The Idealism of Life: Hegel and Kant on the Ontology of Living Individuals

by

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Abstract

My dissertation, The Idealism of Life: Hegel and Kant on the Ontology of Living Individuals, investigates the significance of the concept of life for Kant’s and Hegel’s respective forms of idealism. In Chapter 1, I argue that Kant’s account of the subjective origin of the a priori forms of cognition requires that when we judge something to be a living individual, we only suppose it to be so (or, in other words, that these judgments do not determine anything in the object being judged). In the remaining chapters, I argue that Hegel’s account of life as objectively real (i.e. rather than a supposition we make) depends on his development of the concept of the individual as self-determining self. I trace this development in the Science of Logic through three stages. In Chapter 2, I argue that any minimal notion of self depends on Hegel’s logic of the Infinite as described in the Doctrine of Being. In Chapter 3, I argue that this minimal account of selfhood is possible only if that self is immanently, rather than externally, determined—that is, that a self cannot be defined from without—by tracing Hegel’s account of ‘Determining Reflection’. In Chapter 4, I show how, for Hegel, the logic of self-determination gives us the resources to describe the concept of individuality, which Hegel develops as the ‘Concept’. In Chapter 5, I conclude that Hegel’s account of life depends on the
claim that the ideal relations immanent to it (relations between, e.g., self and other, or organism and organ) both constitute and are constituted by the material determinations of the living thing. This, in turn, suggests that any idealism that attributes ideal forms and material determinations to distinct sources will be unable to describe life as objectively real.
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Introduction

The Idealism of Life

Hegel's Early Reception of Kant's Theory of the Organic

In Hegel’s first published philosophical work, the *Difference* essay of 1801, he makes a brief and curious remark about Kant’s theoretical treatment of nature:

Kant...views nature as Subject-Object in that he treats the product of nature as an end of nature, as purposeful without a concept of purpose, as necessary without being mechanistic, as identity of concept and being. But at the same time this view of nature is supposed to be merely teleological, that is to say, it only serves validly as a maxim for our limited human understanding whose thinking is discursive and whose universal concepts do not contain the particular phenomena of nature. This human perspective is not supposed to affirm anything concerning the reality of nature.¹

Hegel is here clearly making reference to Kant’s “Critique of Teleological Judgment,” the latter half of the *Critique of Judgment* famous, especially among the German Idealists, for Kant’s characterization of the “intuitive understanding”. It is clear, too, that here Hegel celebrates Kant for regarding in nature’s ‘purposefulness’ the “identity of concept and being,” while lamenting the fact that, for Kant, to regard nature in this light is merely to adopt a “maxim for our limited human understanding,” one that does not allow us to know “anything concerning the reality of nature”. In other words, for Hegel, Kant has arrived at some important expression of the ‘Subject-Object’ in nature, but he nevertheless fails to regard it as actually true of nature, or as actually describing

¹ *DS* 163.
nature’s reality apart from how we, as discursive thinkers, merely subjectively understand it.

Though the terms of his analysis change somewhat, Hegel makes a similar point in his next major philosophical work, *Faith and Knowledge*.

In his reflection upon [organic nature] in the “Critique of Teleological Judgment,” Kant expresses the Idea of Reason more definitely than in the preceding concept of a harmonious play of cognitive powers. He expresses it now in the Idea of an intuitive intellect, for which possibility and actuality are one... An intuitive intellect would “not proceed from the universal to the particular and so to the singular (through concepts); and the concordance of the particular laws in nature’s products with the intellect will not be contingent for it.” It is an “archetypal (urbildich) intellect” for which “the possibility of the parts, etc., as to their character and integration is dependent on the whole.”

Here, as before, Hegel identifies a significant idea in Kant’s theorizing on purposive or teleological nature which, he feels, has been unduly relegated to a subjective status, or which has been denied reality. Here, the reference to Kant’s notion of an intuitive intellect is explicit. We are

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2 CPJ, 5: 405-408.

3 Ibid., 5: 405-408.

4 FK, 88-89.

5 ‘Intellect,’ here, translates Kant’s term *Verstand*; ‘intuitive intellect’ and ‘intuitive understanding’ pick out the same idea. See Eckart Förster, *The Twenty-Five Years of Philosophy: A Reconstruction*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012, pp. 151-2 for a discussion of the various senses attributable to the phrase ‘intuitive understanding.’ According to Förster, in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, the phrase ‘intuitive understanding’ has two meanings: it can either pick out an understanding that cognizes particular natural objects as preceding their parts, or it can pick out an understanding that cognizes nature as itself a systematic whole. Distinct from either of these notions of ‘intuitive understanding’ is what, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant calls ‘intellectual intuition.’ In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he latter refers to an intuition that, in contrast to our sensible intuition, need not be sensibly given objects, but rather is productive of its objects just in virtue of representing them. Complicating matters further, however, is the fact
also told more of what, specifically, is at issue in Kant’s treatment of organic nature; whatever Hegel’s issue, it has to do with, first, the sense in which we describe organic nature (or ‘nature’s products’) as possible or necessary (and, too, the nature of the relation between parts and whole), and with the contingency of the laws determining those products; second, it has to do with the relationship between the universal and particular elements of cognition; third, it has to do with the relationship between wholes and their parts. It is easy enough to identify that Kant addresses these issues in the “Critique of Teleological Judgment,” largely in the notorious §§76-77, but it is less easy to determine why, exactly, Hegel is interested in these arguments, or, moreover, why he takes these arguments to comprise “the most interesting point in the Kantian system”\(^6\); it is no easier to see why this treatment of organic nature should yield, for Hegel, the “identity of concept and being.”

One clue can be found in Schelling’s early philosophy of nature, which evidently had a significant impact on the young Hegel’s thinking regarding nature, and, especially, organic nature. Schelling tells us as early as 1797, for instance, that

\[\text{that in the } \text{Critique of the Power of Judgment, Kant also uses the term ‘intellectual intuition’ (in the same section wherein he discusses the difference between a discursive and an intuitive understanding) to refer to an intuition that, in Förster’s words, is a “logically possible intuition of the non-sensible substratum of appearances, i.e., of the thing in itself...” (152).} \]

\[\text{It should be noted, however, that some scholars see the distinct formulations of the ‘intuitive understanding’ and ‘intellectual intuition’ as capturing different aspects of one and the same intellect. Nicholas Stang (} \text{Kant’s Modal Metaphysics}. \text{Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 300-302)}, \text{for example, argues that the fact that the intuitive understanding is not discursive (since it does not rely on passively affected sensibility for the cognition of its objects), it must have a } \text{spontaneous intuition that thereby posits its objects in intuiting them, and thus that intellectual intuition and intuitive intellect/understanding “are concepts, respectively, of a part of a kind of mind (intellectual intuition), and that kind of mind itself (intuitive intellect), which necessarily come as a package” (301, fn.).} \]

\[\text{In what follows, I will restrict my discussion of the ‘intuitive understanding’ to Kant’s discussion of it in connection with the first sense described by Förster, namely, the understanding capable of grasping the parts of a natural object as following from the whole of that object.} \]

\[\text{\(FK, 85.\)}\]
Every organic product carries the reason of its existence in *itself*, for it is cause and effect of itself. No single part could *arise* except in this whole, and this whole itself consists only in the *interaction* of the parts. In every other object the parts are *arbitrary*; they exist only insofar as I *divide*. Only in organized beings are they *real*; they exist without my participation, because there is an *objective* relationship between them and the whole. Thus a *concept* lies at the base of every organization, for where there is a necessary relation of the whole to the part and of the part to the whole, there is *concept*.  

Here we see many of the same ideas articulated in Hegel’s early texts: in organic nature, parts bear a unique relationship to the whole, such that the parts cannot be thought of as contingent with respect to the whole, but follow from it necessarily (and the whole, too, follows from the existence and relations of the parts). Here, too, Schelling suggests that there is an identity of the objective being of the organic product of nature and a concept, and that this is true precisely because of the unique ‘organization’ of organic nature. Moreover, Schelling tells us that,  

Every organization is therefore a *whole*; its *unity lies in itself*; it does not depend on our choice whether we think of it as one or as many [...] Here it no longer avails us to separate concept and object, form and matter, as it pleases us. For *here*, at least, both are originally and necessarily united, not in our idea, but in the *object* itself.  

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This is clearly, if not explicitly, directed at Kant’s argument in the *Critique of Judgment*, and we can see in Hegel’s remark that the “human perspective is not supposed to affirm anything concerning the reality of nature” an echo of this Schellingian criticism: insofar as Kant treats the specifically organized ‘wholeness’ (which is, we are to understand, the direct result of the existence of and relation among the parts, themselves dependent on the ‘whole’) of a product of organic nature—an organism, a living thing—as something we can only subjectively suppose to be the case, rather than as a real feature of the organism itself, he mistakes the very nature of the organic.

But, we should ask, is this a fair and productive criticism of Kant’s theoretical grasp of organic nature, or is it an example of what many take to be the over-zealous attachment, among German Idealists, to the idea of the intuitive intellect? Why is it that Kant restricts our knowledge of organic nature’s part-whole organization, and is this possibly an appropriate restriction? And, furthermore: what, exactly, is at stake here? For Hegel, at least in the *Difference* essay and in *Faith and Knowledge*, this is the central point of concern with Kant, for it is in Kant’s dealing with organic nature that he finally approaches the ‘Idea of Reason,’ the ‘identity of being and concept,’ the ‘Subject-Object.’ Finally: if Kant’s restriction of our judgments or cognitions of organic nature is not just an aberrant feature of the critical philosophy, but a necessary conclusion of it, and if Hegel and Schelling are right about what distinguishes organic nature from other possible objects of experience, is an adequate account of the products of organic nature, as really organized beings, possible? What would such an account need to look like?

In some prominent cases⁹ Hegel’s critical stance towards Kant—especially as concerns his

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theoretical philosophy—is traced through these early texts, and especially *Faith and Knowledge*, where Hegel addresses Kant’s philosophy directly. Such accounts of Hegel’s critique of Kant often, as a result, focus on the possibility (or actuality) of an intuitive intellect (in both of the senses distinguished by Eckart Förster
sup 10 and how this might undermine Kant’s characterization of human cognition as, in Hegel’s terms, ‘finite.’ In what follows, though, I will take a different path, focusing on how the mature Hegel of the *Science of Logic* takes up this problem identified by Schelling and the young Hegel at the turn of the 19th Century, arguing that we need a ‘Subjective Logic,’ in the sense in which Hegel uses the term, in order to properly account for the possible reality of life. Accordingly, I will first examine Kant’s account of organic nature in the *Critique of Judgment* in order to determine exactly why (and in what sense) Kant restricts our possible cognition of organic nature, and what the difficulty with his position is. I will then turn to Hegel’s *Science of Logic* to trace the development of his account of self-determining individuality, the concept required to make sense of his account, towards the very end of the *Logic*, of life as the “immediate Idea.”

This will allow us, I argue, to determine what is required for an account of organic nature, or of living things, and why this requires something like Hegel’s idealism.

A Synopsis of the Argument


SL 761/GW 12: 179.
For Kant, reality—the reality with which we are daily acquainted—is essentially \textit{objective}, which means, among other things, that it consists, fundamentally, of \textit{objects}. The first half, roughly, of the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason} demonstrates that there are a finite number of \textit{a priori} principles that govern what it is to be an object in space and time, which laws thereby govern the form of all possible objects of experience, or all possible appearances in nature.\footnote{Kant, accordingly, calls these principles “universal laws of nature”; see \textit{PFM} 4: 319-20.} Thus, while I might have private visions or feelings or dreams that appear to have an unnatural order to them, no experience of objective reality may possibly violate them. For example, we can know, according to Kant, \textit{a priori} and for all possible experiences, that “all alterations occur in accordance with the law of the connection of cause and effect.”\footnote{\textit{CPR} B232.} In other words, if something, \( x \), is a real thing, or is an object in the technical sense, then any change that actually takes place in it \textit{must} be the result of some prior cause that it follows necessarily or according to a rule.

While these principles govern all of nature, they can be known \textit{a priori} (and hence they can be known to govern nature necessarily) because they have their origin in human subjectivity; the ‘transcendental’ idealism with which Kant’s name is synonymous hangs on the claim that these universal laws govern the form of nature because an experience of nature is, \textit{for us}, possible \textit{only} in virtue of these principles, since these principles represent the \textit{formal}, \textit{subjective} conditions under which alone we can experience the world as objective—not, that is, as mere sensation, but as corresponding to something distinct from my perception. The number of transcendental principles, and the reality they describe, is therefore determined by the nature of human
subjectivity. Kant’s analysis of human subjectivity, and particularly his distinction between the two components essential to empirical cognition—the faculties of intuition and understanding—therefore plays a critical role in shaping transcendental idealism.

