical extreme is what Lucretius, with the help of his atomist predecessors, accomplishes so brilliantly in *De Rerum Natura*.

reason) that these oppositions contradict each other and dissolve themselves into a new result. Being the unity of the "Subjectivity" and "Objectivity" sections of the Doctrine of the Concept, the Idea is therefore the *consummation* of the process of 'overcoming diversity and opposition via contradiction' which reason has been engaging in all along. But since reason is not overcoming diversities and oppositions in something *external* to it but rather *within its own self*, this means that the Idea – i.e., the *result* of all of the overcomings of opposition from 'being' on forward – turns out to be simply *what logical reason is*.

Now let us consider reason as a stage of 'subjective spirit.' Unlike the logical sphere, the sphere of consciousness has numerous oppositions between it and what is conceives to be external to it, e.g., in the stage of 'perception,' in the stage of 'recognizing self-consciousness' (*anerkennende Selbstbewußtsein*), etc. Within consciousness, reason is one dimension of the overcoming of these oppositions. The section on reason comes after the sections on 'consciousness as such' and 'self-consciousness': the former involves consciousness *of objects* (and as we might expect, contains the understanding), while the latter involves consciousness making *itself* its own object. But in objectifying its own self, self-consciousness sees itself as *standing over against* 'consciousness as such'; that is, when self-consciousness see itself as consciousness of itself, it sees itself as *not* being a consciousness of that toward which 'consciousness *as such*' is directed (viz., objects, e.g., birds, trees, 52-inch internet-ready HD televisions, etc.).

Reason, however, does not have this limitation of self-consciousness. In Hegel's words, reason is "the simple *identity* of the *subjectivity* of the concept and its *objectivity*

and universality."[114] That is, reason recognizes *in itself* a universality which *includes* the objects of 'consciousness as such.' For, it sees that "its [own] determinations, and equally the objective [*gegenständlich*] determinations of the essence of things, are its own thoughts."[115] Reason thus achieves the self-reflexivity of self-consciousness *without* this self-reflexivity *excluding* anything (viz., the objects of consciousness as such). Unlike self-consciousness, reason thus *has no 'other'* standing over against it, and this means that, while self-consciousness was *finite* self-reflexivity, reason is *infinite* self-reflexivity. It has "certainty of itself as infinite universality,"[116] and knows that in knowing itself it is also knowing the essence of things. Reason in the "Subjective Spirit" section of the *Philosophy of Spirit*, then, unifies the subjectivity and objectivity of the first part of the spiritual sphere, just as reason in the *Logic* does this in the logical sphere, in the form of the Idea.

Back in Chapter 5 we examined in some detail the logical determination of *life*. Because this determination is the first form of the Idea (i.e., reason in the realm of logic), it will be useful to review a few points about life to see how it sheds light on reason in the realm of spirit. As we saw, life in its logical determination and life in *nature* differ with respect to the 'purity' of their respective unities.[117] The objectivity of natural life possessed a certain determinacy (e.g., nitrogen, from the non-living chemical realm) *before* it unites with its concept and becomes living, a determinacy which is thus in one respect external to, and presupposed by, the natural living thing (e.g., a plant). *Logical*

[114] *Philosophy of Spirit*, §438, my translation.
[115] Ibid., §439, my translation.
[116] Ibid.
[117] pg. 133 above.

life, however, is free from such presuppositions because its subjectivity *generates* its objectivity; it is, therefore, a more perfect unity than any natural living thing could ever be. And the same could be said in the comparison of *spiritual* life to natural life: reason, as the identity of subjectivity and objectivity which knows itself *through* and *as* "infinite universality," is a more perfect unity – and more properly *living* – than any plant or animal life could ever be.

However, reason as found in "Subjective Spirit" is not the reason of *philosophical activity*, the third form of reason we mentioned above. This should be clear simply from glancing at the "Philosophy" section at the end of the *Philosophy of Spirit*. Here, reason shows up in a specific form: philosophical reason is *the Idea as explicitly worked out through the entirety of nature and spirit.* In Hegel's words, "This concept of philosophy is *the self-thinking* Idea, the knowing truth, the logical [*das Logische*], with the significance that it is the *proven* universality in the concrete content as in its actuality."[118] The 'concrete content' of the Idea, i.e., of reason as found in the *Logic*, is nature and spirit. And, as Hegel hints at in this passage, nature and spirit contribute something to the Idea which it *lacked*. On its own, the Idea as found at the end of the *Logic* – that is, the *Logic* as a *whole* – is an *abstraction*. For, the Idea is not fully what it is until it *knows itself*, and the means by which it does this is philosophy, i.e., being exposited and thought by human beings. Put more precisely: this 'concrete content' was necessary for the self-thinking Idea of the *Logic* to *truly* become self-thinking because the fullest expression of the Idea is the activity of philosophy – *philosophical reason* – itself. For it is only *in* this

[118] *Philosophy of Spirit* §574, my translation.

activity of philosophical reason, i.e., in that which the Idea has *become*, that the Idea is finally self-knowing.

At the very end of the encyclopedia, *Philosophy of Spirit* §577, Hegel asserts this dependence of the logical sphere upon the spiritual in an even more direct manner. Because this section provides the final definition of what philosophy is, it is worth quoting in its entirety:

> The third syllogism is the idea of philosophy, which has *self-knowing reason*, the absolute-universal as its middle term [*Mitte*], which divides itself into *spirit* and *nature*, making spirit its presupposition as the process of *subjective* activity of the Idea and making nature the universal extreme, as the process of the *in itself*, objective, existing [*seienden*] Idea. The originary-self-splitting [*Sich-Urteilen*] of the Idea in the two appearances [spirit and nature] determines these as its (self-knowing reason's) manifestations, and it unifies itself in them, such that it is the nature of the matter at hand [*die Natur der Sache*], the concept which moves itself forward and develops itself, and is this movement just as much as the activity of cognition, the eternal in-and-for-itself existing Idea, activating, generating, and enjoying itself eternally as absolute spirit.[119]

First we can note that the philosophical determination 'philosophy' involves the Idea – i.e., self-knowing reason – *presupposing* spirit. This presupposing of spirit is what we referred to earlier in terms of the Idea *needing* spirit in order to receive its expression and completion. Splitting itself into nature and spirit, the Idea then "unifies itself in them." That is, self-knowing reason becomes what it is *through* this splitting (abstraction) and reunification (revivification) of itself. Furthermore, just as was the case with the Idea

[119] Ibid. §577, my translation.

apart from nature and spirit, and just as was the case with reason in the realm of "Subjective Spirit," reason as the middle term of the syllogism which constitutes philosophy involves *a unification of subjectivity and objectivity*. But now, subjectivity is the *whole of spirit*, and objectivity is the *whole of nature*, such that their unification just is: *logic as explicitly containing both spirit and nature.* That is, their unification just is *philosophy*.

In light of this, we can now better grasp why philosophy – *reason fully knowing and expositing itself* – is self-moving, self-determining, and living, i.e., why it is "the concept which moves itself forward and develops itself."[120] As we have seen, that which is living is that which unifies the subjectivity and the objectivity *proper to its sphere*.[121] But in philosophy, the subjectivity and objectivity which are unified, and the resulting unity, just *are* the spheres – spirit, nature, and logic. Philosophy is *infinite* because it has no other, and it is *living* insofar as – to an *even greater* degree than logical life – it is the self-generating, self-moving, self-knowing impulse which is its *Selbstzweck*, its own goal.

Thus, the sort of reason we are interested in with respect to philosophical language – 'philosophical reason' – is neither the Idea as self-knowing reason found at the end of the *Logic*, nor is it reason as a form of consciousness in "Subjective Spirit." Unlike the former, it is a determination *of spirit*, and because it appears at the end of spirit, this means that (again, unlike the former) it has *worked through* the 'concrete content'[122] of nature and spirit. And, unlike the latter, it involves the *Idea* knowing its own self. While

[120] Ibid.
[121] i.e., in our examples, proper to the sphere of logic, or of nature.
[122] *Philosophy of Spirit* §574.

reason in "Subjective Spirit" did indeed recognize within itself a universality which included both itself and the objects of 'consciousness as such,' it did *not* recognize within itself the activity of the *self-knowing Idea*. Philosophical reason, then, is reason in the realm of spirit, and is *also* the comprehension that, *within* and *through* its own activity, the Idea has become genuinely self-knowing.

Having said all of this, a significant qualification must be made. For, up to this point I have been equivocating on what I am calling 'philosophical reason,' sometimes describing it as the activity of *thinking through* the determinations of logic, nature, and spirit, and sometimes describing it as the *final end result* of all this thinking through. So, on the one hand, Hegel seems to be *doing philosophy* as he thinks through being, nothing, becoming, etc. in the opening of the encyclopedia; on the other hand, he seems to *not* really be doing philosophy – i.e., what philosophy *actually* is – until the very end of the encyclopedia. For it is there where, for the very first time, he *comprehends what philosophy is* and simultaneously – and *also* for the very first time – actually *does* philosophy, insofar as philosophy simply *is* the comprehending of itself. So is philosophical reason operative throughout the entire encyclopedia, or only in its final words?

Hegel would, I think, give the same sort of response that he would if we asked him if 'the Idea' is at work or not in the opening of the *Logic*: it is at work *an-sich*, but not as *gesetzt*. Since we know that philosophy is in fact *gesetzt* at the end of the encyclopedia, the *an-sich*/*gesetzt* distinction accounts for the fact that Hegel is in one sense doing philosophy from the beginning, yet in another sense is not, due to the fact that what

philosophy is, in its entirety, is its comprehension of itself. Inherent within this distinction is the idea of *development*, which applies equally to philosophical reason. Just as the Idea's being gradually *gesetzt* by philosophical reason is not simply a bringing to light of what was fully formed and merely hidden, but rather is the full coming-into-being of the Idea, so Hegel would say that philosophical reason is coming to be what it is *through* the encyclopedia, i.e., through its dissecting and revivification of itself.

ii. Concrete Thinking as Experience

In our discussion of philosophical abstraction above, we examined the necessary role that the abstraction of the understanding plays in philosophical reason. As we saw, abstraction is an essential step in the process of contradictions coming into being, and thus in reason being living and self-moving. Similarly, we alluded to the fact that abstract thinking is what makes reason's concrete thinking even possible. That is, thinking what is concrete involves, first of all, thinking what is *mediated*, i.e., it involves "…a mediated movement which begins from *one* of the determinations and advances to another…."[123] Thinking thus becomes truly concrete when the additional step is taken of thinking all of these different determinations together *in their unity*. But clearly, if something is to be thought in its unity, it must *first* be properly differentiated, and this is precisely what the abstraction of the understanding accomplishes.

Implicit in all of this is the connection between reason as concrete thinking and reason as the thinking of contradiction. For it is precisely *by means of* contradiction that reason is able to think what was formerly separated into differences *as a unity*.

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[123] *SL* 77-8, translation mine.

Contradiction, as we know, involves the dissolution of two moments into a result, i.e., into a unity which contains mediation and which is thus in some sense concrete. There are, naturally, greatly varying levels of both concretion and abstraction, but the point here is that reason's ability to think contradiction and the resulting unity constitutes its ability to think concretely.

Yet reason, as we have noted on multiple occasions, does not think about 'objects'; it thinks its own self. Thus, what it breaks into differentiations is *itself*, and then, via contradiction, it thinks them in a concrete unity. Additionally, the fact that what reason thinks is its own self *adds* to the concreteness of its thinking. Above we mentioned that the abstraction of the understanding can occur in at least three ways: separating *between* things (e.g., separating 'something' and 'other'), separating *within* things (e.g., separating the living parts of a body), and separating between *the separator* and *the separated*. This last kind of abstraction, of course, is what leads to the understanding having *Gegenstände*. Yet, in contrast to the understanding, the fact that reason thinks only its own self means that its particular abstractions are all *self*-abstractions. Its very nature is to abstract from its own self via the understanding at work within it, and then to concretize the abstractions by means of thinking them in their contradiction into a unity.