The distinction between the faculties of intuition and understanding rests on a more fundamental distinction between elements of conscious experience: our faculty of intuition is responsible for our direct and passive acquaintance with objects (which, in humans, takes the form of sensibility) while our faculty of understanding is responsible for combining the qualitative, intuited particulars according to universals or concepts. As each faculty has an a priori as well as a posteriori use, we can describe a kind of cognition using the resources of each faculty, that is itself entirely a priori (in addition to the more familiar empirical cognition—that in virtue of which I experience my world as filled with tables and chairs and trees etc.), and it is the a priori use of these faculties that gives us the aforementioned transcendental principles. Importantly, though Kant’s argument works by claiming that we experience the world as constituted by particular sensory impressions brought together or ‘synthesized’ according to universal rules in virtue of our having the kind of cognitive faculties we do—namely an understanding that thinks objects in virtue of sensibly (that is, passively) intuited particulars—we might rather characterize the argument as flowing in the opposite direction: that Kant has read back into the structure of human subjectivity a division that seems apparent in experience, between sensed particulars and universal organizing rules.

If Kant is right, and the possibility of having representations that refer to objects hangs on these transcendental, a priori principles, then we can make the following observation: that in virtue of which something \( x \) is an object is true of \( x \) quite independently of any empirical, given particularities we may come to discover in \( x \). In other words, the a posteriori particular
determinacy of this object—that which makes it a stone or the sun or a speck of dust—has nothing to do with that in virtue of which it is an object at all. This is the consequence of the universality of the transcendental principles: if they formally determine all objects, they cannot determine anything particular about any given object. We can see this in the Introduction to the B Edition of the Transcendental Deduction, where Kant writes,

The manifold of representations can be given in an intuition that is merely sensible, i.e., nothing but receptivity, and the form of this intuition can lie a priori in our faculty of representation without being anything other than the way in which the subject is affected. Yet the combination (conjunctio) of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses, and therefore cannot already be contained in the pure form of sensible intuition; for it is an act of the spontaneity of the power of representation, and, since one must call the latter understanding, in distinction from sensibility, all combination, whether we are conscious of it or not, whether it is a combination of the manifold of intuition or of several concepts, and in the first case either of sensible or non-sensible intuition, is an act of the understanding, which we would designate with the general title synthesis in order at the same time to draw attention to the fact that we can represent nothing as combined in the object without having previously combined it ourselves, and that among all representations combination is the only one that is not given through objects but can be executed only by the subject itself, since it is an act of its self-activity.\(^\text{14}\)

The crucial point to draw from this argument is that there is nothing in what is intuited qua particular (nothing in what Kant calls the ‘matter’ of the intuition, as opposed to the ‘form’ of space and time) that can make the subject’s act of synthesis, of bringing intuited particulars together in an object, impossible, since we intuit nothing as already combined; every act of combination, everything that is represented as combined—including objects themselves—is in this the product of

\(^{14}\text{CPR B129-30.}\)
our spontaneous activity. (Nor, then, is there anything in that intuited matter that licenses or ‘makes possible’ such combination.) The nature of ‘objecthood’ is determined by the transcendental principles, and only through them can intuited sense data be represented as combined in one representation. These principles therefore hold independently of what sense data have been actually intuited at any time, since they give the rules for all possible combination, or for the combination of intuited particulars as such. Accordingly, Kant is able to articulate a transcendental logic:

In the expectation, therefore, that there can perhaps be concepts that may be related to objects a priori, not as pure or sensible intuitions but rather merely as acts of pure thinking, that are thus concepts but of neither empirical nor aesthetic origin, we provisionally formulate the idea of a science of pure understanding and of the pure cognition of reason, by means of which we think objects completely a priori. Such a science, which would determine the origin, the domain, and the objective validity of such cognitions, would have to be called transcendental logic, since it has to do merely with the laws of the understanding and reason, but solely insofar as they are related to objects a priori and not, as in the case of general logic, to empirical as well as pure cognitions of reason without distinction.15

Such a logic therefore articulates what can be claimed of objects in general, since it determines the validity of cognitions as they relate to objects a priori, or universally (simply in virtue of their being objects at all). In articulating a logic of this kind, we are articulating the necessary way in which the understanding thinks objects through these a priori concepts, or a conception of objects in general. Accordingly, we can (departing a bit from Kant’s own idiom) talk of the logic of an object in general as the “rules of the pure thinking of an object,” which rules determine how we must think

15 CPR B81-82.
of objects, generally, and therefore determine what an object is.

Now, this model of cognition works extremely well when it comes to the vast bulk of experiences. In most experiences, the particular sensed qualities of an object and the formal principles according to which it is an object at all have nothing to do with each other, except formally—that is, except for the way in which the sensed qualities are particular rather than themselves universal (that I sense *this* red and not redness in general). There is one type of existing thing, however, that cannot be accounted for by a purely *transcendental* logic, and one that Kant focuses on in the *Critique of Judgment*: living things, which Kant classifies as ‘natural ends.’

Natural ends are distinguished from typical Kantian objects by the fact that they are *purposive*: they exhibit an internal organization that requires a unique kind of causal explanation, one rooted in a representation or concept of the thing itself, rather than a merely mechanistic causal account. All artifacts we create are purposive, in that their internal structure exhibits a design according to purpose: the gears in my watch exist in the watch, and have the shape that they do, *for the sake of* the functioning of the watch, and the parts of the watch (and the watch itself) can have this ‘for the sake of which’ structure in virtue of the representation in the mind of the watchmaker that led to their creation. Thus any purposive object, any end, “seems to presuppose a representation of that same thing.”

But not all purposive objects create such a difficulty for Kant, since not all purposive objects are *naturally* purposive. A natural end must not have been designed by some other intelligence external to it, since, *ex hypothesi*, it is natural. A natural end must therefore be self-determining, and therefore must be organized—and, therefore, combined *as one thing*—according to and in virtue of itself. That combination that makes a natural end one thing, then, cannot

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16 *Naturzwecke*

17 *CPJ* First Introduction, 20: 216.
obviously just be the work of our understanding’s own spontaneous, synthetic activity. The difficulty for Kant, then, is to explain how we could ever come to have an experience of a living thing as naturally purposive, or self-organizing and self-determining.

As I argue in Chapter 1, however, the solution Kant proposes in the Critique of Teleological Judgment has two significant shortcomings. First, Kant can account for a possible experience of natural ends only insofar as we treat them as if they were designed by some posited intelligent ground of nature—in other words, we must treat organisms as if they are the product of divine creation. Though Kant merely requires that we judge living organisms as if they were the product of intelligent design—this is a subjective requirement determining how we judge them, not an objective determination of the things themselves, and therefore it does not require that we take such an intelligent ground of nature to exist—this nevertheless means that there is no room, in Kant’s notion of experience, for a genuinely natural form of purposive organization; there can be no experience of a living thing as self-determining. Second, as a result, Kant must conclude (though he does not do so explicitly in the Critique of Judgment) that we could never have occasion to even judge something as if caused by some intelligent creator, for there can be no objective feature of things that would require us to judge them in this way. It thus could not possibly be the case that, as Kant tells us, the consequence of such a causation attributed to intelligent design (namely, the designed product) “is still given in nature.”

Although this seems, on first blush, to be a fairly narrow issue, concerning a transcendental idealist account of living things, there is a broader problem that is here being manifest. While Kant’s argument deals with the possible causal origin of such a naturally organized being, the

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18 *CPJ* 5: 405.
difficulty he faces comes from the fact that the very idea of a transcendental logic—one that determines what it is to be an object in such a way that abstracts from anything that would need to be attributed to the thing itself—is at odds with the idea Kant introduces (and to which he is attached) of a natural being that is self-determining. Objects, in the sense of a Kantian ‘object of a possible experience,’ are appearances of things determined with respect to their form\textsuperscript{19} according to constraints derived from the subjective ground of cognition. This distinction between what is attributable to the subject (form) and what is merely given to the subject (matter) is built into Kant’s account of reality, of what is, empirically speaking, and this distinction cannot account for the possibility of a self-determining natural being.

This conclusion of the Kantian problem leads to two possible questions:

1) How could a logic of such self-determining beings—a logic of life—be possible? That is, granting Kant’s premise that the concept of life as self-organizing, or Naturzweck, could not simply be an empirical concept, how could we have an \textit{a priori} account of the logical structure of self-determination, if this account must not be restricted to what can be ‘ascribed to the subject’, and therefore cannot, by definition, be part of a ‘transcendental logic’?

2) Assuming that such a ‘logic of life’ is possible, what then is it? How do we describe the \textit{a priori} logical structure in virtue of which living things are distinct from non-living objects? What are the rules for thinking of something as self-determining (as opposed to thinking of it as a substance bearing properties, or as a cause that has an effect, for e.g.)?

The first of these two questions is, in effect, answered in the course of Hegel’s \textit{Phenomenology}

\textsuperscript{19} See Kant’s distinction between the ‘form’ and ‘matter’ of experience in the Transcendental Aesthetic at \textit{CPR} B34.
of Spirit. If, as I argue, the distinctive feature of a ‘logic of life’ is that it must be able to accommodate a logical form that is not exogenous to the organized being—a logical form that is not simply attributable to a judging subject—then we are asking after a logical account of life that does not, as Hegel puts it, remain “confined within consciousness and its opposition”; what we are after is a logical account of this peculiar kind of reality that need not rest on an abstraction from what can be ‘ascribed to the object,’ but rather one that can be taken to describe the immanent (and yet still in some sense a priori) logic of the thing itself, since the logic of life must describe the logical structure life ‘gives itself’ insofar as life is self-determining. The possibility of such an account is developed over the course of the Phenomenology, and that theoretical stance from which we could develop and understand such an account is that of ‘Absolute Knowing.’ Consider Hegel’s characterization of the result of the Phenomenology in his Preface:

The disparity which exists in consciousness between the ‘I’ and the substance which is its object is the distinction between them, the negative in general. This can be regarded as the defect of both, though it is their soul, or that which moves them. [...] Now, although this negative appears at first as a disparity between the ‘I’ and its object, it is just as much the disparity of the substance with itself. Thus what seems to happen outside of it, to be an activity directed against it, is really its own doing, and Substance shows itself to be essentially Subject. When it has shown this completely, Spirit has made its existence identical with its essence; it has itself for its object just as it is, and the abstract element of immediacy, and of the separation of knowing and truth, is overcome. Being is then absolutely mediated; it is a substantial content which is just as immediately the property of the ‘I’, it is self-like or the Notion.

With this, the Phenomenology of Spirit is concluded. What Spirit prepares for itself in it, is the element of [true] knowing. In this element the moments of Spirit now spread themselves out in that form of simplicity which knows its object as its own self. They no longer fall apart into the

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20 SL 62/GW 21: 47.
antithesis of being and knowing, but remain in the simple oneness of knowing; they are the True in the form of the True, and their difference is only the difference of content. Their movement, which organizes itself in this element into a whole, is *Logic* or *speculative philosophy*.\(^{21}\)

Hegel’s claim here is that the *Phenomenology* will demonstrate that the difference that obtains, in consciousness, between the I and its object—the very difference presupposed by Kant’s definition of transcendental logic\(^{22}\)—is, in truth, a difference or ‘negativity’ that we can recognize as falling within substance, the object, itself, as part of *its own* logical structure.\(^{23}\) This means that “what seems to happen outside of it,” namely, what Kant takes to be the spontaneous, synthetic “activity directed against it” accomplished by a distinct\(^{24}\) subject, “is really its own doing”. We should read this, I claim, as a vague outline of the kind of logical account that would be required to make sense of life *qua* self-determining. And it is with this result, Hegel tells us that “the Phenomenology of Spirit is concluded.” The forms that the object takes for Spirit in its various manifestations throughout the *Phenomenology* “no longer fall apart into the antithesis of being and knowing”; in

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\(^{21}\) *PS* 21-22.

\(^{22}\) This difference is ‘presupposed’ by Kant not in the sense that he assumes, without arguing, that there is some such difference for consciousness (a claim neither Hegel nor I would dispute), but rather that Kant characterizes transcendental logic in the terms of that difference, though those terms have not themselves been examined or accounted for. They form the starting point for a consideration of transcendental logic.

\(^{23}\) This point is emphasized by Slavoj Žižek: “The question here is whether the transcendental horizon is the ultimate horizon of our thinking. If we reject (as we should) any naturalist or other return to naive realism, then there are only two ways to get over (or behind/beneath) the transcendental dimension. The first form of this third attitude of thought towards objectivity is an immediate or intuitive knowing which posits a direct access to the Absolute beyond (or beneath) all discursive knowledge—Fichte’s I-I, Schelling’s Identity of Subject and Object, but also direct mystical intuition of God. The second form, of course, is Hegel’s dialectics, which does exactly the opposite with regard to intuitive knowing: instead of asserting a direct intuitive access to the Absolute, it transposes into the Thing (the Absolute) itself the gap that separates our subjectivity from it.” (Žižek, *Absolute Recoil: Towards a new foundation of dialectical materialism*. London: Verso, 2014, p. 16).

\(^{24}\) Again, this is the presupposed difference with which Hegel is concerned.
this result, then, we have the terrain for “Logic or speculative philosophy.”

Compare this to Hegel’s claims, in the *Science of Logic*, regarding the relationship between this science and the arguments of the *Phenomenology*:

The Notion of pure science and its deduction is therefore presupposed in the present work in so far as the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is nothing other than the deduction of it...Thus pure science presupposes liberation from the opposition of consciousness. It contains *thought in so far as this is just as much the object in its own self, or the object in its own self in so far as it is equally pure thought*.

What the *Science of Logic* presupposes, then, and what I too presuppose in what will follow, is that it is possible to develop an account of the logical structure of life without understanding that account in terms of the opposition of consciousness and its object, the terms in which transcendental logic are framed (since there can be, as Kant demonstrates, no transcendental logic of life). My aim here is not to defend these claims (that would require a study of an altogether different type, one dealing with the *Phenomenology*); I am rather presupposing that Hegel has satisfactorily answered the first question listed above, as to the possibility of a science of logic that could in principle describe the logic of life’s self-determination; what I will attempt here is an answer to the second.

There are, of course, many contemporary readers of Hegel who read his ‘speculative’ or ‘absolute’ idealism as an essentially Kantian position; insofar as this reading is right, the possibility

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of a genuine logic of life stands in jeopardy.\footnote{Perhaps the most contentious issue in recent Hegel scholarship concerns Hegel’s relationship with Kant’s repudiation of ‘classical’ metaphysics or the metaphysics of the modern philosophers such as Descartes, Leibniz, and Spinoza. Consequently, many scholars have identified with either the ‘metaphysical’ or the ‘anti-metaphysical’ (or ‘Kantian,’ or, perhaps even less helpful, ‘epistemological’) reading of Hegel’s mature philosophy. While Robert Pippin’s Hegel’s Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, is the most well known example of the non-metaphysical view, Klaus Hartmann’s “Hegel: A Non-Metaphysical View,” in Alasdair MacIntyre ed., Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays. Garden City: Anchor Books, 1972, pp. 101-24, is often credited with inaugurating this tradition. Perhaps the most extreme example of the ‘metaphysical’ reading of Hegel’s philosophy comes from Charles Taylor, Hegel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975. For a recent account of the development of these two readings, and their impact on current Hegel scholarship, see James Kreines, “Hegel’s Metaphysics: Changing the Debate,” in Philosophy Compass, 1: 5 (2006), pp. 466-480.}

Robert Pippin, to pick a well-known instance, in Hegel’s Idealism, insists that Hegel’s Logic remains, basically, a ‘Kantian project,’ “that a Notional ‘foundation’ (Grundlage) of actuality refers to the conceptual conditions required for there to be possibly determinate objects of cognition in the first place, prior to empirical specification...”\footnote{Pippin, Hegel’s Idealism, p. 176. This, of course, characterizes Hegel’s position throughout the Logic in the terms of the Doctrine of Essence, namely by appealing to a conceptual ‘foundation,’ which might make sense when thinking of Hegel’s project in a Kantian light, but fails to capture the properly Hegelian character of the Logic precisely insofar as it excludes the conclusion of the argument, namely, the subjective logic and the Absolute Idea. For a succinct account of why we should not think of Hegel’s concept in these ‘foundational’ terms—terms which belong to the logic of Essence—see Stephen Houlgate, “Why Hegel’s Concept is Not the Essence of Things,” in Cardozo Public Law, Policy & Ethics Journal, Volume 3, Issue 1, pp. 31-43.} He then further cements the idea that Hegel’s Logic is a ‘Kantian project’ by citing Hegel’s claim, in the Introduction, that “what has here been called objective logic would correspond in part to what with [Kant] is transcendental logic.”\footnote{SL 62/ GW 21: 47.}

There are, however, two key caveats Hegel makes that should lead us to question just how suited the Logic is to be a ‘Kantian project,’ one that stays within the bounds of Kantian transcendental philosophy. First, we are told that insofar as the objective logic corresponds to Kant’s transcendental logic, it does so ‘in part,’ or in a qualified sense (in what sense, we will see below). Second, this accounts for the objective logic, but says nothing of the subjective logic which
makes up the *Logic’s* final third (and conclusion—that is, it’s not a third easily divorced from what precedes it). Thus, if nothing else, we would be forced to conclude that Hegel’s *Science of Logic* demonstrates (or takes itself to demonstrate) the insufficiency of something like transcendental logic. But Hegel qualifies even this statement. He writes,

[Kant] distinguishes [transcendental logic] from what he calls general logic in this way, (α) that it treats of the notions which refer *a priori* to objects, and consequently does not abstract from the whole *content* of objective cognition, or in other words, it contains the rules of the pure thinking of an *object*, and (β) at the same time it treats of the origin of our cognition so far as this cognition cannot be ascribed to the objects. It is to this second aspect that Kant’s philosophical interest is exclusively directed. His chief thought is to vindicate the *categories* for self-consciousness as the *subjective ego*. By virtue of this determination the point of view remains confined within consciousness and its opposition; and besides the empirical element of feeling and intuition it has something else left over which is not posited and determined by thinking self-consciousness, a *thing-in-itself*, something alien and external to thought—although it is easy to perceive that such an abstraction as the thing-in-itself is itself only a product of thought, and of merely abstractive thought at that.\(^{29}\)

Thus, again, Hegel directs us to recall that this science operates on the presupposition that we are no longer thinking in the terms consciousness sets for itself, namely, of the opposition of consciousness and its object. Kant “remains confined within” this opposition, and it is in virtue of this that his transcendental logic is distinct from (and, to Hegel’s mind, must be replaced with) the pure science of logic. What Hegel pursues in the *Logic* (and, by extension, what we are interested in) is not a set of *a priori* rules in virtue of which cognition of an object is first possible, where we direct our attention to the ‘I’ as the ground of those rules, apart from the thing that is to be

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\(^{29}\) *SL*. 62/ *GW* 21: 47.
cognized, but rather a pure logic of thought itself, a logic that might describe, for instance, the difference between the I and its object presupposed by Kant’s ‘transcendental’ study.\(^3^0\)

The core of the problem facing Kant is that we need, first, an account of a whole, where the whole and its constitutive parts stand in a reciprocal causal relationship, both in terms of the form of the whole and of the parts, and in terms of the existence of the whole and of the parts. But, second, the whole must be determined as a whole by itself; the precise combination of the parts into the whole they comprise cannot be attributed to some outside intellect. Which means, at the same time, that the determination and differentiation of the parts, if they are (as part of the reciprocal relationship identified) determined by the whole, as per the first requirement, must also depend only on the whole itself, and not on some foreign intelligence. But what, precisely, would it mean to say that the organism qua whole ‘determines itself’ in this manner? Kant gives us an account, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, of what it would mean to attribute such a determination to a subject—this is the work of the Transcendental Analytic. If, however, we are leaving behind the terms in which alone such an argument made sense (the terms of transcendental logic), how should we understand this language of something ‘determining itself’?

In order to answer this question, I trace the notion of self-determining individuality as it develops, through the *Science of Logic*, by examining three crucial stages of the *Logic*: the notion of the infinite of the Doctrine of Being, the notion of reflection from the Doctrine of Essence, and the notion of the individual from the Doctrine of the Concept.

In Chapter 2, I present Hegel’s argument that all finite determinate being must be

\(^{30}\) As Hegel says, “The disparity which exists in consciousness between the ‘I’ and the substance which is its object is the distinction between them, the *negative* in general. This can be regarded as the *defect* of both, though it is their soul, or that which moves them” (*PS* 21). The *Logic* is the science that investigates that very negativity.
understood as a moment of an infinite context. What Hegel’s account of the infinite offers us is the initial, primitive account of something’s consisting in being the identity of itself and some term to which it is opposed—an account of ‘mediated identity,’ or of what it would mean for something to be other than what it ‘immediately’ is. The notion of organic self-determination at which we are aiming will require the distinction, within the organism, of determinately differentiated parts, distinct both from each other and from the whole (and distinct enough that we can understand them to stand in something akin to a causal relation with each other and the whole). This notion of the mediated identity of the infinite provides the most basic account of the possibility of a distinction obtaining within something, an account of the possibility of being constituted by something that is not immediately identical with what is constituted. This account will offer two immediate rewards: first, we can make sense of Hegel’s oft-cited (though controversial) remarks regarding the ‘idealism of the finite,’ and of the sense in which the Logic articulates an idealist position; second, we can see how the logic of the infinite offers the first step to developing a purely logical account of a ‘self’ or subject, which account will be required to make sense of what it means for the category of life to fall under the ‘Subjective’ logic.

In Chapter 3, I examine Hegel’s analysis of the logic of reflection, as it passes through three forms: positing, external, and determining reflection. This extends the work of the previous chapter by showing how the passage, in Hegel’s logic, from thinking about being to thinking about essence problematizes two elements of the infinite: first, that the infinite is a negative self-relation, and second, that the infinite seems to presuppose the finite elements that constitute it, despite the fact that those finite elements are not themselves self-sufficient. I will argue that these two problems are, in fact, two sides of the same logical coin. By thinking through the logic of reflection, the logical relationship that defines the notion of ‘essence,’ as a negative self-relation, we can see what it
means to attribute the determination between a thing and its constitutive moments to the thing itself. In articulating why reflection must be ‘determining,’ the logical culmination of such a negative self-relation, Hegel develops the logic of a thing where the distinction between the constitutive yet opposed terms (those that formed the ‘mediated identity’ of the infinite) is derived from their identity, and where that identity is itself only possible in virtue of the determinate opposition of the constitutive terms. It is, in other words, an account of the reciprocal determination of the identity of the whole and the difference of the constitutive moments (or logical ‘parts’). This will allow us to make sense of Hegel’s remarks in the Science of Logic about Kant’s notion of reflecting judgment (that form of judgment responsible from which we can determine the transcendental principle of the purposiveness of nature, and which deals with our experience of natural ends), and we can see what is at stake in moving from a transcendental (and hence subjectively ideal) logic of objects to a speculative logic of self-determination.

In Chapter 4, I consider how Hegel develops the notion of the individual out of the logic of the Concept (that part of the Science of Logic that outstrips the terrain of ‘transcendental’ logic). In the previous two chapters, I will have developed an account of what it means to think of the difference between the moments of a thing and the thing itself as determined by that thing, or a primitive account of self-determination. What is missing, though, in this account is the sense in which the whole of this logical structure determines itself as a whole; without this, however, we are lacking a sufficient account of selfhood such that we can talk about self-determination. We need a sense of a whole such that, as Schelling says of life, “its unity lies within itself and does not depend on our volition, on whether we think of it as one or many.”31 This is what Hegel develops under

the name of the ‘individual,’ the decisive moment of the Concept. An ‘individual’ in Hegel’s technical sense is just such a unity whose unity is articulated in its own terms, or as dependent on its own logical structure. Collectively, then, these three logical shapes—the infinite, reflection, and the individuality of the Concept—determine the logic of self-determination.

In Chapter 5, I use this logic of self-determining individuality to explain how Hegel’s account of the logic of life is able to meet the initial requirements we developed when considering Kant’s account—what I called R1 and R2. But, I argue, Hegel’s account of life as this individual demonstrates that life can only truly be self-determining in the sense specified by R1 and R2 (that is, it can only be objectively self-determining) insofar as it is a subject engaged with a world opposed to it. For this reason, an adequate logic of life requires a logical account of subjectivity itself—one developed through Chapters 2-4, and which characterizes all of the logical shapes that comprise the ‘Subjective Logic’ of the Concept—which, of course, transcendental logic cannot afford, but which it presupposes.