Furthermore, each new unity that is thought is *more concrete* than the one that preceded it.[124] As we discussed with regard to philosophical abstraction, the pendulum swing back and forth between abstraction and concretion is, for Hegel, simply what the

[124] e.g., the unity of finitude and bad infinitude (affirmative infinity) is more concrete than the unity of being and nothing (becoming), insofar as affirmative infinity is less of an abstraction from the whole than becoming is.

activity of philosophy in the encyclopaedia *is*, all the way from reason at its most abstract ('being') to reason at its most concrete ('philosophy'). Above we stated that the understanding acting in isolation is both a dismembering anatomist, and an organ within the very body it is dismembering. Reason, by contrast, is a dismembering anatomist dismembering *its own entire body*. Yet, reason also follows each cut with a *revivification* (via contradiction) of what has been cut away. To rephrase this train of metaphors: while the understanding is an organ which has cut itself out of its own body, reason *is* the body (i.e., the whole), and its activity is to separate and then rejoin and revivify every member of its body until it has reconstructed itself entirely. At that point, it is not just a whole living body once again, but now – *because it has done* this separating and reunifying – it is a living body which *knows itself*. Having developed itself *out of* what it was *an-sich* and *into* its fullest expression, philosophical reason is the Idea fully knowing itself.

Above we noted Hegel's comment in the *Science of Logic* that "…logical reason is the substantial or real being which holds together within itself every abstract determination and is their substantial, absolutely concrete unity."[125] Now we have a better grasp of how *philosophical* (as opposed to merely logical) reason brings not only every logical determination, but also every natural and spiritual determination into a concrete unity. For the very activity of philosophy is to be alternately separating and rejoining all of its determinations, and its completion consists of all of these determinations being gathered into itself through its own activity. In Hegel's view, then, philosophy as self-knowing is what is *most concrete*, what is *wholly* concrete.

[125] *SL* 48.

To be sure, there are some passages in the *Logic* which seem to indicate that complete concretion occurs in the logical sphere. For example, when stressing how the moments of the concept (universal, particular, singular) cannot be separated, Hegel describes the concept (*der Begriff*) as "what is altogether concrete [*das schlechthin Konkrete*]."[126] But a few lines later, in the Remark, he adds, "The absolutely concrete [*Das Absolut-Konkret*] is spirit."[127] We can see why Hegel would make these two claims, in light of our discussions above about how the logical sphere is – in a specific but very real sense – an *abstraction*. Spirit, as the expression and truth of logic (and of nature), is that which is most concrete because, unlike logic, it does not find its full development in another sphere, but rather in itself. It is certainly true that spirit presupposes logic, and that – in its return to logic in *Philosophy of Spirit* §577 – it reveals itself to have *not* been 'other' to logic. But it is still the case that spirit does not find its expression in anything other than its own self. Logic, on the other hand, presupposes spirit (and philosophy in particular) for its full expression, an expression which is an ontological/developmental one accomplished, as we will see, through the linguistic expression of philosophical language.

Before finally turning to a more sustained discussion of this kind of language, it will be useful to develop one more aspect of the activity of philosophical reason, viz., how it *experiences* what it thinks, and how this experiencing relates to concrete thinking. Earlier I made the claim that when philosophy thinks through the determination 'plant,' it is engaging in an *a priori* investigation, in the sense of an investigation not involving

[126] *EL* §164.
[127] Ibid., Remark.

sense experience (*Wahrnehmung*). While Hegel does often use the term '*Erfahrung'* in the Kantian meaning of 'sense experience,' he also regularly uses it to mean something else, viz., in terms of 'thought experience.' The most obvious example is his designation of the entire *Phenomenology of Spirit* as the "Science of the Experience of Consciousness," and throughout this text he presents consciousness as experiencing *its own self*. A passage at the *Phenomenology*'s conclusion helps to elucidate this non-sensory kind of experience quite clearly:

> …it must be said that nothing is *known* that is not in *experience*, or, as it can be otherwise expressed, nothing is *known* that is not available as *felt truth*, *as the eternal which is inwardly revealed*…. For experience consists in precisely this, namely, that the content – and the content is spirit – exists *in itself*, is substance and therefore the *object* of *consciousness*.[128]

It is in this sense that philosophical reason operating throughout the encyclopedia experiences what it is thinking, i.e., experiences *itself* as it thinks through itself. When it thinks through the determinations of logic, nature, and spirit in order to bring them into a concrete unity within itself, it does this by experiencing its own self.

In this broader sense of the word, we might say rather colloquially that experience is '*what happens to you*,' as opposed to something which one merely hears about, or merely observes happening to someone else, etc. Yet, even in an everyday context, this broader sense of 'experience' does not need to entail mere passivity. For example, someone might say that he has had the experience of *making himself into* a world-class marathon runner, an experience which clearly involved him being both passive and active insofar as

[128] *Phenomenology* §802.

he was 'working on' his own self. Something similar could be said of philosophical reason, as it engages in its self-dismemberment and revivification.

In the *Phenomenology*'s Preface, Hegel makes the connection between concretion and experience explicit. Here he explains that – just like concretion – experience both involves and *requires* abstraction:

> Consciousness knows and comprehends nothing but what is in its experience, for what is in experience is just spiritual substance, to be precise, as the *object* of its own self. However, spirit becomes the object, for it is this movement of becoming an *other* to *itself*, which is to say, of becoming an *object* to *its own self* and of sublating this otherness. And experience is exactly the name of this movement within which the immediate, the non-experienced, i.e., the abstract…alienates itself and then returns to itself from out of this alienation. [129]

As we know, one can have an *object* only through *abstraction*. Thus, to make oneself one's own object – to *think* oneself – requires that one *abstract* from oneself, i.e., that one become an *other* to oneself.[130] This is what we see philosophical reason doing by means of the understanding operating within it, and it does this every time it makes an abstraction, e.g., when it separates off 'nothing' from 'being' and 'quantity' from 'quality' in the *Logic*, or when it abstracts 'time' from 'space' in the *Philosophy of Nature*, or even in the massive abstraction which takes place when logic and nature *as a whole* are separated. For every time philosophical reason makes an abstraction, it is abstracting from itself. And when it does so, it becomes 'other' to itself in the

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[129] *Phenomenology* §36, translation emended.

[130] While I have been claiming that reason – in contrast to the understanding – does not have objects, there is another sense in which it does, when it makes itself its *own* object, abstracts from itself, etc. This 'weaker' sense of *Gegenstand* is one that Hegel uses very frequently in the *Phenomenology*, and with less frequency, although not rarely, in the *Logic* as well.

abstractions and *therefore* can transform this otherness (through contradiction and *Aufhebung*) into progressively more concrete unities*, i.e.,* into unities more like its *own* unity: the "absolutely concrete,"[131] the unity of the whole.

Now, to match up this process more clearly with the part of the quote above about *experience*, we can describe it from the opposite direction. The pure immediacy of 'being' contains *an-sich* the entire encyclopedia, including the philosophical reason which is not only *at work* throughout the encyclopedia but which is also *posited* at the very end. In the quote above from the *Phenomenology*, the Idea in the form of 'being' would be "the immediate, the non-experienced, i.e., the abstract," and experience in the *Logic* would consist of the "movement within which the immediate, the non-experienced, i.e., the abstract…alienates itself and then returns to itself from out of this alienation." So, the Idea in its immediacy – pure being – alienates itself through the myriad of abstractions that take place throughout the *Logic*, but *through* these abstractions it is able to move through all of its differentiations and, eventually, return to itself now as differentiated *and* concrete. Hegel's claim is that this movement – reason's pendulum swing of abstraction and concretion which results in a higher level of concretion – just *is* 'experience.'[132]

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[131] *EL* §164, Remark.

[132] If experience is the process of what is abstract becoming concrete, the analogy with the marathon runner is again an apt one. Before actually experiencing the process of becoming a world-class runner, he had certainly heard from others what things one would need to do to accomplish this goal; thus, he had an *abstract* relation to these things, viz., one of words and concepts *separated off* from the physical feeling of exhaustion, pain, etc. His experience of becoming a runner, then, consisted of these abstractions becoming concrete.

Since the word '*a priori*' means 'prior to experience,' the broader sense of the word 'experience' as *concrete thinking* entails a broader sense of '*a priori*.' An investigation that is *a priori* in this broader sense would be one *devoid* of concrete thinking, one which engages in abstractions of both its objects and itself *from* its objects, which does not reunify them by means of contradiction. Which is to say, *a priori* thinking would be *abstract* thinking. So while Hegel's encyclopedia is certainly *a priori* in the 'traditional' sense of not involving sense-experience, it is in no way 'prior to' the experience of its own thoughts. For the self-moving activity of philosophical reason is nothing but this experience.

b. The Being of Philosophical Language

In a dissertation about Hegel's view of philosophical language, it might seem strange to speak at length about this topic only at the work's very end. My decision to do so stems partially from my view that the language of philosophy can only be given a full account after one has accounted for many, many other things – in fact, almost all other things. While this dissertation is only aspiring to give the rough outlines of such an account, following this general approach was the direction I decided to take, not least of all because of my own dearth of knowledge about Hegel's philosophy. That aside, my contention is that philosophical language is what it is *through* its relation to philosophy, and vice versa; thus, this language is philosophy's *non-indifferent* medium. Just as a body can neither be, nor be accounted for, in isolation from its specific kind of soul (e.g., plant, animal, human), so it is with philosophical language's relation to philosophy.

Philosophy, as we know, is not given a systematic account until the very end of Hegel's encyclopedia. This means that he sees philosophy as not only the most developed of philosophical determinations, but also as *containing* all the other determinations in sublated form. Additionally, that philosophy is accounted for only at the very end of his philosophical account of the whole means that, from the words "*Being, pure being*…" at the beginning of the *Logic* all the way to the *Philosophy of Spirit*'s conclusion, *we have not fully known what we have been doing*. That is, the activity of philosophy which we have been *doing* is not something we comprehend, or *could* comprehend, until we have reached its completion.[133] It is therefore also true that, until we have reached this completion, we do not fully know what we are *saying*.

So, while philosophy and its language are 'underway,' there is a gap between our '*doing*' and '*knowing* what we are doing.' But what is particularly fascinating about this situation is that the gap between the two is closed *by the doing*. That is, the specific determinacy of the activity of philosophy and its language just *is* to be closing this gap, to be comprehending more of what it is that they themselves are. This is clearly not the case with other philosophical determinations, e.g., sexual reproduction, having sense perceptions, establishing a family, or making art. To be sure, doing any of these activities repeatedly may lead one to better comprehend the nature of what one is doing; but, this improved comprehension would simply be a *side effect* of doing the activity, and not – as with philosophy and its language – the *activity itself*.

[133] This is another way of describing why Hegel sees philosophy – and the not the Absolute Idea at the end of the Logic – as truly being 'thought thinking itself.'

i. Does Hegel Have an Account?