In this way, my hope is to offer a study of a particular issue that recurs throughout the works of the German Idealists, but in particular Kant and Hegel, so that at least one specific aspect of Hegel’s critical reception of Kant can be understood in concrete terms. Beyond those specific terms, however, I aim to show how this local issue of a ‘logic of life’ opens up onto some of the more general points of contention: the relation between concept and intuition and the possibility of an intuitive understanding; the ‘finitude’ of human cognition; the ‘identity of subject and object’ so frequently spoken of. My claim, then, is that by thinking about how Kant and Hegel handle the idea of organic life as the idea of a self-determining individual, we can develop the resources to productively think about the relationship between transcendental and speculative idealism more generally, precisely because the idea of self-determining individuality puts pressure (by Kant’s own
admission) on the foundation on which transcendental idealism is erected; insofar as such a task is worthwhile, though, it is not simply because it lends some insight into thinking about the relationship between Kant and Hegel, but because it develops their insights regarding what must be true for life to be a distinct kind of reality.
Chapter 1

Kant’s Conception of Life and the Limits of a Discursive Intellect

1.1 The Life of Transcendental Philosophy

In making our beginning, we should first ask: why is life, or natural teleology (what amounts, for Kant, to the same thing), important to Kant? Why should teleological judgment about nature warrant such extensive critique as is given in the Critique of the Power of Judgment? Or, finally: why is life not simply treated as one of a vast array of empirical concepts, one that can be investigated by the natural sciences, but one that has no transcendental relevance? What is special about the nature of living systems or organisms that makes them uniquely fitted for transcendental examination?

To Kant’s mind, living beings belong to a special class of objects that seem to be purposive, meaning that they seem to exhibit a teleological structure. When describing an animal’s anatomy, when explaining why it has the organs it does, we seem to need to appeal to that which the organs are for: the eyes are good for seeing the surrounding area, the heart good for pumping oxygen-carrying blood through the body, etc. Moreover, what the organs seem to be good for is the organism as a whole. The purposiveness of a living creature thus differs from the sense in which we might say that the meat of an animal is good for us; it is, in Kant’s terminology, internally rather
than externally or relatively purposive. What unifies all purposive objects is that the existence of each “seems to presuppose a representation of that same thing”. We might say, provisionally, then, that purposive objects are constituted not accidentally, as mere aggregates or heaps, but rather as if by design, as if according to a plan, where each part of the whole plays some role related to the existence of the whole.

The notion of purposiveness occupies two significant places in Kant’s critical thought: first, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, as something that reason must assume of nature as a whole, and second, in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, where Kant deals specifically with the notion of a natural end, a self-organizing and self-causing being (in effect, an organism). These two treatments of purposiveness are noteworthy for their introduction of a remarkable element in the Kantian apparatus: a (theoretical) transcendental principle that is merely subjectively valid or, as Kant calls it, one that is merely regulative. That is, though we are seemingly required in both cases to judge something—either Nature as a whole or a particular natural object—as purposive, we cannot take that purposiveness to be an objective determination of the object in question; we are constrained to treat it as if it is so. And yet, for all this, we should not think of purposiveness as an illusion, a mistake that we make when regarding certain kinds of objects. Living things, then, place a special demand on us as cognitive agents: something about their structure means that beyond the transcendental principles detailed in the Analytic of Pure Reason, there is a further transcendental principle governing our judgment of them, though one that determines merely our judging (rather than the object itself). In order to see why life holds a special position in transcendental philosophy, why it is not merely an empirical determination, we therefore need to see why Kant

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33 *CPJ* First Introduction, 20: 216.
thinks that we must consider life to be purposive.

In doing so, however, I will argue that Kant’s treatment of the purposiveness of living things, of what he calls ‘natural ends’, is vexed with two particular difficulties: first, we can only judge objects to be natural ends insofar as we, paradoxically, take them to be organized as if by some intelligent creator (meaning that we can judge them to be natural ends by judging them, on the contrary, to be analogous to artifacts or machines, that is, products of design) while simultaneously regarding them not as machines or artifacts, but as products of nature; second, that it appears impossible that any object could ever occasion a natural teleological judgment—that is, it seems impossible that we should ever come to judge something to be a natural end. Furthermore, and more significantly, by investigating Kant’s account of life in the context of his account of the relation, in experience, between universal concepts and intuited particulars, these two difficulties can be shown to stem from a common problem: that there appear to be special classes of objects that must be understood as themselves determining the relationship between universal and particular, a thought that is at odds with the concept of a discursive intellect. Thus while the difficulties regarding Kant’s account of life seem to be local difficulties that might be quarantined, as it were, in Kant’s musings on the philosophy of biology, they are in truth connected to one of the deepest commitments held by Kant in his critical period.

To that end, I begin, in section 1.2, by tracing the problem of teleological judgment back to two important sections of the Critique of Pure Reason: the Transcendental Deduction and the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic. In section 1.3, I demonstrate the connection between the problem of empirical chaos (following Henry Allison’s coinage of the term) as raised in the Appendix to the Dialectic and the problem of the purposiveness of nature as pursued by Kant in the Critique of the Power of Judgment. In section 1.4, I connect the issue of the purposiveness of
nature in general to Kant’s treatment of the purposiveness of specific products of nature, namely, organisms. Finally, in section 1.5, I argue that though Kant is bound to treat the self-organization of living things as, rather, an organization designed by some intelligent creator—for this is the only way a discursive intellect can regard life—for the same reason that the purposiveness of nature itself was at issue in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and that an account of organisms as *in fact* both natural and organized is incompatible with Kant’s commitment to our having discursive intellects.

1.2 Two Kinds of Chaos

We first see the seeds of what will eventually become the problem of the purposiveness of organisms, as taken up in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic of Kant’s first *Critique*.\(^{34}\) Though the focus of §1.4 will be living things, which are to be regarded as purposive objects, the issue of purposiveness gets first raised in relation to nature as a whole, for Kant has not yet introduced the concept of an object that is itself purposive. Nature, as the totality of possible objects of experience, is determined in two senses: first, it is determined by what Kant calls the ‘universal laws of nature,’ the transcendental principles derived from the pure concepts of the understanding; second, it is determined by the particular ‘material’ intuited by sensibility. In thinking about the determinate character of nature as a whole, then, we are afforded the opportunity to think about the relationship between these two sources of determination. But thinking in this way leads to a particular worry:

If among the appearances offering themselves to us there were such a great variety—I will not say of form...but of content, I.e., regarding the manifoldness of existing beings—that even the most acute human understanding, through comparison of one with another, could not detect the least similarity (a case which can at least be thought), then the logical law of genera would not obtain at all, no concept of a genus, nor any other universal concept, indeed no understanding at all would obtain, since it is the understanding that has to do with such concepts.  

There are three points to draw out of this passage that will be critical for understanding just how severe this problem is for Kant, and why it might warrant addressing again in a separate Critique. First, Kant claims that it is possible to think that in the appearances given to us, in the empirical matter of experience, there could be such diversity that it would be impossible to identify any similarities between given objects. In other words, for Kant, nothing in the preceding Analytic has guaranteed anything like an empirical regularity in that which is given over to us in experience. Second, Kant claims that in such a case, the understanding would not obtain, since it would be impossible to form any empirical concepts, and the understanding deals with concepts, rather than particulars. What, we might ask, does Kant mean in saying that the understanding would not “obtain”? Since the understanding is the faculty for the thinking of concepts, if no empirical concepts could be formed, the understanding would not be able to offer anything to the subject in light of the given manifold beyond its purely formal, a priori categories. 

35 CPR B681-2.

36 See Horstmann, 1989, p. 63: “Given the results of the Analytic of the Critique of Pure Reason, we must take for granted that everything in nature and nature itself (understood as the sum total of all possible objects of experience) are governed by certain highly general nonempirical laws that are the joint product of the conditions of our sensibility and those concepts without which we could not even have the idea of an object. [...] These principles, however, do not account for the contingent or empirical fact that nature consists of very many individual objects that, though necessarily determined by those principles—otherwise they would not be objects for us—behave in their special ways, have their special similarities, act and react according to rules that seem to depend on the special contingent characteristics of these objects, and so forth.”
understanding would, in this scenario, be nothing more than the faculty that generates transcendental principles. We would be literally unable to understand the world around us. This means that not only has the Analytic not guaranteed any empirical regularity—the arguments of the Analytic develop necessary, not sufficient, conditions for such regularity—it has not even guaranteed the functioning of the understanding. The third point is more subtle, and is a corollary of the first: whether or not we form empirical concepts, whether or not we group objects together in classes, has to do as much with the nature of those objects themselves as it does with our understanding. That is, it isn’t simply a fact about human cognitive behaviour that we make empirical concepts; it is, for Kant, at least equally a fact about empirical objects, that they lend themselves to such classification. In order for us to form such concepts, in order for the understanding to function properly, appearances must bear some affinity to our cognitive interests.

It is not obvious, though, why this is a problem by the end of the Dialectic. In fact, the concern Kant raises here sounds remarkably similar to one he raises just before providing the deduction of the categories in the Transcendental Analytic. There, Kant supposes, appearances could after all be so constituted that the understanding would not find them in accord with the conditions of its unity, and everything would then lie in such confusion that, e.g., in the succession of appearances nothing would offer itself that would furnish a rule of synthesis and thus correspond to the concept of cause and effect, so that this concept would therefore be entirely empty, nugatory, and without significance.\(^{37}\)

\(^{37}\) *CPR* B123.
Henry Allison, though, marks an important difference between these two concerns. The concern Kant raises at B123 is, according to Allison, a concern over ‘transcendental chaos,’ a concern that at the transcendental level experience would not conform to universal law. The significance of the Transcendental Deduction, however, is that appearances couldn’t be so constituted as to resist a causal structure as such (or so as to make it impossible to identify any event as a cause), for example, since the category ‘cause’ is wholly indifferent to the given content of appearances; anything that can show up as an appearance can be a cause. What this result doesn’t preclude, Allison points out, is that appearances could still be so constituted, in their given nature (or materially), so as to preclude, for example, any empirical, law-like regularity among causes. While event X cannot possibly resist being a cause as such, it does not follow that there are X-type events that have Y-type effects. This second concern is not of ‘transcendental chaos’


39 Allison actually notes a difference between this passage from the Analytic and the statement of the problem of purposiveness from the CPR; seeing as I take the problem as stated in the CPR to be the same as the problem Kant raises in the Appendix to the Dialectic, I take Allison’s point to work equally well here.

40 Whether one could talk coherently of empirical ‘laws’ that applied exclusively to unique events—whether, that is, empirical laws require multiple instantiations in nature—we must acknowledge that the concern here is that nature is underdetermined by the transcendental laws, such that, simply on the ground of the transcendental laws, it remains possible that there are no empirical, law-like regularities among events. For a similar account of this problem, see Kenneth Westphal, “Kant, Hegel, and the Fate of ‘the’ Intuitive Intellect,” in The Reception of Kant’s Critical Philosophy: Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, ed. Sally Sedgwick. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 283-305.

but ‘empirical chaos,’ and it remains a live possibility at the end of the Transcendental Analytic.

Before considering what it is that is pressing about the problem of ‘empirical chaos,’ I want to make a few remarks about just why it is that the putative concern over ‘transcendental chaos’ isn’t actually a meaningful concern. The relevant passage to consider here is §15 of the B Deduction, wherein Kant discusses the notion of ‘combination’:

The manifold of representations can be given in an intuition that is merely sensible, i.e., nothing but receptivity... Yet the combination of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses, and therefore cannot already be contained in the pure form of sensible intuition; for it is an act of the spontaneity of the power of representation, and, since one must call the latter understanding, in distinction from sensibility, all combination, whether we are conscious of it or not, whether it is a combination of the manifold of intuition or of several concepts, and in the first case either of sensible or non-sensible intuition, is an action of the understanding, which we would designate with the general title synthesis in order at the same time to draw attention to the fact that we can represent nothing as combined in the object without having previously combined it in ourselves, and that among all representations combinations is the only one that is not given through objects but can be executed only by the subject itself, since it is an act of its self-activity.42

The essential idea here is that all combination in a representation—even the combination of the manifold as given in intuition—is possible only through the spontaneous ‘self-activity’ of synthesis. We are never simply given a manifold as a manifold of intuited particulars; rather, we must already synthesize the manifold in order to represent it to ourselves as combined, as a manifold. Things


42 CPR B129-130—emphasis mine.
are thus only combined, as Kant says, insofar as we have combined them. All combination *must* therefore be compatible with the forms of our cognition, since it is only in and through those forms that any combination can arise at all. That is, the concern over ‘transcendental chaos’ is addressed directly by the argument of the Transcendental Deduction, since, as Kant argues there, nothing in the intuited manifold, or the ‘succession of appearances,’ could ground the rule-bound synthesis the understanding *spontaneously* accomplishes—there is no order or combination immanent to the intuited manifold *qua* intuited that could possibly violate the combination according to the categories.33 The ‘worry’ over transcendental chaos is a worry that appearances might not have it *in themselves, qua* intuited, to support a synthesis according to the concept, for e.g., of ‘cause’, but this is a worry only if we are confused about what grounds this possible synthesis. Part of Kant’s point in the Deduction is that nothing in the appearances *qua* intuited can or need ground this synthesis. Thus, while we cannot see from §15 that the categories are objectively valid and thus can provide principles that necessarily govern our experience of the world, we can see that appearances could not possibly resist synthesis through the categories on the basis of intuited particulars. In other words, this could never be a question of the affinity of intuited particulars to the categories, since no such affinity is either possible or required.44

The reason that this argument doesn’t address the concern of ‘empirical chaos’ is because it solves the transcendental worry by claiming that in determining the form of an object, the

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44 Allison (*Kant’s Transcendental Deduction*) claims that the elimination of the ‘specter’ of transcendental chaos is the aim of the Transcendental Deduction (pp. 8-9). My reading rejects this claim, since, as I have argued, Kant’s claim that all combination is the result of a spontaneous act of the understanding already rules out such a ‘specter’. On my reading, then, the issue is not whether appearances might not bear sufficient affinity to the conditions of the unity of the understanding, but rather whether those conditions can sufficiently determine our experience of objects.
categories (or, strictly speaking, the understanding in its pure deployment) do not determine, nor are they determined by, the intuited particulars. Precisely because no affinity in appearances, \textit{qua} intuited, is needed for the legislation of the understanding, that legislation does not determine anything in those appearances \textit{qua} intuited, that is, \textit{qua} particular. As Kant expresses it in the \textit{CPJ}, this means that the intuited particular “contains something contingent with regard to the universal”—with regard, that is, to the categories. Thus because the transcendental principles, or what Kant elsewhere calls \textit{a priori} laws of nature, determine the nature of appearances independently of any empirical particular determination (in contrast to what Kant calls ‘particular laws’), it remains undetermined whether nature will have within it sufficient empirical regularity such that we can form empirical concepts, and thus have an experience we can understand.

1.3 Empirical Chaos and the notion of Purposiveness

How does this possibility of ‘empirical chaos’ relate to the question of purposiveness handled by the \textit{CPJ}? In order to see this connection, we need to consider the role Kant sees

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{CPJ} 5: 404.
\item \textit{CPR} B163-6.
\item See also \textit{CPJ} 5: 197, where Kant writes that “there is such a manifold of forms in nature, as it were so many modifications of the universal transcendental concepts of nature that are left undetermined by those laws that the pure understanding gives \textit{a priori}, since these pertain only to the possibility of a nature (as objects of the senses) in general...”; see, also, 5: 183 for Kant’s discussion of the indeterminacy of empirical particulars with respect to the universal law of causation, which Kant calls merely “that formal time-condition.”
\item \textit{CPR} B165.
\end{itemize}
judgment playing in our cognition (according to the CPJ).\textsuperscript{49} Judgment, Kant tells us, is the faculty for “thinking the particular as contained under the universal”\textsuperscript{50}, as opposed to the faculty for deriving particulars from universals, which is a task reserved for the faculty of reason. Judgment can do this in two ways: as either determining or reflecting.\textsuperscript{51} Given that judgment always thinks the particulars as contained under universals, and does not deduce the particulars from the universals (this is the role assigned to reason in the CPJ—see 20: 201), then judgment will always deal with given particulars. The difference between the two kinds of judgment, then, hangs on whether the universal is also given. In cases where both universal and particular are given, the power of judgment simply subsumes the particular under the universal, and is called determining judgment. If the universal is not given, however, then the power of judgment reflects on the particulars to find the universal, and is therefore reflecting judgment\textsuperscript{52}. And the universals that are given in this sense (that is, given to judgment) are the universal laws of nature, the transcendental principles that determine what it is to be an object of possible experience; thus Kant writes, “the law is sketched

\textsuperscript{49} It is worth noting here that the role Kant assigns to judgment—along with the understanding and reason—in the CPJ differs from what Kant says in the CPR (see, for example, B 141-2). I will not address the question of how these different accounts of our cognitive faculties relate here—that requires a separate investigation—nor do I think it particularly bears on the point I aim to make here. What is relevant to my purposes is the relation Kant sees—whether he attributes it to judgment or something else—between intuited particulars and the concepts of the understanding. Since, in the CPJ, he does attribute the subsumption of particulars under concepts to the faculty of judgment, I will adopt this designation in what follows.

\textsuperscript{50} CPJ 3: 179; see also CPJ 20: 201, where Kant characterizes the faculty of judgment as “the faculty for the subsumption of the particular under the general,” which is thereby distinguished from the faculty of the understanding, which is simply “the faculty for the cognition of the general”.

\textsuperscript{51} It has been argued by some commentators that Kant’s notion of ‘reflecting judgment’ replaces what he calls, in the Critique of Pure Reason, the ‘hypothetical use’ of reason. Given that both reflecting judgment and the hypothetical use of reason relate given particulars to hypothetical or problematic universals, and that both are used, in the respective texts in which they appear (the first and third Critiques), to address the problem of empirical regularity, I am broadly in agreement. For a summary of the issues surrounding the relation between these two faculties, see Suma Rajiva, “Is Hypothetical Reason a Precursor to Reflective Judgment?” in Kant-Studien; Philosophische Zeitschrift; 2006; 97, 1.

\textsuperscript{52} CPJ 3: 179.
out for it _a priori_, and it is therefore unnecessary for it to think of a law for itself....”\(^{53}\) It is only when judgment thinks given particulars under those universal, _a priori_ laws that it is determining judgment.

When judgment is reflecting, however, it takes given particulars and searches for a universal under which those particulars can be contained. Empirical concepts are therefore the result of this work of reflecting judgment, since in the case of empirical concepts, the universal (concept) must be arrived at on the basis of the given particulars. However we understand empirical concept acquisition, what distinguishes empirical (_a posteriori_) concepts from _a priori_ concepts is that we do not possess the former in advance of our encounter with things in the world. But whereas determining judgment is always necessarily successful in thinking given particulars under the given universal (since the relevant universals just determine what it is to be an object of experience), it is not necessarily the case that there is a universal under which any set of given particulars can be thought.\(^{54}\) _This_ is the relevant contingency of particulars with respect to the transcendental principles mentioned above, and it is the wellspring for the worry about empirical chaos. For there is nothing to guarantee that given particulars _will_ come in kinds.\(^{55}\) Thus in some subjective sense, we _need_ nature to be empirically regular, because of the nature of our cognitive faculties (specifically, because of our discursive understanding, which thinks via universals in accordance with _given_ particulars).

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\(^{53}\) _CPJ_ 5: 179.

\(^{54}\) This only holds true, of course, so long as we rule out (or take Kant to have ruled out) disjunctive universals like ‘red-or-brown’, but such a reading seems required by charity, for otherwise, among other difficulties, the entire project of the _CPJ_, and the idea of a principle of purposiveness, is difficult to motivate.

\(^{55}\) See Allison, _Essays on Kant_, p. 183: “The basic point is that the transcendental laws laid down in the Analytic of the first _Critique_ do not themselves guarantee the existence of a cognizable order at the empirical level.”
The possibility of forming empirical concepts, and thereby of meaningful experience, thus depends on a nature so constituted as to admit of empirical generalizations. As Kant explains in the first Introduction, reflecting judgment “could not undertake to classify the whole of nature according to its empirical differences if it did not presuppose that nature itself specifies its transcendental laws in accordance with some sort of principle,” which principle “can be none other than that of the suitability for the capacity of the power of judgment itself for finding in the immeasurable multiplicity of things in accordance with possible empirical laws sufficient kinship among them to enable them to be brought under empirical concepts...” ⁵⁶ Reflecting judgment must assume that nature specifies its universal laws (for e.g., every event has a cause) in such a way as to bear some affinity to our cognitive capacities (or, more specifically, to reflecting judgment’s own search for universals). This idea, that nature should specify itself in line with our cognitive needs (namely, that it should admit of a hierarchy of empirical concepts, or what is the same thing, that it should be uniform rather than a chaotic aggregate), just is the idea of a purposiveness of nature.⁵⁷ This conception of nature’s purposiveness makes sense of the way in which Kant defines purposiveness, namely as “that the existence of which seems to presuppose a representation of that same thing”.⁵⁸ Nature would be purposive in this sense because it would exist in such a fashion that its constituent parts—empirical natural objects and events—would be determined so as to be organizeable into classes and laws, which themselves would exist in a hierarchy suitable for reflecting judgment; in other words, it would exist in accordance with a representation of what is required by our cognitive faculties.

⁵⁶ *CPJ* 20: 215.
⁵⁷ *CPJ* 20: 216.
⁵⁸ *CPJ* 20: 216.
Of course, for obvious reasons, Kant cannot take the faculty of judgment, in recognizing this requirement, to dictate to nature how it should be materially (that is, empirically, in virtue of the intuited particulars) constituted—for this would be the very antithesis of ‘empirical realism,’ which Kant’s doctrine is at least meant to advance. Nature is not the kind of thing over which we can hold sway in this respect. Fortunately, though, Kant does not think that we need to dictate these terms unto nature, but only that we should be rationally constrained to treat nature as if it is purposive in this way. Thus, although the need for nature’s purposiveness has a transcendental dimension—and thus requires a transcendental principle—this principle need not determine nature objectively; it will suffice to determine us as thinking subjects, to determine how we approach nature in experience. This is because we need to maintain the contingency of the particular in nature, and to dictate this purposiveness to nature, to take it to determine nature objectively, would be to undermine that contingency. Thus although nature must be conceived of as at least possibly chaotic, we are, by the nature of our cognitive faculties, bound to treat it as if it is not, for only in this way can we cognize the natural world. 

Before going further, I want to address a potential ambiguity in the text. The reading I have offered thus far might be termed a ‘strong’ reading of the problem of empirical diversity, since I am claiming that what is at stake here is, like in the version of the problem encountered in the CPR, the possibility of empirical concepts and of experience as such. This reading is not, however, uncontroversial. Paul Guyer, for example, has argued that the idea of such a purposive, empirical regularity in nature (what Guyer calls ‘systematicity’),

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59 See CPR 5: 184: “Consequently, since the lawful unity in a combination that we cognize as in accordance with a necessary aim (a need) of the understanding but yet at the same time as contingent in itself...”

is not an idea which we must use to link individual perceptions into a single experience; it is only the idea of a further layer of organization which we hope to find among the empirical concepts which we do use to secure such a connected consciousness. Consequently, the principle of systematicity cannot be regarded as a constitutive principle, without which any experience would be impossible, but can only be regarded as a principle which motivates the search for system among the concepts of experience.\footnote{Guyer, \textit{Kant and the Claims of Taste}, p. 48.}

Guyer here plays down the significance of the idea of an empirical regularity of nature, contrasting this principle with the constitutive principles of the understanding described in the Analytic of the \textit{CPR}. But in doing so, Guyer draws a false equivalence between constitutive principles, on the one hand, and transcendental principles, namely those “without which any experience would be impossible,” on the other—one that is incompatible with the text. For in the published Introduction, by way of explaining why the principle of purposiveness is transcendental, Kant writes, “A transcendental principle is one through which the universal \textit{a priori} condition under which alone things can become objects of our cognition at all is represented”.\footnote{CPJ 5: 181.} If a transcendental principle is that through which we can represent those \textit{a priori} conditions “under which \textit{alone} things can become objects of our cognition,” or possible objects of experience, and if, as Kant assures us\footnote{The title of section V, in the Introduction, is the rather unambiguous “The principle of the formal purposiveness of nature is a transcendental principle of the power of judgment.” (CPJ 5: 181)}, this description must apply to the principle of purposiveness, it cannot therefore differentiate regulative (and transcendental) principles from constitutive ones. Given that this is a
very special case (i.e., having a transcendental, yet regulative, principle), this is an understandable confusion, but making it means severely undervaluing the principle of purposiveness, downgrading it from a necessary condition for the possibility of experience to a mere heuristic, or a guide for an idealized form of scientific inquiry.

Fortunately, too, the reflecting use of judgment is perfectly suited to this need. For judgment, Kant tells us, “which with regard to things under possible (still to be discovered) empirical laws is merely reflecting, must think of nature with regard to the latter in accordance with a principle of purposiveness for our faculty of cognition...”64 Thus the reflecting use of judgment, which is necessary for our possible cognitions of objects, can only operate so long as we suppose nature to be purposive, which supposition is just the supposition necessary for reflecting judgment that it will be able to find some universal under which it can think some set of given particular objects.