As mentioned in this work's Introduction, an important question that must be addressed is why Hegel himself never provided an extended and systematic account of philosophical language, especially in light of his extremely confident claims about the completeness of his system of philosophy. One way to get some traction on this question is to ask, "If he *had* given philosophical language a systematic account, at what point in the encyclopedia might he have done so?" Because of the very intentional way that Hegel orders his encyclopedia, asking the question "where does X belong in the encyclopedia?" is to ask an ontological question. To refer back to our discussion in Chapter 2,[134] we can say that asking where something belongs in the encyclopedia is to ask what it *is*, and to ask what it *is* is to ask how well is it capable of expressing the Idea. In that previous discussion, we also noted that the more something is like philosophy, the better it goes about expressing the Idea: "a turtle better expresses what is implicit within the Idea than a rock because a turtle is more like philosophy than a rock is."[135]

To start out most broadly, then, it is clear that philosophical language does not lie in the realm of nature. So does it lie in the realm of logic, or of spirit? The view that it lies in the realm of logic seems somewhat plausible; for, the *Logic* certainly consists of a great deal of language, and Hegel claims that the logical sphere is presuppositionless, 'within itself,' self-determining, etc. Yet when we consider that the logical sphere is, according to Hegel, non-spatial, non-temporal, and non-material, the fact that

[134] pg. 57.
[135] pg. 57. I.e., 'animal' is more like the determination 'philosophy' than is some part of 'geological nature.'

philosophical language involves material signs (in the air, on the page, etc.) within space and time means that the *being* of these signs cannot lie within the logical sphere, i.e., that they are not themselves *logical* determinations. Similarly, given that the logical sphere does not contain the category of materiality itself, it is evident that material signs could not possibly be accounted for in terms of the other determinations in the logical sphere. Thus, philosophical language must be a determination of the realm of spirit. And since this language receives its determinacy at least in part *from philosophy itself*, it would make sense that it would need to be accounted for *in conjunction with* philosophy. Additionally, given that Hegel believes that thought cannot come into being without language, philosophical thought (i.e., philosophy) must – in at least some sense – receive *its* determinacy from philosophical language. We have claimed several times above that there is a kind of reciprocal dependence between the two, and this indicates that one would only be able to account for each of them *through* the other. What the precise nature of this 'reciprocal dependence' might be will be dealt with below; nonetheless, given that philosophical language involves material signs which are in some way determined by philosophical thought, it seems reasonable to say that this language would receive its proper systematic treatment in close conjunction with the systematic treatment of philosophy itself, i.e., in the closing sections of the *Philosophy of Spirit*, at the very end of the encyclopedia as a whole.

If this is indeed where an account of philosophical language would be given, one possible reason – and a rather unexciting one – why Hegel might not have given such an account is this: these concluding sections of the *Philosophy of Spirit* are, aside from a

very long Remark, approximately four pages long. This becomes more significant when we consider that the *Philosophy of Spirit* §556-563's five-page treatment of "Art" receives its expanded version in the two-volume *Aesthetics* lectures, and *Philosophy of Spirit* §564-571's five-page treatment of "Religion" receives an expanded version in the two-volume *Philosophy of Religion* lectures. This is not to imply that the non-existent *Philosophy of Philosophy* lectures would have been anywhere near the size of these other lectures, particularly, e.g., given the great diversity of materials that art can work with which might be accounted for. Nonetheless it seems safe to assume that these hypothetical lectures would have been more than 4 pages long.

Yet on further consideration, we can say that Hegel *did* provide an exposition on the '*Philosophy of Philosophy'*: his encyclopedia as a whole. Given that philosophy is defined at the very end of the encyclopedia as 'the self-thinking Idea as worked out and expressed in nature and spirit,' and given that this is precisely what the *Science of Logic*, *Philosophy of Nature*, and *Philosophy of Spirit* in *combination* account for, it seems true to say that the encyclopedia *as a whole* is an account of philosophy. But if this is so, and if the nature of philosophical language

is in some way determined by philosophy, this might mean that an account of philosophical language is similarly located in the *whole* of the encyclopedia.

That this is a possibility highlights the fact that the attempt to present Hegel's view of philosophical language has a number of similarities – including similar difficulties – with the attempt to present his view of the *human body*. It is this latter task which John Russon takes up in his book *The Self and Its Body in Hegel's* Phenomenology of Spirit.

Because the subject matter of the *Phenomenology* is human consciousness, and because the work makes few direct claims about the human body, Russon's goal in his book is to present an account of the human body which is not directly stated, but rather implied, in the *Phenomenology*. That is, Russon provides an account of just what sort of thing the human body would *have to be* in order to be consistent with human consciousness as presented in the *Phenomenology*. And his claim is that it is indeed possible to glean such an account from the *Phenomenology* itself. In his words:

> My argument is that…a phenomenology of the body is implicitly carried out in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and the effort here will be directed to extracting from Hegel's text the philosophy of the body that is there implied and to showing how this is the rational comprehension of human embodiment.[136]

While the relation of the human body to human consciousness is by no means identical to the relation between philosophical language and philosophy, it seems that a profitable approach to accounting for philosophical language would nonetheless be similar to Russon's approach to accounting for the human body.

The reason for this is that, in several respects, the human body and philosophical language occupy a strikingly similar place within Hegel's philosophy. Both of them receive no distinct, extended systematic treatment by Hegel, yet both of them have a kind of 'precursor' which *is* given such a treatment. The 'precursor' to the human body is the animal body, treated systematically and at length in the *Philosophy of Nature*; the 'precursor' to philosophical language is ordinary language (*Sprache*), treated

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[136] John Russon, *The Self and Its Body in Hegel's* Phenomenology of Spirit (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 3.

systematically and at length in the *Philosophy of Spirit*. Additionally, both the human body and philosophical language are *essentially* different from their 'precursors,' for each of them stands in a *constitutive* relation to something to which their 'precursor' does *not*, viz., human consciousness and philosophy (respectively). That is, the human body is essentially different from the animal body insofar as the former is what it is only *through* human consciousness; and, philosophical language is essentially different from ordinary language insofar as the former is what it is only *through* philosophy. In Hegel's systematic accounts of human consciousness and of philosophy in the *Phenomenology* and *Philosophy of Spirit*, one does not find the systematic treatments of the human body and philosophical language that one might expect. A further reason one might expect such treatments of these two determinations is that their 'accompanying' determinations which Hegel *does* systematically address are *dependent on them*: human consciousness cannot be what it is without the human body, and philosophy cannot be what it is without philosophical language.

An important question raised by these seeming gaps in Hegel's philosophy is this: when something is sublated, what 'happens to' it? Abstractly speaking, Hegel says that what is sublated is both done away with and preserved in the result. In the transition from the *Philosophy of Nature* to the *Philosophy of Spirit*, it is clear that the animal body is sublated (i.e., as a determination of thought, it ceases-to-be, and yet does not go into nothing), and that the result which comes-to-be is the first determination of spirit, viz., the "natural soul." My argument is that ordinary language is sublated and an essentially different kind of language comes-to-be in conjunction with philosophy.

Given that what is sublated becomes a moment and then a vanishing moment within a new whole, and given that moments are constitutively determined by their relation to other moments and to the whole, one might suppose that every sublation would require Hegel to present a new account of *every sublated determination* (e.g., the animal body, ordinary language) which now stands, in an altered form, as a moment in the new whole. Yet obviously Hegel does not do this; instead, with each sublation, he begins accounting for the result as a new *whole*. That is, while he claims that each such new whole contains the origins out of which it came, and contains corresponding *differentiations*, the new whole is nonetheless a *true* whole, something *immediate* with a living (non-mechanistic) unity. For, the unity of the determinations which are sublated into a new whole simply *are* that new whole. Thus, when the determination 'animal' (and the entire sphere of nature) is sublated and the result is the 'natural soul' and the realm of spirit, the activity of the natural soul *just is* what the human body *is*. In this way, an account of the human body is, as Russon puts it, "implicitly carried out" in Hegel's account of human consciousness.

In a similar fashion, I would like to argue that, in Hegel's account of philosophy, an account of philosophical language is implicitly carried out. Thus, to try to grasp philosophical language by simply looking to the 'language' section of the *Philosophy of Spirit* would be just as misguided as trying to grasp the human body by looking to the 'animal' section of the *Philosophy of Nature*. Instead, one must look to philosophy itself.

This raises two separate issues. The first is that the relation between philosophical language and philosophy is not the same as the relation between the human body and

human consciousness. A very significant difference, one we will discuss in some detail below, is that while philosophy comes into being only through its language, philosophy can, and *must*, 'abandon' this language to become fully itself. A second issue – also to be taken up below – is actually a question: if one must 'look to philosophy' to grasp the nature of philosophical language, and if the account of philosophy is the *entire* encyclopedia, *where* precisely should one look? As we will see, while the *Logic* is its own form and its own content, the fact that it is nonetheless (in another sense) a "formal science"[137] means that it will play a special role in determining the structure of philosophical language. But before looking to these issues, we should consider a more preliminary matter, viz., the role that the *contingency* of any given specific language plays in the nature of philosophical language.

ii. The Necessarily Contingent Dimension

As language, philosophical language always takes the form of some *particular* language which has developed in history (e.g., French, Russian, German). Given that particular languages possess contingent dimensions – e.g., the way the words sound and how the letters are shaped – does this situation compromise philosophical language's ability to mediate the non-contingent nature of philosophical thought? If the medium through which philosophy takes place has such arbitrary features as having or not having umlauts, or placing adjectives before the noun or after it, how can it be used to give an exposition of that which is necessary? To see why Hegel does not view this as a problem

[137] *SL* 592.

for philosophy, we will look briefly at the way that necessity and contingency function in the realms of logic, nature, and spirit.

As we mentioned on several occasions in Part II,[138] thought in the *Logic* is 'within itself' insofar as its contents *become* its forms and vice versa. Because all the various logical determinations are thought by means of other logical determinations, and because these determinations have their existence in the logical sphere, logic as a whole is, *qua* logic, not external to itself but rather self-contained. Additionally, we saw that certain logical determinations are thought in terms of their *own specific* selves. A few examples we have seen thus far are the determination 'becoming' *itself* becoming (in the form of coming-to-be,[139] and also in the form of ceasing-to-be[140]); 'something' being itself *a* something, as contrasted over against an 'other' which is *other* than 'something;'[141] 'difference' being that which is *different from* identity; and contradiction as contradicting itself.[142] While it is only fully thematized in the Doctrine of the Concept, when 'universal' *develops into* 'individual,' all of these various determinations we have listed turn out to be *instances of themselves*. So, in sum, the Idea *qua* logical Idea (and all of its logical determinations) is 'within itself' insofar as it is what it is in the logical sphere without any need for external instantiation. To use medieval terminology, we could say that, for the Idea and all of its logical determinations, essence and existence are the same. To use Russellian terms, the Idea is a set that is a member of itself.[143]

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[138] pg. 115; pg. 138, fn. 112.
[139] *SL* 83.
[140] Ibid., 106.
[141] Ibid., 116-122.
[142] See Chapter 5, pg. 145, fn. 129.
[143] and, further, it is the set of all sets.

That this kind of inwardness and self-reflexivity is unique to the sphere of logic becomes clear when we compare logical determinations to determinations in the spheres of nature and spirit. While the *logical* philosophical determination 'something' is *a* something, the *natural* philosophical determination 'plant' is *not* in fact *a* plant, nor is the *spiritual* philosophical determination 'language' *a* language.[144] That is, while 'something' is an instance of its own self, 'plant' and 'language' are not. One result of this is that, while 'something' finds existence within its sphere (logic) as an instance of itself, 'plant' and 'language' do not find existence simply as instances of themselves. This is the reason why, when walking through the woods, one never comes across 'plant.' It is also the reason why it is not possible for a human being's native language to simply be 'language.' For, philosophical determinations in the realm of nature and spirit require *further specification* in order to be individuated, in order to exist. So, e.g., the philosophical determination 'plant' finds existence as a specific material plant, e.g., *as a rose*, and the philosophical determination 'language' finds existence as a specific material and spoken language, e.g., *as German*.

And here we come upon a point of great consequence: this 'further specification' required by determinations in nature and spirit is, by its very nature, something *contingent*. For there is nothing within the Idea which requires that roses exist, or that German exist. There did need to be *some* form of plant life, and *some* particular language, because both of these are necessary in order for the Idea to come to know itself

[144] Similarly, the determination 'space' is not *itself* spatial, and the determination 'matter' is not *itself* material.

through living embodied human beings doing philosophy. But the particular forms in which these determinations appear are not necessary.