Now, it seems as if there is a gulf between what is required for cognition—the purposive organization of nature—and what is granted by the transcendental principle—a maxim or supposition that we adopt in our approach to nature. That is, it seems as if what we must expect of nature could—given the contingency of empirical particulars—fail to obtain in nature itself, and thus that we have not properly exorcised the demon of empirical chaos. Moreover, Kant seems to suggest as much, writing that

we are also delighted (strictly speaking, relieved of a need) when we encounter such a systematic unity among merely empirical laws, just as if it were a happy accident which happened to favor our aim, even though we necessarily had to assume that there is such a unity, yet without having

64 CPJ 5: 184.
been able to gain insight into it and to prove it.  

There are, it seems, two possible responses to this concern. First, though it might, philosophically speaking, be a bitter pill to swallow, nature might just be such that we cannot determine or prove it to be regular in the way we would need. It might be that expecting that we should be able to rule out the possibility of empirical chaos is expecting too much. Sticking with a merely regulative principle of purposiveness (one that determines how I approach the object, rather than the object itself) would be an expression of philosophical modesty.

Second, though, we should recall that nature as such is never itself an object of possible experience, insofar as it is regarded as the totality of such objects. Thus even if nature were actually organized purposively, we could never cognize it as such, since we could only ever approach a complete cognition of nature asymptotically. The purposiveness of nature would therefore need to be realized only as a maxim we adopt, then, since it could not be known objectively. That is, even if nature were purposively organized, we could still only treat it as if it were so, since, insofar as we have discursive intellects as described by Kant, the full cognition of nature qua organized would need to remain problematic for us, and so would still fall in the jurisdiction of reflecting judgment.

1.4 From Purposiveness to Life

When it comes, however, to Kant’s discussion in the *CPJ* of natural ends—objects of

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65 *CPJ* 5: 184; my emphasis. Note the inverted use of ‘as if’ here, which suggests that, by Kant’s light, it is more than a happy accident, that it is in fact a necessary agreement.
experience that display *internal* purposiveness, or living organisms—the stakes are, it seems, higher. As I intend to show, the issues facing the idea of objective purposiveness (that is, facing our conception of nature as a whole) are the same when it comes to natural ends. On this count, however, neither response outlined above—that nature might just be this way, and that we can’t cognize nature as an object anyway—can be appealed to here, since natural ends are by definition particular, purposive objects found in experience.\(^{66}\) Shifting from nature to natural ends thus seems to require that we treat purposiveness as something that is at least in principle not just objectively realizable, but as something that can constitute the nature of an object (though not, admittedly, of all objects). Or, to put it differently: with nature as a whole, the supposedly purposive object can never show up in experience, and so questions of the purposiveness of nature become questions about our *idea* of nature, and thus of our rational demands. With natural ends, however, these purposive objects do, presumably, show up in experience, and so it seems reasonable to ask whether their purposiveness is objectively real or merely a mental heuristic (or something else entirely).

We must first be clear on what, exactly, Kant means by ‘natural end’, since Kant’s phrasing here is both precise and relevant to the issue at hand.\(^ {67}\) According to Kant, a natural end is both a natural object—to be distinguished from a mere artifact—and conceivable only as an end, meaning that “the causality of its origin must be sought not in the mechanism of nature, but in a cause whose productive capacity is determined by concepts”.\(^ {68}\) The first point to make is that this

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\(^{66}\) See, for example, *CPJ* 5: 399, 5: 405.


\(^{68}\) *CPJ* 5: 369-70
definition of end—something the cause of which is determined by concepts—does not, as one might think, necessarily violate the principle of causality laid out in the Second Analogy.\textsuperscript{69} It is not, then, to be conceived of exclusively as a kind of causation that works backwards through time, as it is sometimes thought of; it is merely invoking a causality guided by representation or conception.

In light of this, it is helpful to return to Kant’s definition, in the unpublished Introduction, of a purposive object (and already we may start to see parallels to the characterization of nature as purposive): “that the existence of which seems to presuppose a representation of that same thing”.\textsuperscript{70} In order to qualify as a natural end, then, an object must, at minimum, only be possible if it appears to be grounded by a representation of the very same object. I say ‘at minimum’ because, of course, all artifacts qualify as ends in this sense. Kant uses the example of a watch to point out the differences between natural ends and artificial ends; a watch is possible only because its origin is determined by a representation of it. The reason a watch-maker can make a watch, and I cannot, is because I don’t have a sufficiently precise conception of what a watch is, according to which I might try to make one, and the watch-maker does. This, however, marks the end of the similarities between natural ends and artificial ends. In this sense, Kant’s argument here inverts William Paley’s watchmaker analogy that is used to support claims of intelligent design.\textsuperscript{71} A defining characteristic of natural ends (or living organisms) is precisely the way in which they do not appear to be created by something or someone else, the way in which they aren’t simply machines; on the

\textsuperscript{69} Allison, Essays on Kant, makes this point quite forcefully (pp. 203-4).

\textsuperscript{70} CPJ 20: 216. Kant’s characterization in terms of that which ‘seems’ to presuppose a representation is unclear—what would it mean for it to merely ‘seem’ to presuppose a representation in this fashion? I address this issue below, in terms of Kant’s discussion of §77; suffice to say, here, that it is a merely subjective requirement for us that we regard purposive natural objects as if their existence presupposed such a representation.

\textsuperscript{71} See specifically CPJ 5: 374 for Kant’s explanation of the dis-analogy between watches and organisms.
contrary, Kant claims that “a thing exists as a natural end if it is cause and effect of itself.”

In the case of natural ends, though, it is unclear how to reconcile their naturalness, on the one hand, with their purposiveness, on the other, so long as their purposiveness is understood as ‘caused in a manner determined by a concept or representation of themselves’. These two requirements, then—that natural ends must have their origin in a cause determined by a concept or representation of themselves and they must be cause and effect of themselves—need, therefore, to be further specified. Kant specifies the first (end) requirement in the following way: for something to be a natural end, “it is requisite, first, that its parts (as far as their existence and their form are concerned) are possible only through their relation to the whole.” This clarifies the earlier formulation, because what it means for something to have its origin be determined by a concept of that thing is just that its parts are determined a priori as being parts of the thing as a whole. By contrast, a rock may come to be part of a pile, but if it does so, it will be a part only accidentally. A part of a natural end must necessarily be a part of that end, and its existence must only be able to be explained in virtue of that end. In this sense, a human heart exists only as a part of a body; human hearts aren’t first found and only later attached as an accidental part to an independently functioning body. The second requirement, that a natural end cause itself, is then specified as follows: the parts of a natural end must be related to the whole “by being reciprocally the cause and effect of their form”. This is clearly the case with a living organism: the form of the whole

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72 CPJ 5: 370-1.

73 CPJ 5: 373.

74 CPJ 5: 373.

75 Evan Thompson, in Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007, has argued that something like this self-producing and self-organizing principle (what Thompson, following Francisco Varela, calls ‘autopoiesis’) is the defining feature of life.
human being is produced by the constituent parts (organs), which are themselves produced by the healthy body in an ongoing reciprocal fashion (so long as the human remains alive). To return to the heart mentioned above: the functioning human heart contributes to the ongoing existence of the human as a whole (and is in this sense a partial cause of its existence), but the heart is also kept functioning and in existence by the body, for without a living human body to house the heart, it would not continue to exist as a heart (either functionally or materially) for long.

We can therefore formulate the two requirements, according to Kant, for something to be naturally purposive:

R1: Parts must be, with respect to both form and existence, possible only through their relation to the whole.

R2: Parts and whole are reciprocally cause and effect of each other with respect to form, in virtue of which the parts are combined as that whole.

In light of these requirements, Kant characterizes natural ends as both organized and self-organizing. Like a machine (the watch, for example), the parts of a natural end are all themselves necessary and related to the form of the whole, and in virtue of this they constitute an end; but unlike a machine, the whole and parts reciprocally generate themselves, and in virtue of this the end is natural, and has no external creator.

According to Kant, though, despite the fact that this seems like quite a good

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76 For a detailed account of the significance of Kant’s notion of self-organization to contemporary philosophy of biology, and especially to the concept of ‘autopoiesis,’ see also Weber and Varela, “Life After Kant: Natural purposes and the autopoietic foundations of biological individuality,” in Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences 1: 97–125, 2002.

77 Indeed, on this formulation we are required to conceive of natural ends precisely as having no external creator.
characterization of living organisms, and that his notion of natural ends does not appear to violate the law of causality that numbers among the universal laws of nature, there is a problem in conceiving objects of experience as natural ends. This problem, or, more accurately, apparent problem, is addressed in the well-known Antinomy of Teleological Judgment. Now, the meaning and significance of Kant’s argument in the Antinomy is not immediately clear, and there is a wide range of views on just what Kant is trying to do here. My aim is not, strictly speaking, to weigh in on the debate regarding just what Kant thinks the problem of the Antinomy to be, or how he intends to resolve it. My aim here is simply to point out the similarities between the issue of empirical chaos, as discussed above, and the antinomy of judging natural ends, similarities that cut to the heart of Kant’s transcendental apparatus.

Kant’s presentation of the antinomy is as follows: In our investigations into nature, we tend to operate according to two different maxims, depending on what we are investigating. The first maxim tells us that the generation of all material things must be judged to be possible according to mechanical laws. The second maxim tells us that some products of nature (organisms, or natural ends) cannot be judged to have been generated mechanistically (though he does not here explain why), and therefore that in these cases, “judging them requires an entirely different law of causality.

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78 For example: Tuschling, “The System of Transcendental Idealism: Questions raised and left open in the Kritik der Urteilskraft,” in The Southern Journal of Philosophy (1991), vol XXX, thinks this is the introduction of a post-critical, more speculative idealism, characterized by the positive introduction of intellectual intuition (which he takes to be invoked by the principle of purposiveness); Horstmann, “The Problem of Purposiveness and the Objective Validity of Judgments in Kant’s Theoretical Philosophy,” 6 Wash. U. Jur. Rev. 081 (2013), thinks that the description of organisms as purposive is incompatible with the law of causality, and thus with the categorical determination of objects, and so must be attributed to a subjective, rather than objective, transcendental principle; Allison (Essays on Kant) thinks that we merely need a heuristic to make sense of biological science.
namely that of final causes.” In doing so, however, we often make the mistake of treating these *maxims for our judgment* as themselves telling us something real about the objects being judged. We thus tend to falsely confuse the former maxims for the following principles: first, that all generation of material things is only *possible* by way of mechanical laws, and second, that the generation of some material things is *not possible* just in terms of mechanical laws. These latter principles are also obviously contradictory—a given material object is either possible, according to mechanical laws, or it isn’t. The relevant difference, for Kant, is that in the latter set of principles, we are making a claim about the possibility of the existence of the objects themselves, while in the former set of maxims, we are making a claim about how we must approach them, epistemologically speaking. Thus, he writes,

> All appearance of an antinomy between the maxims of that kind of explanation which is genuinely physical (mechanical) and that which is teleological (technical) therefore rests on confusing a fundamental principle of the reflecting with that of the determining power of judgment, and on confusing the *autonomy* of the former (which is valid merely subjectively for the use of our reason in regard to the particular laws of experience) with the *heteronomy* of the latter, which has to conform to the laws given by the understanding (whether general or particular).  

However we read Kant’s argument, here, we must acknowledge that the attempted resolution of the antinomy is to point out that teleological judging—the judging of a thing to be purposive—is the work of *reflecting*, not determining judgment. The antinomy seems persuasive in the beginning.

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79 *CPJ* 5: 387.

80 *CPJ* 5: 389

81 What the precise nature of the antinomy is, and where we are meant to locate the relevant contradiction, remains an open and hotly debated question in Kant scholarship. While the most obvious reading—that it is the constitutive
because we notice a class of natural objects, organisms, that seems to have their origin in a causality that is not strictly mechanical, as is the case with most physical objects, but in a causality that is

principles, not the subjective maxims for reflecting judgment, that are contradictory, and that we can resolve the antinomy simply by recognizing that we are only entitled to the subjective maxims—seems to rest on fairly solid textual support (as in the passage quoted above), it faces considerable opposition. Eric Watkins ("The Antinomy of Teleological Judgment," in Kant Yearbook, 2009 (01), ed. Dietmar H. Heidemann. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co.) and Peter McLaughlin (Kant’s Critique of Teleology in Biological Explanation, Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990.) argue that, instead, the contradiction is between the maxims of reflecting judgment. Although this reading appears to be refuted directly by the text—“By contrast, the maxims of a reflecting power of judgment that were initially expounded do not in fact contain any contradiction” (5: 387)—this sentence in the German text clearly only makes reference to a single maxim (“Was dagegen die zuerst vorgetragene Maxime einer reflektierenden Urteilskraft betrifft, so enthält sie in der Tat gar keinen Widerspruch”), and thus cannot establish the claim that there is no contradiction between the two maxims.

Moreover, if the antinomy could be simply resolved by pointing out that there is no contradiction between the maxims of reflecting judgment, and that these are all we are entitled to (and hence there is no contradiction threatening us), it should seem strange that Kant explains this in the section he calls “Preparation for the resolution of the above antinomy.” Thus, as Watkins and McLaughlin argue, there must be a contradiction, and hence an antinomy, that arises between the two maxims themselves. This contradiction is, then, that we cannot be required to judge the generation of natural things both as mechanically explicable and as not mechanically explicable.

Indeed, if these were the two maxims, it seems that there would be a contradiction between them: insofar as I am required to judge something as explicable on mechanical grounds, I cannot also be required to judge it as inexplicable on mechanical grounds. Insofar, then, as both maxims present subjective requirements I must meet—insofar as they tell me that I ought to judge the generation of things in mutually exclusive fashions at once—there is a contradiction. But Kant’s text does not obviously support such a reading; while the first maxim does in fact tell me how I must judge the generation of all things (“Alle Erzeugung materieller Dinge und ihrer Formen mößt als nach bloß mechanischen Gesetzen möglich beurteilt werden” (5: 387, my emphasis)), the second maxim tells me that in certain cases, this general requirement notwithstanding, I cannot judge the generation of natural things as mechanically explicable (“Einige Produkte der materiellen Natur können nicht als nach bloß mechanischen Gesetzen möglich beurteilt werden...” (5: 387—my emphasis)). If this is the case, though, there is no contradiction between the two maxims, since they do not prescribe incompatible ways in which I ought to judge the products of nature. While it is true that I am required, subjectively, to always judge the products of nature as if they are possible according to mechanical laws (I am governed by this norm), in some cases I will be unable to do so (as a matter of fact), and so the judging of these objects will require (as a matter of fact) appeal to a distinct law of causality (i.e., not a mechanical law). Watkins (2009, p. 203) conflates the issue by interpreting the first maxim as a claim “that mechanical laws all by themselves can be used to judge” the generation of natural things; the first maxim is not a guarantee on what mechanical explanations can do (this is instead claimed by the corresponding constitutive principle), but rather a claim that we must always appeal to them.

This interpretation of the two maxims of reflecting judgment also coheres with the argument Kant goes on to give. First, he explains, claiming that I am subjectively bound to judge things in a certain fashion (I must judge them as mechanically explicable), I am not thereby saying that they are only possible mechanically (for this would be to make a constitutive principle out of a merely subjective maxim), but only that this is how I must approach nature. “Now,” Kant writes, “this is not an obstacle to the second maxim... For reflection in accordance with the first maxim is not thereby suspended, rather one is required to pursue it as far as one can... It is only asserted that human reason, in the pursuit of this reflection and in this manner, can never discover the least basis for what is specific in a natural end...” (CPJ 5: 387-8). While it remains unclear how, exactly, we should interpret the controversial claim that there is no contradiction contained in the first maxim (the claim Watkins and McLaughlin cite), in face of the foregoing considerations, I do not take it to be sufficient to undermine this reading of Kant’s argument.
determined by concepts. We avoid this antinomy, then, by recognizing that in judging organisms in this way—that is, teleologically—we are not determining them objectively, but are merely regulating our judgment according to an idea of purposiveness; we are constrained to judge them as if they were caused not mechanically, but by “an (intelligent) world-cause acting in accordance with ends, no matter how rash and indemonstrable that would be for the determining power of judgment”.

Now, this invocation—however qualified—of an intelligent world-cause seems out of step with the point Kant stressed earlier, in the Analytic of Teleological Judgment, that organisms must be conceived of as “possible only as a natural end and without the causality of the concepts of a rational being outside of it”. Recall that this is precisely what distinguishes natural ends from artificial ends, or machines. To be clear, Kant is not positing the existence of such an intelligent cause; teleological judgment remains the work of reflecting judgment, and so we are concerned only with how we are constrained, subjectively, to judge the existing organism. This is the strength of the ‘as if’. Nevertheless, it should seem curious that we must treat organisms as if they were so created, given that Kant’s point in the Analytic of Teleological Judgment was that we must judge the whole and parts of the organism to be reciprocally cause and effect of each other. So we should ask: what motivates this shift in thinking?

In order to answer this question, we need to clarify why the judging of some object to be a natural end must be the work of reflecting, not determining judgment. Kant’s initial explanation turns on the fact that we cannot demonstrate the objective validity of the concept of a natural end. He writes:

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82 \textit{CPJ} 5: 389.

83 \textit{CPJ} 5: 373.
But in order to use [the concept of natural ends] dogmatically for the determining power of judgment, we would first have to be assured of the objective reality of this concept, for otherwise we would not be able to subsume any natural thing under it. The concept of a thing as a natural end, however, is certainly an empirically conditioned concept, i.e., one that is possible only under certain conditions given in experience, but it is still not a concept that can be abstracted from experience, but one that is possible only in accordance with a principle of reason in the judging of the object.\textsuperscript{81}

There are two important points to draw from Kant’s argument here. First, the judging of an object as a natural end requires a principle of reason. This is, first of all, a slightly curious claim, since the principle of purposiveness, we have been repeatedly told, is a principle of reflecting judgment. We should here remember, though, that in the first Critique, Kant dealt with the problem of empirical chaos by invoking a regulative principle that originates in reason, and that is based on the idea of God as an intelligent world-cause—and it is to the idea of such an intelligent cause that the principle of purposiveness appeals. It is helpful to recall, too, the twin roles of reason and reflecting judgment. Reason is the faculty for determining particulars through general ideas or concepts, whereas reflecting judgment is the faculty for subsuming particulars under a general concept or idea that remains hypothetical. In the case of empirical concepts, reflecting judgment searches for a universal that would subsume the given particulars, though without thereby determining them. In the case of natural ends, however, reflecting judgment is what judges various particulars to have been determined by some problematic (as opposed to given) universal, namely, the idea of the organism.

\textsuperscript{81} CPIJ 3: 396.
The second important point is harder to make sense of. Kant tells us that the concept of a natural end is “empirically conditioned,” and that this means that it “is possible only under certain conditions given in experience,” and that “it is still not a concept that can be abstracted from experience.” While this might seem an odd thing to say (especially the latter claim about abstracting from experience), Kant is exactly right here. His argument in this passage works by distinguishing the concept of a natural end, which might seem to determine empirical objects, and thereby have objective validity, from the categories, which assuredly do. Recall that the categories determine objects of experience not in virtue of some empirical conditions, but quite independently of anything that could be given in a manifold of intuition. This is the point Kant rhetorically set up by introducing the ‘problem’ of transcendental chaos. Unlike the categories, the concept of a natural end does apply only in certain empirically conditioned cases, which is just to say that neither rocks nor tables nor a steak dinner count as natural ends. Unlike the concept ‘cause’ or ‘substance,’ the concept ‘natural end’ does not further determine what it is to be an object. This is the sense in which the concept of a natural end is empirically conditioned. When he writes, then, that the concept of natural ends “cannot be abstracted from experience,” the most charitable reading of this is to say that the concept of a natural end cannot be the result of the pure deployment of the understanding. That is, we can abstract the concept of natural ends from the experience of a living organism, but the concept itself cannot be separated from its empirical conditions.

So how does this lead to the invocation of an intelligent world-cause? The judging of some object as a natural end requires of us that we recognize a conceptual combination of particulars in the object, but not the kind of combination for which we, as subjects, are responsible. For recall Kant’s remarks, discussed above, regarding the representation of a manifold as combined. For
Kant, “all combination...is an action of the understanding,” which means that “among all representations combination is the only one that is not given through objects but can be executed only by the subject itself, since it is an act of its self-activity.” The representation of something as combined—which is necessary for all empirical representations, since we must combine the manifold given in intuition—is the result of an action of the subject’s understanding. For most objects, to represent them as combined in this way is just to represent them as objects, since the categories offer the rules according to which the manifold of intuition can be objectively combined. For this reason, as was noted above, the particulars of an object—that which makes an object the particular object it is—are underdetermined by the universal concept under which they are thought; the particular will always be a further contingent determination over the understanding’s definition of an object as such.

This account of cognition, on which all particular determinations of an object are necessarily contingent with respect to the universal under which they are thought fails, however, to do justice to the notion of the organism; or, at least, according to Kant, it is on its own insufficient. For in the case of an organism, qua natural end, we must, as Kant has already told us, conceive of it as that which is self-causing in virtue of the reciprocal causal relation between parts and whole, and that the parts of the organism are only possible through their relation to that whole. This means that the parts must, in some capacity, be conceived of as necessary, though only with respect to the existence of the whole. For a natural end, the organization of its parts into the form of the whole is not an additional, accidental feature of those parts, since those parts are possible only through that organization. Thus, for the whole to consist of just those parts is likewise not some

85 *CPR* B130.
accidental feature of the whole; the whole and the parts necessarily imply each other. To cognize such a thing, then, would require that we were able to grasp a certain combination of parts into a whole that is not the result of our synthetic activity, that is, not the result of our subsuming given, contingently determined particulars under a universal concept. This would require, Kant says, an understanding which, since it is not discursive like ours but is intuitive, goes from the synthetically universal (of the intuition of a whole as such) to the particular, i.e., from the whole to the parts, in which, therefore, and in whose representation of the whole, there is no contingency in the combination of the parts...\(^{86}\)

That is, to grasp a whole as the determining ground of the parts (even if reciprocally caused by those parts) would require a cognition that could grasp a combination of particulars for which (that is, the combination) it was not responsible—a combination that is independent of the subject’s synthesizing activities. This, though, is exactly what we don’t have, according to Kant.

How, then, does Kant think we are to make sense of such self-organizing beings? If we are to think of natural ends as, in some sense, wholes that ground the possibility of the parts,

this cannot come about by the whole being the ground of the possibility of the connection of the parts (which would be a contradiction in the discursive kind of cognition), but only by the representation of a whole containing the ground of the possibility of its form and of the connection of parts that belongs to that.\(^{87}\)

This would be just to represent the organism as grounded in a causality determined by concepts

\(^{86}\) *CPJ* 5: 407; my emphasis.

\(^{87}\) *CPJ* 5: 407-8.
(since the organism would be possible only in accordance with a representation of the whole),
which, on Kant’s definition, would be to represent the organism as purposive, or as an end. There
are two crucial ideas to draw from this point. First, that we must consider organisms (self-organizing
natural beings) as ends or as purposive is the result of our having a discursive rather than intuitive
intellect; for if we had an intuitive intellect, we would not need to make reference to a causality
determined by concepts, and hence to ends at all—we could simply intuit the whole as determining
the parts. This is why teleological judgment is the activity of reflecting judgment, and why we
cannot determine organisms as objectively purposive, but must merely regard them as if they are
so. In other words, the notion of an end, of a causality determined by concepts, is here used as a
substitute, a proxy, for the notion of a self-organizing being.

The second point, though, is that in order to represent a whole whose possibility is not
simply grounded in the existence of its parts (as is typical for a discursive understanding), we need
to conceive of it as grounded in a representation of the whole. The reason this is more appropriate
for discursive intellects, or why it is possible at all, is that it grounds the possibility of the organism
on a combination of parts that is itself a representation or concept—and this is perfectly acceptable
for a discursive understanding. That is, a representation of a whole is a combination of particulars
that can be the product of a synthetic activity in the subject. The problem regarding the cognition
of wholes was simply that we cannot passively intuit wholes qua combinations of parts, but we
certainly can actively represent them as such (indeed, this is what cognition amounts to). Thus the
closest we can come to cognizing a whole that determines the possibility of its parts is to think of it
as caused or itself determined by a representation (a product of a synthesizing subject) of that
whole.  

And notice, finally, that this is just what an artifact is, namely, something whose possibility is grounded in a representation of the whole (which was why a watchmaker can make a watch, but I cannot). Thus to understand the relationship that holds between whole and parts in an organism, we (in virtue of our discursive intellects) must regard the organism as an end in the way that an artifact is an end. That is, we must appeal to a representation as ground. And since the existence of an organism is not the result of our having had a representation of it (unlike artifacts, which do have us as their creator), we must, to make sense of this idea, posit some other intelligent creator. Thus, the idea of an organism as a natural rather than artificial end is impossible without the positing of some intelligent cause, since, according to Kant, “even the thought of [natural ends] as organized things is impossible without associating the thought of a generation with an intention”.  