In fact, it is necessary that these particular forms *not* be necessary. As we discussed back in our treatment of philosophical reason, logic – despite its 'inwardness' and 'existence within itself' – can actually reach full expression only through becoming *other* to itself in the determinations of nature and spirit. This 'becoming other' entails precisely that it *cease* being 'within itself,' and *cease* having only determinations whose full being consists of simply being their own selves. That is, logic's 'becoming other to itself' entails that it find expression in the determinations of nature and spirit as determinations within those spheres which are '*not*-within-themselves,' and which involve contingencies.[145] The determinations of nature and spirit – with the exception of philosophy itself[146] – thus involve specifications (instantiations) which are not determinations of the Idea itself and which are *necessarily contingent*. That is, these natural and spiritual determinations necessarily have specifications which could have been otherwise and which are outside of the realm of philosophical thought strictly speaking. This is true of language, and it is also true of the language that philosophy uses. Philosophical language *must* possess contingent dimensions, for it is precisely its

[145] To be sure, logic contains the determination 'contingency,' as well as the individualized contingency that accompanies this universal. However, this contingency, i.e., the *philosophical determination* contingency – unlike the various contingenc*ies* in nature and spirit – is one that is in fact known by philosophical thinking.

[146] The reason that philosophy is the one determination of spirit that is an exception to this – i.e., which does not require contingency – is that the role of 'othering/expressing of the Idea' which contingency plays is precisely *not* played by philosophy, given that philosophy is the Idea as returned unto itself, i.e., as fully self-thinking.

'not-being-within-itself' which *allows it to be other* to the realm of logic, and thus to be its developmental expression.

To lend further clarity to the difference between the necessity of logic and the contingency involved in nature and spirit, we can talk about what goes on when we *think* the philosophical determinations in each of these spheres, i.e., when we think the determinations *of thought*.[147] When I think the philosophical determinations within the logical sphere, my thoughts are the same as these determinations, and there is *nothing further* to do in order to grasp their existence: there is *no remainder* which lies beyond the determinations themselves. For example, when I think 'something' and then think it as *a* something, this is simply what it is in its existence. Now, when I think the philosophical determinations within the *natural and spiritual* spheres, my thoughts are, once again, the same as these determinations (e.g., 'plant,' 'language'). Here, however, there *is* a remainder beyond the determinations, for in order to grasp them in their *existent* forms, I must go beyond them, viz., into the spatial and material world, e.g., into 'rose' and 'German.' And in so doing, I am no longer *only* dealing with philosophical determinations, i.e., the determinations of thought itself. Instead, I am engaging 'universal presentations' which have been formed by abstracting from, e.g., all of the images of roses in my mind. So, when I think the determination 'plant,' the 'remainder' beyond this determination which must be engaged in order to grasp 'plant' in one of its *existent forms* is not itself a philosophical determination, but rather is something

[147] As discussed on pg. 28 of Chapter 1, by 'philosophical determination' I mean 'all the determinations of the Idea in logic, nature, and spirit.' These determinations, in *aufgehoben* form, just *are* what philosophical thinking is. Thus, when one thinks the determinations of philosophical thinking, i.e., the determinations of the very activity in which one is engaged, one is in fact thinking all the determinations of the Idea in logic, nature, and spirit.

contingent.[148] And, as we have seen, the language used by philosophy also possesses such a necessarily contingent dimension, one which does not detract from but actually *enables* it to be an expression of the Idea.

iii. The Origins and Relations of its Words

Up to this point I have claimed several times that philosophical language is essentially constituted by its relation to philosophy, and now I will attempt to show more specifically how this is so by discussing the way that its words come into being. Additionally, how they come into being will have a great deal to do with the relations between them. As one might suspect, the genesis of philosophy's words and their relations determines what sorts of things they *are*, and it turns out that on both counts they are fundamentally different from the words of ordinary language.

Let us quickly review part of our discussion of ordinary language above. We saw there that the words of ordinary language originate when intelligence places a 'universal presentation' [*allgemeine Vorstellung*] into an intuition (e.g., spoken sounds).[149] Intelligence, in the form of presentation (*Vorstellung*), which is itself in the form of 'associative imagination,' creates a universal presentation (e.g., 'rose') by associating and abstracting away from various images (e.g., of various roses), and it then places this

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[148] A longer discussion of these matters would require us to specify the sense in which the totality of logical determinations – as the Idea – has 'no remainder' (i.e., to specify the sense in which the Idea is 'within itself'). For clearly Hegel thinks that, in another sense, it *does* have a remainder, that it *does* have something beyond it which must be thought in order to think it in its existence, viz., the determinations of nature and spirit. And because these latter determinations have an empirical and contingent remainder, we could say that what is a *direct* remainder to the determinations of nature and spirit is an *indirect* remainder to the determinations of logic. This is the case because the logical determinations of the Idea must find expression in natural and spiritual determinations, and these *latter* determinations must find expression in *contingent and material* things. For as we have seen, there needs to be, e.g., a *real and particular* plant, and *a real and material* language, in order for philosophy to be possible.

[149] Pg. 61.

universal presentation into an intuition. The result is that a 'merely sensuous' intuition becomes an '*intelligent* intuition' – the *sounds* 'rose' become the *word* 'rose.' As Hegel puts it, "The tone which articulates itself further to express specific representations – speech and its system, language – gives to sensations and intuitions a second and higher existence than they immediate possess…"[150] Through the intuition's "second and higher existence," i.e., the linguistic sign, intelligence is able to *see itself*, for the sign is intelligence's externalized self.

How, then, does this process compare with the origin of the words used in philosophical language? And what is the *influence* of 'ordinary words' on 'philosophical words'? Hegel addresses this latter question directly in the *Science of Logic*:

> Philosophy has the right to select from the language of common life, which is made for the world of presentations (*Vorstellungen*), such expressions as seem to *approximate* to the determinations of the concept. There cannot be any question of *demonstrating* for a word selected from the language of common life that, in common life too, one associates with it the same concept for which philosophy employs it; for, common life has no concepts, only presentations (*Vorstellungen*), and to recognize the concept in what is otherwise a mere presentation is what philosophy itself is.[151]

Philosophy, then, takes words from ordinary language and reappropriates them for its own use. Because the meanings of these words in their everyday senses are inadequate for its purposes, philosophy endows the intuitions of the words with its *own* content, thus *replacing* the universal presentation, i.e., replacing the content which was originally

[150] *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline* §380.
[151] *SL* 708, translation emended.

endowed to the intuition by intelligence. Thus we see how the specific manner of the coming-into-being of philosophy's words entails that they are a *different sort of entity* than ordinary words. For while a word of ordinary language consists of a universal presentation combined with an intuition, a word within philosophical language consists of a *concept* – a *philosophical determination* – combined with an intuition.[152]

When Hegel says that the language of common life is "*made for* the world of presentations," he is saying that this language came into being within the context of the kind of mental activity which deals with images and representations – e.g., the world of the hunter, the farmer, the politician, etc. Because of what was *needed* from such a language, it developed in such a way as to meet those needs. But in Hegel's view this kind of language simply does not meet the needs of philosophy. Thus, instead of using the language which was made for the 'world of representations,' philosophy must make its own language, one which is suitable for the 'world of philosophical determinations' insofar as it is able to *express* these determinations.

Let us look then in more detail at how it makes its own language. As the *Logic* progresses, thought is thinking through its various determinations as they come into being, and is then choosing intuitions – e.g., the sounds 'difference' – within which to

[152] Another important dimension to Hegel's method of choosing words – one which deserves a much longer treatment than this footnote – is that he very often draws words *from the philosophical tradition*. So, when he has a group of logical determinations before him and wishes to insert the unity of their sublation into one term, he often considers what term from the tradition would have a similar definition and then uses that. A good example is 'identity,' a word which he obviously realized had been thought through in a much more rigorous way (e.g., *auto kath auto* in Plato) within the tradition than merely in terms of a vague 'universal presentation.' Identity is also a good example to illustrate how the *first moment* – the 'formal' moment – of a determination in the *Logic* oftentimes closely resembles the way in which that determination has been viewed in the tradition; e.g., Hegel would say that *auto kath auto* is very similar to *formal* identity. Other relevant examples would be *formal* causality and *formal* (abstract) universality.

place its determinations. But, unlike ordinary language, it is not choosing *bare* intuitions, e.g., a collection of meaningless tones whose *intuitional* content it then replaces with its own *intelligent* content (viz., a universal presentation); rather, it is choosing intuitions that are *already words*, i.e., a collection of tones with intelligent content, which it then replaces with its own *conceptual* content. So, for example, the first step would involve intelligence placing a universal presentation into the sounds 'difference,' a universal presentation of difference which – given its origins in the associative imagination – would be entirely *in abstraction from* identity. Philosophy then, as Hegel says, takes that word "from the language of common life, which is made for the world of presentations," and replaces the universal presentation of *abstract* difference with the concept of difference which is what it is *only in relation to* identity.

Philosophy's endowing of its words with its own content is clearly an enormous shift away from ordinary language. Nonetheless, it is drawing its 'material' *from* ordinary language, and it creates its words on a model similar to that of intelligence. Just as intelligence produces its words by reappropriating intuitions for its own use, so does philosophy. Both intelligence and philosophy remove the content of what they come upon and then insert their own content in its place: they carve out the inside of what they find, and give it a new internality. The basic mode of the production of both kinds of words is thus structurally parallel, with the difference – the crucial difference – being that while in ordinary words the immediate content of an *Anschauung* is replaced by a *Vorstellung*, in philosophical words a *Vorstellung* is replaced by a philosophical determination, by a *Begriff*.

We have already noted Hegel's claim that when the contents of intelligence replace the sensuous contents of intuitions, the latter achieve "a second and higher existence than they immediately possess."[153] We can now extend this idea to say that when the contents of *thought* (i.e., philosophical determinations) replace the intelligent content of ordinary words, those ordinary words *also* achieve a 'second and higher existence,' and the *intuitions* involved achieve a *third* existence. Thus, intuitions are to ordinary words as ordinary words are to philosophical words: just as ordinary words are 'reappropriated intuitions,' so are philosophical words 'reappropriated ordinary words.' And – most importantly – it is through the intuitions' 'third existence,' i.e., through philosophical words, that thought is able to *see* itself, for in these words thought is made external to itself. In these words the 'in-itself' of thought is made *other* to itself, such that thought can become 'for-itself,' by *thinking* itself.

With this sketch of the genesis of philosophical words in mind, we can now go a step further into the details, and also look at a specific example. As thought thinks through its various determinations (e.g., being, essence, plant, language, etc.), it gathers together the various elements of its progress up to that point into a unity, by means of a single word. To do this, it first looks to the language of everyday life and chooses a word whose meaning – i.e., whose universal presentation – is most similar to the conceptual determination at which it has just arrived. Then, thought endows that word with that conceptual determination. Put more precisely, thought chooses a word whose meaning is

[153] *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline* §380.

approximate to a *unified version* of the *several* conceptual determinations of which it has just finished giving an exposition.

To see how this works at the ground level, let us take the example of 'reciprocity.' This determination is dealt with, unsurprisingly, in the "Reciprocity" section, which makes up Section C of the chapter entitled "The Absolute Relation" at the very end of the Doctrine of Essence. Section A of this chapter had provided an account of "The Relation of Substantiality," and in Section B the topic is "The Relation of Causality." As we saw back in Part II of this dissertation,[154] the relation of causality begins with the idea that cause is primary and independent, and effect is secondary and dependent upon the cause. But when it becomes evident that cause is also dependent upon effect, a contradiction has arisen: the two are *inter*dependent, and thus they are neither the separate substances they were thought to be, nor are they standing in a one-way relation of cause and effect. As the contradiction results in the dissolution of these previous determinations of thought, they collapse in on each other, and thought needs a word within which to express them *in a unity*. At this point philosophy 'selects from the language of common life' a word which 'seems to *approximate* the determinations of the concept.'[155] So it selects the word 'reciprocity' from ordinary language and fills it with its *own* determination, viz., the unity of the sublated and now unified determinations of 'substantiality' and 'cause and effect.' The result is the *philosophical* word 'reciprocity,' a word which has come into being through thought reappropriating the word of ordinary language by replacing the content

[154] pg. 103-ff; 138-ff.
[155] *SL* 708, translation emended.

of intelligence with its own content.[156] Thus, while the ordinary and philosophical uses of 'reciprocity' have the same intuition, they contain different content, i.e., different meanings.[157]

As we have seen, it is only by means of the intuition 'reciprocity' containing a determination of *thought* that thought can make its activity, i.e., its own self, *other* to itself. For in general, since the differing content of ordinary and philosophical words dictates that what they *mean* is different, it also dictates that what they *accomplish* is different. Ordinary words' expression of intelligence allows the latter to see itself and become itself due to the fact that the content of these words, and thus the words themselves, are the product of intelligence. Clearly, though, these kinds of words are not capable of expressing philosophy, i.e., of expressing the thinking (*Denken*) which philosophy is, insofar as they are not the *product* of philosophy.[158] In order for philosophy to become itself through seeing itself fully and completely in an other, it needs an other which *it* has produced, and this is why it produces the words of philosophical language. For Hegel, philosophy is the thinking which thinks itself, and it thinks itself *by* and *through* making its own language.

We should return for a moment to our above description of the coming-into-being of the word 'reciprocity' in the *Logic*. While this word comes into being out of the

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[156] That this content is different from the content of intelligence when the latter says 'reciprocity' is evident from the fact that the philosophical meaning of the word involves a *self-standingness*, i.e., the self-standingness which is carried over into the very next determination, 'the universal concept.' This self-standingness is the *sublated* form of 'substance,' which was what contradicted the interdependence of cause and effect and led to the coming-into-being of reciprocity.

[157] Another example of all this would be the word 'mechanism'; in *EL* §195, Hegel says that "we must also vindicate for mechanism the right and the significance of a universal logical category; and therefore we must not restrict it simply to the domain of nature from which it derives its name."

[158] Yet, in the same way that intelligence sees itself imperfectly in the symbol, the Idea can often see itself in ordinary language in a blurry and imperfect way.

sublation of 'substantiality' and 'causality,' where did the meanings of *those* determinations come from? Obviously, they came from sublations of determinations which took place prior to *them*. This means that, if someone were to ask, "What is reciprocity?", Hegel's answer would be that its definition consists of all the words that have come before it in the *Logic*, viz., the words describing all the previous determinations and their sublations. Similar to how the words 'cold-blooded four-footed amphibious creature with a tail' are collected up into the term 'salamander,' all the words Hegel has written about, e.g., being, nothing, their unity in becoming, and *all of the other* determinations and sublations up through 'causality,' are collected up (in their sublation into a unity) into the term 'reciprocity,' constituting its definition, its content, its meaning.

This mode of proceeding – we might call it the linguistic side of *Aufhebung* – is at work throughout the entire *Science of Logic*. As a result, each term's definition consists of all the determinations which precede it. So while one could, to be sure, give a short definition of reciprocity such as "a mutual causality of *presupposed*, self-*conditioning* substances,"[159] this would be nonsensical if one did not know what Hegel *meant* by all those words. In order to comprehend what Hegel actually means by these words in the short answer, one would have to read the hundred pages leading up to reciprocity. The *full* definition of 'reciprocity' consists of the entire *Science of Logic* up to, and then including, the section on reciprocity.

[159] *SL* 569.

Through our consideration of Hegel's manner of defining philosophical determinations, the difference between the meaning of philosophical words and ordinary words becomes even more apparent. The content of ordinary words is inadequate for the activity of philosophy because this content is not speculative, i.e., does not contain opposed determinations, and *therefore* would not allow philosophy to engage in the conceptual contradictions which drive it forward. Said differently, the content of ordinary words is inadequate for philosophical reason because this content (e.g., the universal presentation 'plant') has not arisen *immanently* within reason, from *out of* reason. As we have seen, as reason thinks through its own determinations, it abstracts them from itself and inserts them into intuitions, thus creating words by giving them the speculative content which has arisen from its self and through its own movements, its *self*-movements. And this leads us to an important conclusion about the relation of reason's living self-movement and philosophical language: *the activity of reason thinking through its own determinations, inserting them into intuitions to create words, and thinking new determinations out of these words just is the self-movement of reason.*

Philosophy's need to extract and replace the content of ordinary words can further illuminated, interestingly enough, by those rare occasions in which an ordinary word is *not* entirely inadequate to philosophy's needs. Such an occasion is what we find Hegel describing in the Remark on *Aufheben*, regarding the meaning of this word in the German language. After his discussion of how the word in ordinary German has the double sense [*gedoppelt Sinn*] of preserving and putting to an end, he says that these two determinations [*Bestimmungen*] could be referred to as two *meanings* [*Bedeutungen*] of

the word. Then he states, "But it is certainly remarkable that a language has come to use one and the same word for two opposed determinations. For speculative thinking it is delightful to find words in the language which have within themselves [*an ihnen selbst*] a speculative meaning…."[160] While it is not uncommon for a word to have two meanings, it is rather strange for a word to have two *opposed* meanings. These rare ordinary words, then, already have a speculative meaning when philosophy "finds" them. That is, they have this meaning *before* any reappropriation of the word is done by philosophy, and this, presumably, is why coming across such words is "delightful" for philosophy. But while Hegel himself does not point this out, it must be added that, even though '*Aufheben*' contains an unusual amount of speculative content for a word originating from ordinary language, philosophy must nonetheless insert its own content into it. For, while '*Aufheben*' can indeed be used to mean two opposing things, it is still the case that one could use this word and only intend *one* of these meanings, e.g., '*Ich habe mein Zeitungsabonnement aufgehoben*.' It is precisely this *mere* cancellation/negation sense of '*Aufheben*' which Hegel cautions the reader against on multiple occasions, as when he says that the true meaning of the word is "especially to be differentiated from nothing. What sublates itself does not thereby become nothing."[161] So we see that even with a 'naturally-speculative ordinary word,' philosophy must still replace the ambiguous content of intelligence with its own content.

And, as we have seen, most ordinary words have a meaning further removed than this from their philosophical counterparts. Above we discussed the difference between the

[160] *SL* 107, translation emended.
[161] Ibid., my translation.

ordinary and philosophical meanings of the word 'plant,' and now we have the resources to describe this difference more fully. Because ordinary language's meaning of 'plant' comes from abstracting from the various images it has gleaned from intuition, its meaning of 'plant' is based on its limited experiences. But because philosophy's meaning of the word comes into being immanently from within philosophy, its meaning is not limited by what it happens to have *sensuously* experienced. Rather, it *experiences* the determination 'plant' *within itself*, and it does so when the previous determinations which it has experienced within itself – viz., 'being' all the way through 'the Idea,' and then 'space' all the way to 'geological nature' – are sublated and result in the determination which ordinary consciousness had experienced only *finitely* and in a *confused* way, and which Hegel gives the name 'plant.' So, when he defines 'plant' in the *Philosophy of Nature* as "…*subjectivity*, according to which the organic is as *singular*, develops itself in an *objective* organism,"[162] it is no wonder that this seems strange and even bizarre to ordinary consciousness. For there is not an immediately obvious similarity between that *philosophical* content of the concept and the *intelligent* content of the universal presentation, a presentation derived by abstracting away from remembered images of plants one has seen which involved green or brown entities with stalks, leaves, roots, etc.

Ironically, though, while ordinary consciousness would certainly consider Hegel's strange definition of 'plant' to be an *abstract* one, Hegel would say that it is precisely the *ordinary* meaning of 'plant' that is abstract, because this meaning has come into being

[162] *Philosophy of Nature* §343, translation mine.

through a process of contingent, finite, and arbitrary abstraction from the various images that one happened to have gained from one's sense experiences of the natural world. The understanding and intelligence, operating in the mechanistic fashion that they do, view 'plant' as something external to themselves which they must then – from an external position – account for and comprehend by means of a.) sensation and b.) the application of various terms which have been imported in from other fields of study, e.g., chemistry. Philosophical reason, by contrast, while in the process of working through all of its own determinations, comes upon the determination 'plant' as within its own self, and thus gives the word 'plant' this content which has *immanently* arisen, through reason's own movements, its self-movements. More precisely, as reason is thinking through itself, it recognizes that the determinations it is currently thinking contradict each other and are dissolving into a unity; it then recognizes that this unity is what *ordinary* consciousness would, in a confused way, calls 'plant.' So, it chooses this word and inserts its own content – the determination of its own self which has just come into being as the *result* of an *Aufhebung* – into the intuition of the sounds 'plant.'

To close out our treatment of philosophical words, we should briefly address the issue of their *relations*. Insofar as Hegel sees philosophy as producing the words of its language as it proceeds, he sees philosophy as *defining* its words as it proceeds. As we saw in the example of 'reciprocity,' every time an *Aufhebung* occurs, philosophy collects the conceptual determinations at which it has arrived thus far into a unity, placing them into a single word. This fact illuminates a second major difference between ordinary words and philosophical words, one to which we have already alluded. While the

relation between ordinary words is one of relative *indifference*, the relation between philosophical words is one of *reciprocity*. This reveals itself in two ways.

First, while the meaning of a given word within ordinary language is generally considered to be relatively self-standing, the meaning of a philosophical word is dependent on – because it is *constituted by* – all of the *previous* words in the exposition. So, as we have seen, to comprehend the philosophical sense of the word 'reciprocity,' one needs to comprehend not only the meanings of the words immediately unified into its definition (viz., 'causality,' 'substance,' etc.), but also the words which make up *their* meanings, i.e., the words that preceded them. On the other hand, to comprehend the *ordinary* sense of the word 'finitude,' saying the definition 'something limited' would likely be adequate to this word's universal presentation. But the fact that the meaning of philosophical words includes all the meanings that preceded them entails that, e.g., when Hegel refers to being and essence as the moments of the concept,[163] he is implying that one must comprehend all that those two tiny words entail (i.e., the first several hundreds of pages of the *Logic*) to begin comprehending what the word 'concept' means. Similarly, if we were asked to provide the definition of the word 'Idea,' our reply would have to be: the definition is the 762 pages of the *Logic* itself.[164] In a very limited way, then, the *Science of Logic* could be compared to a conceptually-ordered dictionary, and not simply because of their similar thickness and weight.

But there is a second way in which the reciprocity of philosophical words (as opposed to the relative 'indifference' of ordinary words) can be seen. And it is in this context that

[163] *SL* 577.
[164] minus the Remarks, of course.

we can begin to grasp Hegel's words which we quoted at the very beginning of Part III, that "Knowing what we say is much rarer than we think." It also in this context that I can defend my claim that, in Hegel's view, everyone who has not thought through the totality of philosophical determinations does not fully comprehend the words that they speak. And so the issue is this: within the encyclopedia, the complete meaning of a given word depends not only on the words that *precede* it in the exposition, but also on the words that *follow* it. Let us take an example we have already worked with in detail, the determination 'becoming.' Back in Part I we saw that Hegel finds the proposition 'being and nothing are the same' defective because it does not express the difference of being and nothing, only their identity. But even when their difference *is* expressed by the assertion that 'being and nothing are not the same,' we still cannot explain why this is so, or how this makes any sense. As a result, we cannot fully comprehend what we are saying when we say 'the *unity* of being and nothing is *becoming*.' And as we saw,[165] it is not until the Doctrine of Essence, some 300 pages later, that we come to see that identity and difference define and interpenetrate each other, are *contained within* each other; this allows us to see that any 'is' statement is also *simultaneously* an 'is not' statement, which allows us to make more sense of the relation of being and nothing. However, even with this significant advance in our comprehension of 'becoming' which we gain from the Doctrine of Essence, we are still, all along in the logical exposition, making *judgments* about things. And yet, what a judgment truly *is* – and how it is shown to be a *defective*

[165] Chapter 3, pg. 76.

form of speculative expression – is not taken up until pg. 622 of the *Logic*, which entails that for the last 621 pages we have not *fully* known what we have been saying.

Back in Part I we also noted Hegel's claim about the progression of philosophy being a matter of the 'in-itself' being posited: "the whole course of philosophizing… is nothing else but the mere *positing* of what is already contained in a concept."[166] Thus, as we are 'underway' in this course of philosophizing, every time we *think* a philosophical determination, we do not fully know what it is that we are thinking. Similarly, whenever we *speak* a philosophical word, we do not fully know what it is that we are saying. For what we are saying fails to fully express and fully posit the 'in-itself' of the determination of which we are speaking. Yet, it is precisely this inadequacy with regarding to thinking and speaking which drives the exposition forward, for what is not fully thought or spoken is some further content within the Idea, i.e., some *further differentiation* within the Idea. And when the differentiation then comes to the surface, there is another contradiction and another movement – self-movement – of reason. Thus self-moving reason proceeds, positing and expressing more determinations until all that is 'in-itself' has been fully posited and fully expressed, a point which is marked by the self-thinking Idea returning to itself in philosophy's account of its own self. As the 'in-itself' becomes the posited, the said becomes the comprehended, and what is implicit in what is said becomes explicit and expressed.

[166] *EL* §88.

iv. A Few Remarks on Form and Grammar

One of the primary issues we have been trying to comprehend in this chapter is how philosophy forms and structures philosophical language. Thus far we have examined this 'forming' primarily with respect to individual philosophical words. We have also seen some of the ways in which these words are *connected*, in terms of philosophy's comprehension that the copula contains unexpressed difference which must be expressed in a second proposition. Thus the smallest unit of speculative expression is, it seems, *two* propositions. Yet we have said very little about the *grammar* of philosophical language. Some pages ago I posed the question, "If one must 'look to philosophy' to grasp the nature of philosophical language, and if the account of philosophy is the entire encyclopedia, *where* precisely should one look?" I noted then that the *Logic*, while being its own form and its own content, nevertheless plays the major formal role with respect to philosophical language. This formal role extends, I believe, to determining the grammatical structure of philosophical language. So now I will say a few words about why I hold this view, along with a few words about why most of this view's most important implications will not be addressed in this dissertation.

In the introductory section of the Doctrine of the Concept entitled "The Concept in General," Hegel sheds some indirect light on the form of philosophical language. One of the topics he addresses is the status of logic in relation to the natural and spiritual spheres, and in this context he says:

> Since it is primarily *logic* and not science in general [*Wissenschaft überhaupt*] with whose relation to truth we are here concerned, it must further be conceded that logic as the *formal*

> *science* cannot and should not contain that reality which is the content of the further parts of philosophy, namely, the philosophical sciences of nature and spirit….As contrasted with these concrete sciences – which nonetheless have and retain as their inner formative principle [*inneren Bildner*] the logical, or the concept, which had served as their archetype [*Vorbildner*] – logic itself is indeed a *formal* science, but it is the science of the *absolute form*….[167]

While logic is its own form and its own content, it serves as the form of the content of nature and spirit. That is, while logic plays a formal role with respect to its own self, it does so also with respect to everything else: it is the form of all that is. Logic is contained within nature and spirit as their *Bildner* or sculptor or 'shaper,' but logic is also their *Vorbildner* insofar as it is both a sculptor that is *vor*/prior to them[168] and their pattern and example. Yet as we know, Hegel is adamant that logic is not a form that is indifferent to its content; rather, in sculpting the sculpted, logic is sculpting and completing *itself*. For logic's forming and structuring of nature and spirit is what eventually, within spirit, give rise to philosophy, i.e. logic's knowing of its own self. Put otherwise, logic's forming of its content (of nature and spirit) is such that it leads the content to *become form* – to become the *absolute* form of logic – *once again*. For when spirit results in philosophy, it results in something whose being is the activity of thinking thinking its own self; that is, this result is, like the Idea at the end of the *Logic*, *its own form and its own content*. So *the 'content becoming form once again' which finds its*

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[167] *SL* 592, translation emended.
[168] But it is prior only in one sense, insofar as there are *setzen/voraussetzen* reciprocal relations present between logic, nature, and spirit. See Chapter 4, pg. 103-ff for our discussion of *setzen/voraussetzen*, and *Philosophy of Spirit* §575-577 on how this applies to logic, nature, and spirit.

completion in philosophy is what the entire progression of thought through nature and spirit just is.

Because philosophical language is a determination of spirit, logic is also the form of this language. But this is not saying very much, given that logic is, in one way or another, also the form of spatiality and rocks and aardvarks and the family and the state and everything else. What makes philosophical language unique is the *degree* to which logic acts as its form. Speaking in general, how well logic exhibits its form in any given determination of nature and spirit dictates what sort of thing that determination is. For example, logic exhibits its living, self-moving form *most poorly* in the extreme indifference and utterly static nature of spatiality (*Raum*), the first determination after the logic. It exhibits its form progressively better as the *Philosophy of Nature* proceeds, and better still as the *Philosophy of Spirit* proceeds. Back in Chapter 2, I expressed a similar point in the following words: 'In Hegel's view, to ask *what something is* is to ask about *its specific ability to express the Idea*. What something *is*, *is* its particular capacity of expressing the Idea.'[169] This was illustrated by the fact that, for Hegel, a turtle expresses the Idea better than a rock, human desire better than a turtle, ordinary language better than human desire, etc. Now we can specify these points a bit more by saying that what something *is*, is its particular capacity to express the *form* of the Idea, within *its own* form. So, the form of a rock – as dead, and as relatively indifferent to that around it – exhibits the form of logic rather poorly; the form of animals, as we might expect, exhibits

[169] Chapter 2, pg. 57. As we also noted at the time: 'What something *is* determines how well it is capable of expressing the Idea. But it is just as true to say that what something *is* is determined *by* how well it is capable of expressing the Idea.'

the form of logic much better (regardless of the 'content,' i.e., which specific animal it is); and the form of ordinary language exhibits the form of the logic extremely well (regardless of the 'content' of language, i.e., what specific language it is and what in particular is being spoken about[170]).

But the form of philosophical language is something quite different. This language is directly involved in the step *immediately before* logic (form) returns to itself, a return which takes place by the content of spirit taking on the form of logic *entirely* and thereby becoming philosophy. Because philosophical language occupies this place and plays this role, it exhibits and expresses logical form, we might say, 'extraordinarily well.' More specifically, by being that into which philosophy inserts its concepts and thus sees itself, philosophical language directly mediates philosophy's ability to think its own self; thus, this language is the *final step* of the long process of logic forming its content such that the content becomes form once again. As a result, *the form of philosophical language is more like the form of logic than is the form of anything else.*

This description of philosophical language might seem to be appropriate only with regard to philosophy itself, not to its language. But since philosophy simply *is* the logic as self-knowing, philosophy *has* the form of logic. Thus it is appropriate to say that the form of philosophical language, in comparison with the forms of all other determinations, is the most like the form of logic. Since philosophical language is the 'other' of philosophy through which it comes into being (i.e., the other through which logic becomes genuinely self-knowing), this means that this language is, in its own being, the

[170] cf. Chapter 2, pg. 61.

final step in content (spirit) become form (logic) again. When we connect this last point with the ones above, we can see that the *reason* philosophical language allows 'content to become form again' is that its *own* form 'is more like the form of logic than is the form of anything else.'

If the form of philosophical language is so similar to the form of logic, we must now ask, 'What *is* the form of logic?' And although we might quickly starting chasing our tail by responding that the form of logic is its content, etc., we know from our previous discussions that as the *Logic* proceeds, logic becomes less *an-sich* and more *posited*, i.e., better expressed. That is, logic as form – as 'absolute form' – is more fully expressed the farther one proceeds in the exposition. One example of this that we discussed back in Part I is the inadequacy of the proposition (any 'A is B' statement) for expressing speculative content, given that such content involves both identity and difference; since a single proposition is unable to express both of them simultaneously, a second proposition is needed. So, a *formal* dimension to language has arisen in the very first pages of the *Logic*, yet we cannot comprehend why this form is necessary until the Doctrine of Essence, when we recognize that identity and difference are mutually dependent.

But of course, even after grasping the nature of identity and difference, we still do not comprehend the reasons behind another – perhaps paradigmatic – formal dimension of the *Logic*: its triadic nature. Thinking through the nature of contradiction certainly grants some clarity to the triadic form; yet, this form is not fully thematized and exposited until the "Subjectivity" section of the Doctrine of the Concept, in the *syllogism*. So, while Hegel has great distaste for formal logics, and while the "Subjectivity" section *generates*

the "Objectivity" section, it is nonetheless true that the "Subjectivity" section speaks directly and extensively about the logic's formal *side*.

Because of this, I believe that grasping the form of philosophical language – and, specifically, grasping its *grammar* – would require a detailed investigation of the judgment and the syllogism in "Subjectivity." It would also require tracing these themes out in "The Idea of Cognition," where the issues of analysis, synthesis, and definition are addressed. Unfortunately this task is one for which I have neither the time, nor, at present, the level of comprehension to accomplish. But if one worked through these themes, one could, I believe, see much more clearly how the grammar of philosophical language is formed by philosophy.

A point from our treatment of ordinary language sheds some light on this matter. As we saw there, Hegel states, "The *formal* element of language is the work of the understanding, which informs [*einbildet*] it with its categories; this logical instinct brings forth the grammar of language."[171] The understanding's *building* of its categories *into* ordinary language is what creates its grammar, its formal dimension, and this ensures, e.g., that 'is' will always be expressed only in terms of formal identity. I have been claiming that, instead of being the "work of the understanding," philosophical language is the work of philosophical reason: this language has its categories built into it by reason. The fact that reason does not orient its entire being around the extremely powerful but lifeless category of formal identity means that it can, e.g., produce a language which can contradict itself and not go into nothing, but rather into a result. Thus, *when reason*

[171] *Philosophy of Spirit* §459, Remark.

replaces understanding as the producer of language, both the *content* of the individual words, and the *form* of how the words are combined, become something different. That is, the *meanings of words* change, and the *grammar of the language* changes: language becomes philosophical.

To specify this point, I would claim that it is reason *as* the Doctrine of the Concept which produces philosophical language and informs it with its categories. In one way this is not saying very much, since the third part of the Logic is the expression of the first two. Yet from specific examples we can see how the Doctrine of the Concept lends particular insight into the structure of philosophical language. Two such examples are the judgment and the syllogism. To be sure, these ways of determining the form of language also have much to say about language's content,[172] and in the syllogism in particular one sees the gradual overcoming of the indifference of form and content.[173] But as influencing form, they are operative not only throughout nature and spirit, but are also present in inchoate forms at the very beginning of the *Logic*, structuring the language there despite the fact that it is impossible, at that point, to comprehend what 'judgment' and 'syllogism' even are.

In "An Aside on Language" in Chapter 2,[174] we discussed ordinary and philosophical language in the context of the categories of 'linguistic' and 'developmental' expression, with the latter type of expression being one in which the expression genuinely alters and develops what is expressed. This discussion is worth recapping so that we can now place

[172] e.g., in the judgment (as opposed to the proposition), it is no longer the case that the form can receive any given content. *SL* 626
[173] *SL* 665, 669.
[174] pg. 59-ff.

it in a broader context. First, ordinary language's 'linguistic' expression engages in the 'developmental' expression *of the Idea* just by *being* ordinary language;[175] at times, it engages in the 'developmental' expression of its *own* content as well (viz., whatever the speaker is trying to express). Yet, this kind of language can also engage in the 'static' expression of its content by *merely* externalizing it. Furthermore, it does not need to have any particular content in order to *be* ordinary language. Turning to philosophical language, we saw that it too developmentally expresses the Idea just by being what it is, by being philosophical language. By contrast, though, philosophical language is not what it is – and thus does not developmentally express the Idea *qua* philosophical language – unless it has a *specific* content and a *specific* form, viz., the content of philosophical determinations, and the form of developmentally expressing those determinations. Yet as we noted, the philosophical determinations which make up the content of philosophical language just are determinations *of the Idea*. So, given that all of philosophical language's 'linguistic' expressions are 'developmental' expressions of its own content, and given that its own content just *is* the Idea, all of its specific 'linguistic' expressions *are* 'developmental' expressions *of the Idea*. The complete convergence of 'linguistic' expression and the 'developmental' expression of the Idea is, we noted, just what philosophical language *is*.

In the meantime we have said a great deal more about the content and the form of philosophical language. For example, we have examined in detail how philosophical reason takes ordinary words and endows them with philosophical determinations by

[175] in the same way that an animal is an expression of the Idea just by being an animal.

replacing the content of intelligence with its own. Regarding its form, we have seen how philosophical language engages in 'developmental' expression of the Idea by its expression of opposed meanings which contradict one another, with the new meaning that results allowing us to know more of what we were saying than we previously did. And while our treatment of philosophical language's form ended up being very incomplete, we discussed some of what would need to be further investigated in the Doctrine of the Concept in order to flesh out philosophical language's grammar. One of these issues, the syllogism, would certainly shed light on the conclusion we made back in Part I that philosophical language is what it is only by having a *specific* form and a *specific* content, given that the working out of the syllogism involves the elimination of the indifference of its form from its content. And this would coincide with Hegel's general view of philosophy, that its purpose is "to banish indifference and to become cognizant of the necessity of things, so that the other is seen to confront *its* other."[176] However, uncovering the full extent to which philosophy banishes indifference from its own language will have to wait for another dissertation.

v. *Diaeresis* and *Synagoge*: Beginning and Ending with a Word

How does ordinary language *become* philosophical? This is a question we have already addressed in part, but as a preface to talking about philosophical language in terms of *diaeresis* [division] and *synagoge* [collection], we should push the question further. Above I have made the argument that language moves from being ordinary to being philosophical when philosophical reason replaces the understanding as the

[176] *EL* §119, Addition 1.

producer of language; I have also argued that this 'replacement' brings about both fundamentally different meanings and a fundamentally different way of *combining* meanings. But where and how does this 'replacement' take place? I would claim that it takes place at the beginning of the *Science of Logic*, and my support for this claim would be the particular relation that holds between logic and philosophy. On the one hand, the *Logic* presupposes none of its content and none of its form, because the two generate immanently out of the *Logic*'s opening. On the other hand, the *Logic* presupposes and depends upon philosophy for its full development. That is, given that the *Logic* presupposes a human being thinking through the nature of thinking, it presupposes a being which *is* its expression, to *give* it expression.[177] So while it is more obviously the case that the activity of philosophy presupposes the Idea,[178] it is also the case that the Idea presupposes – depends upon – a human being thinking through the nature of thinking.

But this needs to be put more precisely. For its full development, the Idea presupposes *philosophy*'s fully development, and both of these take place simultaneously at the very end of the *Philosophy of Spirit*. Given that both are fully *gesetzt* only at the end, at every point *before* the end both of them are partially *an-sich*, partially unexpressed. Leaping all the way back to the first words of the *Logic*, we see that both the Idea and philosophy are not just *an-sich* but *fully an-sich*. This is the point at which philosophy begins, and thus the point at which philosophical language begins. For this is

[177] this is the reciprocal relation between *Setzen* and *Voraussetzen* operating at the very broadest of levels. See Chapter 4, pg. 103-ff.
[178] Hegel accounts for relative ease of grasping this particular set of relations in *Philosophy of Spirit* §575, where the *first and most immediate* of the three syllogisms involving logic, nature and spirit is "logic-nature-spirit" (the second two being "nature-spirit-logic" and "spirit-logic-nature").

the point at which Hegel, a human being with language, moves from 'spirit' into logic. I put spirit in quotes here because this transition into logic is not the transition which is *accounted for* at the end of the *Philosophy of Spirit*; for, that transition consists of philosophy as *fully posited* recognizing that it is the Idea returned unto itself and thus fully posited. Rather, the transition of which I am speaking here is philosophy as *not yet* accounted for, i.e., as philosophy *still fully in-itself* which *starts* the *Logic*, and which just is the 'Idea in-itself,' i.e., *Sein*. When Hegel makes this transition, the transition into beginning to do philosophy, his thinking – *and therefore also his language* – take on a new shape.

The transition from 'spirit' to logic that Hegel makes is one that we can describe only with the benefit of hindsight, once we have actually *accounted* for what spirit is. Nonetheless, this transition is worth comparing to the transition from nature to spirit. In the latter, the determination 'animal' at the end of the *Philosophy of Nature* passes away, and is not present *qua* animal at the beginning of the *Philosophy Spirit*. The human soul – as an embodied, living entity – contains the animal as a moment, but the human is a new kind of entity. In the transition from 'spirit' to logic, i.e., in the transition to *doing* philosophy, ordinary language[179] is sublated and philosophical language is the result; the latter – as intuitions having been endowed with mental contents – contains ordinary language as a moment, but it is itself a new kind of entity. This is how, and where, ordinary language first becomes philosophical. For this is how, and where, philosophical reason begins thinking through its own determinations. And as we have discussed above,

[179] this would also include the non-ordinary but still non-philosophical languages of poetry and religion. See pg. 181, fn. 42 above.

philosophical reason goes about doing this by placing its determinations within intuitions so that they become other to itself and it can see its own self in them.

This, then, is by way of a preface to discussing philosophical language as *diaeresis* and *synagoge*. Or, rather, it is a preface to talking *further* about these topics, because what I mean by these two terms is what I have been describing up to this point as abstracting/dissecting and reuniting/revivifying, respectively. Yet it seems appropriate to acknowledge Hegel's debt to Plato here, given that Hegel is – as Socrates described himself – "a lover of these divisions [διαιρέσεων] and collections [συναγωγῶν]."[180] To be more accurate, it seems appropriate to acknowledge Hegel's debt to the *gods*, in light of Socrates' wonderful description of dialectic as "a gift of the gods to human beings" that was "hurled down from the heavens by some Prometheus along with a most dazzling fire."[181]

Specifically, I would like to further develop the way in which philosophical reason's moments of abstraction, negative (dialectical) reason, and positive (affirmative) reason affect, and are effected *by*, philosophical language. Above we have described this process in terms of reason being an anatomist who makes a cut at some point of differentiation within its body, who then realizes that the 'parts' on either side of the cut are not actually parts but moments, and who then – *through this very realization* – revivifies the parts via their contradiction and dissolution into a new and more concrete unity. This process repeats over and over, with the resulting unities being less and less abstract in comparison to the *whole* of reason. When reason has dismembered and

[180] *Phaedrus*, trans. R. Hackforth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 266b.
[181] *Philebus*, trans. Dorothea Frede (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993), 16d.

revivified itself in its entirety, it then knows itself in its living concretion, and has completed its knowing of itself: it is philosophy as fully *gesetzt* and expressed. Yet this description of the progression of reason only includes reason's *thought*, while leaving out reason's language, so let us now look at the latter. To do so we will take a specific example, examining what reason does with the determination 'finitude' in the *Logic.*

Just previous to the 'finitude' section, reason had worked through the determinations 'something and other' and then 'determination, character, and limit.' Then it had recognized a contradiction therein, and expressed the dissolution of these determinations into a unity by choosing the word 'finitude.' Then, by thinking through various dimensions of finitude, reason recognizes that the limit of finitude entails that there is a *beyond* of this limit, and thus an *other* to finitude. In this recognition, reason – specifically, the *understanding* within reason – is in the process of making a cut/*diaeresis* between finitude and….what? Reason searches for a word from the language of everyday life and realizes that the word 'infinitude' approximates what it has in mind as this 'other' of finitude, so it places its thought determination 'the beyond of the limit of finitude' into the sounds 'infinitude.' Upon doing this, reason sees within this intuition the determination that it has cut away from finitude, and *in so doing* completes the abstraction from finitude, i.e., *in so doing fully thinks* the determination 'infinitude.' Thus, this *thinking* of infinitude is the expression of – the development and result of – the *word* 'infinitude.'

But as we know, reason quickly notes that if infinitude is what is beyond the limit of finitude, infinitude *also* has a limit, and thus is a.) not limitless, b.) not any different from

finitude, and c.) actually *dependent on* finitude, and vice versa. Finitude and infinitude are moments, and furthermore, are set apart as being opposites while nonetheless being the same. Reason thinks this contradiction, notes the two determinations as dissolving into one another in an act of *synagoge*, and thus sees that they form a unity. But what to call this unity? In this case, the language of common life falls short: reason cannot find a word that approximates the determination which is beginning to form within it. So it creates the term 'affirmative infinitude' and endows it with the determination which is coming to be within it. Having done so, it recognizes within this intuition the unity of the determination which has come about out of the abstractions of finitude and infinitude. And *in this recognition* of the contradiction's result which reason has placed within the intuition, reason *completes* the revivification process. Once again we see that the *word's naming* of the determination makes it possible for reason to *actually think* the determination; thus, this thinking is the development of, and expression of, that word.

When we look back over this section of the *Logic* and consider how language was functioning within it, we notice something significant: the *result* – the meaning of the word 'affirmative infinitude' – has *come out of* the meaning of the word 'finitude,' indicating that the former was *implicitly within* the latter. As we saw, the way that reason expressed this implicit meaning such that it could actually think it was by *splitting* the meaning of 'finitude.' This splitting/*diaeresis* of the meaning was, therefore, the recognition of a *first* meaning implicit within 'finitude,' viz. the meaning 'infinitude' (initially as simply 'the other side of the limit of finitude,' and then as 'the other side of the limit of finitude which is also finite). The contradiction of these two meanings was

then what led them to dissolve and unify into the *second* meaning implicit within 'finitude,' a collection/*synagogue* which is dubbed 'affirmative infinitude.'

Now let us step back from this somewhat close-up view of the *Logic* and see how the linguistic side of *Aufhebung* functions in the encyclopedia as a whole. The activity of philosophical reason is, as we have noted, a pendulum swing between abstraction and concretion, dividing and collecting, cutting and revivifying, and this process allows reason to gradually think through its own self in its entirety. We also noted that the first and most abstract determination of the encyclopedia is 'being,' and that the last and most concrete is 'philosophy.' In light of this, we can bring together a great deal of what we have said thus far about philosophical language: *philosophical reason's use of language in thinking through its own determinations* begins *with it naming 'being' and then* splitting *this meaning, and it* ends *with it* reunifying *all the previous meanings into the word 'philosophy.'* And this is simply to say: *all of the meanings in the encyclopedia spill out of the word 'being,' and all of these meanings are* also *reunified in the word 'philosophy.'*

At the 'micro' level, the 'spilling out' and the 'coming back together' take place in an alternating sequence, as we saw with finitude, infinitude, and affirmative infinitude. But at the 'macro' level the two take place throughout the entire encyclopedia *simultaneously*. That is, the whole encyclopedia is simultaneously an analysis of the word 'being' *and* a synthesis into the word 'philosophy.' Speaking of the progress of the concept, Hegel speaks of this simultaneity of analysis and synthesis when he says, "This progression is equally both *analytical* – because through the immanent dialectic only what is contained

in the immediate Concept is posited – and *synthetic*, because this difference had not yet been posited in the immediate Concept."[182] Although he is here speaking only of the sphere of logic, the same could be said of the encyclopedia as a whole, and with respect to the words' meanings. For, as thought progresses past 'being,' meanings continue multiplying 'out of' that first determination (e.g., quality, quantity, measure); yet also at the same time, these meanings are being 'collected into' more and more concrete meanings (e.g., quality and quantity sublating *into* measure), i.e., meanings which are closer to the *most* concrete meaning, the meaning of the word 'philosophy.'

Earlier we spoke of how the meanings of philosophical words are constituted by the meanings of all the previous words *and* all the words that are to follow.[183] That is, insofar as all the philosophical determinations are moments of each other, so also are the meanings of all the words, such that one only fully knows what one is saying when one reaches the end. And so we noted that the *Science of Logic* could, in a loose sense, be compared to a very large dictionary, a dictionary whose entire contents are in the service of defining one word, the 'Idea.' Hegel mentions such a 'cumulative defining' in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*'s transition from the Doctrine of Essence to the Doctrine of the Concept. Speaking rhetorically, he asks why it is the case that, if the concept is the truth of being and essence, one does not simply *begin* logic with the concept. His response to his question is this:

> If the concept were posted at the head of the logic, and defined as the unity of being and essence (which would be quite correct from the point of view of its content) then the

[182] *EL* §239, Remark. See also *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline* §185.
[183] Pg. 256.

> question would arise about what one should think under 'being' and essence,' and how the two of them come to be brought together into the unity of the concept. This would mean that we were beginning with the concept in name only and not with the matter itself [*Sache*].[184]

In other words, if we defined the concept as 'the unity of being and essence' *before* we had come to comprehend what the words 'being' and 'essence' mean – i.e., what the *elements* of the definition mean – we would have a definition of the concept that, although in one sense 'correct,' would be essentially empty. A definition consisting of undefined parts does not provide one with a comprehension of what is defined, but only with a name. This mere name 'concept' would not allow one to think the *actual meaning* of the word; for, while one would have the correct intuition (in the sounds), the content within would be entirely abstract, thus failing to provide the proper philosophical content, i.e., the proper meaning.

Hegel speaks of the *Logic* as a kind of dictionary even more directly when commenting on what will come after the initial determinations of being and nothing. He states:

> Every following significance, therefore, is only to be seen as a more precise specification and truer definition of the absolute; such a definition is then no longer an empty abstraction like being and nothingness, but rather a concrete entity in which both being and nothingness are moments. When the difference emerges in such a concrete entity, then it is further determined in itself.[185]

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[184] *EL* §159, Addition.
[185] *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline* §40.

And we can extend this point about a "truer definition of the absolute" beyond the realm of logic, to the entire encyclopedia. All determinations after being and nothing are more concrete and more complete definitions of the Idea as fully self-knowing, with the final definition being this very definition itself, i.e., the definition of philosophy. Thus, to read and comprehend the encyclopedia is to rebuild one's vocabulary according to the demands of reason's own self-defining activity. And were someone to ask what the difference is between the meaning of the word 'being' and the meaning of the word 'philosophy,' we could answer: it is the difference between both the Idea and philosophical reason being merely *in-itself*, versus being *posited and expressed*, i.e., the difference between them *not knowing* themselves, versus *actually knowing* themselves.

vi. The Last Expression of the Idea

If language has something to do with truth, it would be reasonable to think that Hegel's claim that "the true is the whole" has some significance for the issue of language. And this is what we have just observed: all of the meanings of philosophical words reciprocally constitute each other, and all of these meanings are taken up into one word, 'philosophy,' for the determination 'philosophy' just *is* the whole. This helps to further elaborate my claim from Chapter 2[186] that, when Hegel says 'A is the *truth* of B,' it could equally be said that 'A is the *expression* of B,' where 'expression' means a *developmental* expression. For – just to use two examples – to say 'animal is the truth of plant' is to say 'animal is *more like the whole* than plant.' And this latter could be rephrased as 'animal *develops out of and is more concrete* than plant,' or, simply, 'animal

[186] pg. 44.

is *more like philosophy* than plant.' For Hegel, philosophy is the whole, the only truly concrete philosophical determination; all the others – including logic itself – are abstractions from it.[187]

As the encyclopedia progresses, philosophical reason and philosophical language are reciprocally expressing each other. That is, philosophical determinations developmentally express philosophical language and vice versa, and they do so by forming what might be imagined as an interlocking web: a philosophical word is the developmental expression of either a determination's negation (e.g., the negation of 'finitude,' in 'infinitude') or of two opposed determinations coming into a unity (e.g., 'affirmative infinitude'). And, a philosophical determination is the developmental expression of the word which named it – e.g., reason sees one of its own determinations (and thus its own self) in the word 'affirmative infinitude' and *therefore* is able to actually think this determination *fully*. This interlocking web of mutual dependence between reason and its language continues throughout the encyclopedia, but – and this point is absolutely crucial for Hegel – reason's dependence on its language *ends* at the encyclopedia's end.

Although it is not a little ironic, there is one philosophical determination that philosophical language does not express: 'philosophy.' As we have seen, what a philosophical word expresses is not the determination which it names, but rather those previous determinations which it *collects into* its own self. For, the determination which

[187] This way of articulating things helps to illuminate the precise nature of Hegel's 'monism.' Yet, unlike the problems posed to other forms of monism by the need to *speak* (cf. Parmenides' "being is one"), the inward differentiation of Hegel's monism *demands* that he speak. And it is his conception of *Aufhebung* that *allows* him to speak and still remain consistent with a monistic ontology, as opposed to refuting himself by slipping into an ontology of 'discrete' substances.

the word names is the developmental expression *of the word*, and this is so because the thinking of the determination is the *result* of – the *truth* of – the naming of it. So we can see why the *word* 'philosophy' does not developmentally express the *determination* 'philosophy': while the word unifies and then expresses the *definition* of philosophy (i.e., the syllogism 'spirit-logic-nature'), it does not express the philosophical determination 'philosophy.' Rather, the word 'philosophy' is expressed *by*, developed *by*, the determination 'philosophy.' For the determination 'philosophy' posits what was implicit within the word 'philosophy,' namely, thought *actually thinking* the determination 'philosophy.' The reason that these distinctions are so crucial for Hegel is that, if things were reversed – if the word 'philosophy' were the expression of the determination 'philosophy' – then the Idea at the end of the *Philosophy of Spirit* would not actually be able to return to itself by thinking itself. But because the determination 'philosophy' is in fact the expression of its word, philosophy becomes complete when philosophy as in-itself becomes philosophy as posited, as *self*-posited. Said otherwise: *because the determination 'philosophy' comes <u>after</u>, and is the expression* of*, the word 'philosophy,' philosophy is able to think itself <u>only</u>* through itself*, and not through language.*

To better grasp how philosophy does this, we should remind ourselves of our discussion of the 'mechanical memory' section of the *Philosophy of Spirit*. This kind of memory is able to reproduce a series of words (such as a song or poem) by rote, without the speaker having any of the *meanings* present to her. The relations between the words are mechanical because they are external and indifferent to each other *qua* words: the meaning has been drained from them. Hegel sees the existence of this kind of memory as

evidence that intelligence can snatch the meaning which it placed into words back out of them and into itself. That is, he sees it as evidence that intelligence can leave language behind and become *thought*. In this 'being left behind,' the word, he says, becomes "something abandoned by spirit."[188] Just as intelligence is able to 'reclaim' its meanings out of the intuitions of words such that it can become thought, so can philosophy do so with its meanings throughout the entire encyclopedia. And this is what we have been describing above, simply in different terms, when we talked about philosophical reason seeing itself when it sees its own determination within an intuition and, in so doing, being able to *think* this determination of itself. This thinking of one dimension of itself, then, takes place when reason 'reclaims' its content out of the word, a reclaiming which takes place all along the path of the encylopedia. But what is most relevant for our discussion here is that this is precisely what philosophy does *at the very end* of the encyclopedia, to *complete* the encyclopedia. First, it places its content – the syllogism 'spirit-logic-nature' – into the intuition 'philosophy.' When it sees itself in this intuition, it then 'abandons' the intuition by reclaiming the meaning out of it. In so doing, it *thinks* itself, and now, at the end of the encyclopedia, it has thought itself *fully*.

In "The Absolute Idea" section in the *Logic*, Hegel speaks directly of this process of thought externalizing itself into words and then drawing itself back into itself. In this quote, he also makes a fascinating reference to the language of the logic:

> The logical Idea is the Idea itself in its pure essence, enclosed in simple identity in its concept and having not yet entered into the *appearing* [Scheinen] of its form-

[188] *Philosophy of Spirit* §462, Addition.

> determinateness. Thus logic exhibits [*darstellt*] the self-movement of the absolute Idea only as the original *word*, which is an *expression* [Äußerung], but one that, in its being, as something external [*Äußeres*] immediately vanishes again; the Idea is thus only in this self-determination of *apprehending itself*; it is in *pure thinking*, in which difference is not yet *otherness*, but is and remains completely transparent to itself.[189]

Logic is, as he says, enclosed in itself, and has not yet entered into the 'appearing of its form-determinateness,' i.e., into nature and spirit. *Because* it has not yet done so, it exhibits or displays "the self-movement of the absolute Idea only as the original *word*…." That is, the Idea at this point – before externalizing itself in nature and spirit – has *only one way* to display itself, via the 'original word.' And even though this 'original word,' this 'expression' is the *only* form-determinateness that logic has, it nonetheless "immediately vanishes." As soon as it has played its role – that of containing as external whatever determination the Idea is attempting to think through – the Idea reclaims its content out of that word and is once again simply by itself, no longer thinking itself through the 'other' of the word, but only through itself. This is the process that continues throughout the entire encyclopedia, until the final abandonment of the final word.

Let us conclude this dissertation with two final remarks on Hegel's view of the relation of philosophical language to the Idea. We have seen how the determination 'philosophy' is the expression of the word 'philosophy,' and how the Idea is *therefore* able to think itself through itself alone. Nevertheless, aside from philosophy in its fully posited and complete form, philosophical language does in fact express philosophy in a

[189] *SL* 825, translation emended.

certain sense: it expresses philosophy when the latter is still in some way *an-sich*, in some way undeveloped and unexpressed. For as we have seen, all the self-movements of the Idea as it develops are expressed by philosophical language. As an abstraction from, and thus 'other' to, the Idea, every philosophical determination (e.g., essence, plant, art) is also in some manner an expression of the Idea; yet philosophical language is, all through the progression of the encyclopedia, what mediates reason's thinking of these its determinations.

But furthermore, philosophical language is the final 'other' of the Idea before its return to itself. This is so because the determination 'philosophy' is *not itself* an expression of the Idea. For, an expression is *other* to what it expresses, and philosophy is not other to the Idea, because it just *is* the Idea as completely self-knowing. Thus, *philosophical language is the* full *expression of the Idea, its* last *expression*.

Above we noted that 'the form of philosophical language is more like the form of logic than is the form of anything else.'[190] This claim, we can now see, helps to explain why Hegel views philosophical language as the last expression of the Idea. For this language is able to be the Idea's full expression due to the fact that its form is the most like the form of the Idea that it is possible to be without *being* the form of the Idea. Its materiality is what prevents its form from *being* the form of the Idea, and thus what allows it to be 'other' to the Idea such that it can express it at all. And as an 'other' to the Idea, philosophical language is the 'last other' to it because it is the *least* other to it. More than any other determination which is 'other' to the Idea, language is able to be

[190] Pg. 261.

formed by the Idea, taking the Idea's form literally into its own self and, in so doing, becoming philosophical language. It is for this reason that, in the process of the Idea becoming other to itself in nature and spirit, philosophical language for Hegel is the *last step* of this 'othering' process. In the sequence of decreasingly external determinations, philosophical language is the least external and least other to the Idea, thereby directly leading the Idea into the experience of the final result of its self-externalization, viz., thinking itself in and through the activity of philosophy.

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