A natural end, then, is only natural as opposed to artificial in that it is not anyone’s artifice to which we appeal. Nevertheless, since the concept is empirically determined, it cannot be

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88 In his recent book, James Kreines (Reason in the World: Hegel’s Metaphysics and its Philosophical Appeal. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 86-89.) argues, rather, that on Kant’s view, we are bound to think of organisms as purposive, as the products of a causality determined by representations, because of the temporal character of experience. Specifically, this is because we need to explain how an organism qua organized whole, which is a consequence of “the presence of the parts,” could in turn determine the form and existence of those very parts. That is, if ‘determine’ here is to be rendered as ‘cause,’ we would have a case of a temporally later effect causing its temporally earlier cause, which is obviously, for Kant, inadmissible—unless we replace ‘organism qua organized whole’ with ‘representation of an organized whole’, in which case there is no more appeal to backward causation than in the crafting of an artifact.

But must we conceive of the whole as the temporally later consequence of the presence of the parts? Kant thinks so, but claims that this is only true for a discursive intellect, for the same reason I discuss above: a discursive intellect cannot intuit a whole qua whole. (See 5: 407: “In accordance with the constitution of our understanding, by contrast, a real whole of nature is to be regarded only as the effect of the concurrent moving forces of the parts.”) Thus, because we cannot represent a whole as the ground of the combination of its parts—because to do so would require that we intuit the ‘real whole of nature’ qua whole, which we can’t—we must represent it as the effect of the movement of the parts and represent instead a representation of the whole as causing the parts.

89 CPJ 5: 398.

90 That is, it is not the artifice of any worldly intellect.
demonstrated to have objective validity in the mode of the categories, and so objects cannot be objectively determined to be natural ends; all we can do is judge them as if they are. This means that, insofar as we judge objects to be natural ends, we posit some intelligent world-cause, but not as really existing. Rather, it is merely the idea that guides our reflecting judgment such that we can investigate organisms as a unique class of objects (i.e. as distinct from natural objects that aren’t ends).

And yet notice, already, the incompatibility between, on the one hand, Kant’s insistence that we must appeal to the idea of an intelligent creator when cognizing natural ends, and, on the other, Kant’s claim that “One says far too little about nature and its capacity in organized products if one calls this an analogue of art: for in that case one conceives of the artist (a rational being) outside of it.”\(^91\) We need not think that Kant has actually committed himself to contradictory claims here to see the problem he faces: for although Kant does not actually claim that natural ends are possible only through the activity of a divine artist, he makes it clear that, as discursive intellects, we must think of natural ends according to precisely this analogy.

In *The Normativity of Nature*,\(^92\) Hannah Ginsborg gives one of the most sustained defenses of Kant’s notion of ‘natural ends’ in recent scholarship. Her contention is that, far from being contradictory—by requiring that we think of organisms as both intelligently designed and natural—the notion of a natural end captures a kind of ‘normativity without design’.\(^93\) She argues as follows: we should understand ‘purposiveness’ in this context as meaning ‘answerable to some norm’ rather

\(^91\) *CPJ* 5: 374.


than simply picking out a particular causal history (i.e. one guided by concepts), though, as she points out, these two notions are in fact compatible. The benefit of treating purposiveness as ‘governed by norms’ rather than ‘caused by concepts’ is that it allows us to free purposiveness from the domain of intelligent design. She takes this notion of natural normativity to be compatible with how we typically talk of organisms—speaking of what an organ should do, or of a deformed organism or cell, etc. But, more importantly, she understands this natural normativity as explaining or accounting for the lawfulness of organisms, citing textual support that “it is precisely in order to understand organic phenomena as lawlike or necessary—despite their contingency with respect to mechanical laws—that we must regard organisms as purposes”. The appeal of such a position is clear: if we can make sense of a kind of normativity that does not imply intelligent design, and if we can read Kant’s account of natural ends as invoking just this kind of normativity, then Kant’s position becomes much more compatible with contemporary thinking regarding living systems. The difficulty with this position is that it conflates the relevant necessity—the necessary relation between the parts of the organism and the organism as a whole—with the more typical necessity of a law. This law-like necessity is the necessity of a set of particulars governed by a universal rule—a kind of necessity familiar and available to a discursive intellect—but this is precisely not the kind of necessity we need to capture when it comes to organisms. In thinking of organisms as if designed by some intelligence, in representing them as being determined according to a concept, we do represent the necessity governing their form in the

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94 Ibid., 275.
fashion Ginsborg describes, but we do this *only* because of our discursive intellects. This kind of necessity, then, is what we *settle for*; it is not that which we need to capture in the first place, namely, a being that meets the two requirements (R1 and R2) for self-organization that Kant lays out at 5: 373, and which I described above. The notion of a self-organizing individual may, in turn, be able to license talk of how an organism ‘should’ be—it might license the appeal to norm that Ginsborg thinks so important—but it is at least distinct from such normativity, and we need to see why in order to appreciate why Kant might invoke the idea of an intelligent creator.

1.5 The Limits of the Discursive Intellect

The most significant problems with this Kantian account, however, can be seen if we think about just what are the ‘empirical conditions’ for applying the concept of natural ends. For Kant tells us that “this maxim of the reflecting power of judgment is essential for those products of nature which must be judged only as intentionally formed thus and not otherwise, in order to obtain even an experiential cognition of their internal constitution”. In other words, we cannot even experience the internal constitution of natural ends as organized without judging them to be intentionally formed (i.e. without invoking the concept of natural ends). This leads us to two distinct (though closely related) problems regarding a possible experience of living things as self-organized: first, if the concept of natural ends can’t be shown to have objective validity, this concept can’t tell us anything objectively valid about the organism; second, if we cannot have “experiential cognition” of the internal constitution of an organism without thinking of it as intentionally formed, what occasions us to think of it as such in the first place? This brings us back to the distinction I

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*CPJ* 5: 398.
made earlier between nature as a whole and natural ends. Nature as a whole must be judged to be purposive, Kant tells us, but since nature as a whole can never be given in experience, the fact that the principle of purposiveness is merely a subjective regulation could be seen as unproblematic.

With natural ends, however, we are constrained to treat them as if they had had an intelligent cause; and while that cause will never be given in experience, “the consequence that answers to it (the product) is still given in nature”.

But in what sense can a natural end be “given in nature”? What distinguishes a natural end from another natural object lies in its internal constitution, in the relation of parts and whole, particulars and universals (concepts). Yet we can have no cognition of this relationship without already treating the object as an end. And, it should be added, doing so does not point us to some objective determination of the organism, but rather merely regulates our judgment of it. The problem, it seems, is the following: 1) We are unable to recognize organisms, qua organisms, as objectively real; 2) If we can’t recognize them as objectively real, it seems mysterious that we should ever come to treat them as ends in the first place; Therefore, there can be no empirical conditions for the appropriate application of the concept of natural ends. If there is nothing objectively different about natural ends—and if there were, then to designate something a ‘natural end’ would not consist merely in adopting a certain maxim of the power of judgment—then what could possibly lead us to treat it as a natural end? Why would we not go on treating cats and trees as if they were akin to other natural phenomena like rocks or waves? Or, to put the point differently, given that we do treat cats and trees as belonging to a distinct class that excludes other natural objects such as rocks and waves, why should we not think that we are mistaken in doing so, if there is no objective

96 *CPJ* 3: 405.
differentia to appeal to? Or, finally: given that we not only do treat living things as belonging to such a distinct class, but that we tend to reach intersubjective agreement about what falls in that class—given that there is broad agreement over what is alive and what is not—we should ask what grounds this agreement? The difficulty is, then, that there can be no possible objective feature of living things in virtue of which it would be appropriate to judge them to be natural ends (and hence no objective feature that could lead us to judge them to be self-organizing). But if there is no such criterion, it simply cannot be the case that natural ends are “given in nature”. Even if we set aside the question of the correctness of the analogy to artifacts, it seems that we cannot maintain, on Kantian grounds, that there is an objective difference between living and non-living natural objects. But aside from being a difficult philosophical position to maintain generally, it is out of step with the argument Kant advances in the second half of the *CPJ*, where he argues that we must judge organized beings teleologically.

What should we conclude from these difficulties facing Kant’s account of natural ends? In order to distinguish between artifacts—or, more properly, artificial ends—and natural ends, or self-organizing beings, we must distinguish between organized objects that are produced according to a representation of the object—a representation held by an intellect distinct from the organized object—and those that are produced according to their own causality, those that are both cause and effect of themselves. There can be, however, on Kantian principles, no possible ground for such a distinction, and we must therefore treat all natural ends as if they are artificial after all. Worse still, in order to distinguish between natural ends and all other objects (including, that is, natural, non-organized things), we would need to identify some criterion according to which it would be appropriate to judge some object as if it was a natural end. But no such criterion can possibly exist, since it would need to be an objective feature of the object (if it is to occasion the appropriate
judgment), and yet according to Kant there could be no such objective feature.

The salient point to draw from the foregoing is that the possibility of the cognition of the latter type of object is incompatible with our (supposed) nature as discursive intellects, since such a cognition would require that we represent something as combined in itself, such that the parts are necessarily related to each other in terms of and in virtue of the whole. This point has the following two consequences, though only the first of which is acknowledged by Kant: first, we can only cognize self-organizing objects as natural ends, that is, by treating them ‘as if’ organized by some intelligent creator, in effect treating them as analogous to artifacts (an analogy he elsewhere disavows); second, since, as a result of the first consequence, the designation ‘natural end’ fails to pick out any objective feature of objects, it seems impossible that we should ever find an object given in experience, as Kant claims, that would occasion our treating it as a natural end.

What, then, is the significance of this pair of related problems, problems that, on their own, simply suggest that Kant does not have an adequate or, more to the point, a coherent theory of life or of natural teleology. When considered against the entirety of the critical system, this might seem to be a minor concern, especially since Kant’s description of living systems as ‘self-organizing’—even if not developed in an internally consistent fashion—has proven fruitful for contemporary discussions of life and its connection to the study of consciousness. 97 Indeed, as Evan Thompson writes, “The theory of autopoiesis is especially relevant to the Kantian account, for this theory gives a detailed scientific characterization of precisely that feature Kant made central to his conception of the organism, namely, a self-producing organization.” 98 Central to this contemporary work,

97 See, again, Thompson, Mind in Life, and Weber and Varela, “Life After Kant”.
98 Thompson, Mind in Life, p. 138.
however, is the denial of Kant’s pessimism regarding knowledge of self-organizing beings; rather, what is pursued is precisely a scientific account of such beings as they are found to exist, namely, in living systems. Moreover, even if reaffirming Kant’s pessimism seemed otherwise correct, we are still faced with the problem, internal to Kant’s own view, that, on this account, it is impossible that we should ever come to judge anything in even the subjective, qualified sense Kant advocates, to be a natural end, since there can be no objective feature of a product of nature that signifies purposiveness.

I would suggest, though, that the problem is in fact much more significant. In order to render Kant’s theory self-consistent, we would need to either (1) abandon the claim, central to Kant’s transcendental philosophy, that we have discursive intellects, intellects that passively intuit particular sense-determinations and then synthesize or combine them according to rules of thought, or (2) staunchly deny that we can ever cognize objects as actually being self-organizing in the sense Kant develops. The first option is obviously not available to a charitable (or, perhaps, friendly) reading of Kant, though it should not for that reason be ruled philosophically inadmissible. The second option might be seen as charitable to Kant, and might be the preferable move for a Kantian to make, despite the cost associated with denying the possibility of experiencing self-organizing natural objects—denying, that is, the scientific and theoretical value of Kant’s notion of self-organization, which has been remarkably relevant in contemporary discussions of life and consciousness. We should acknowledge, though, that in this case we are equally committed to the conclusion that our experience of nature could never give us occasion to

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99 See Kreines, *Reason in the World*: “Kant is an inflationary pessimist about knowledge of Naturzwecke. He is arguing that the concept of a natural teleological system includes requirements demanding enough that we can never know whether anything meets them. [...] His view is that we must not assert or deny in any theoretical context, whether scientific or philosophical, that there are any Naturzwecke” (82).
form the concept of a natural end, nor occasion to judge something according to it, despite Kant’s explicit claims to the contrary.100

Furthermore, this latter option fails to do justice to the problem facing Kant. To judge that something is self-organizing and (in this sense) self-causing is to judge it to have a certain logical form (the causal reciprocity between parts and whole, for example) that cannot be isolated from the determinate, empirical ‘matter’ of the thing, the determinacy that is organized according to the aforementioned logical form. This means that there cannot be, in principle, a ‘transcendental logical’ account of self-organizing beings. For recall Kant’s formulation of transcendental logic: it is that which concerns “the origin of our cognitions of objects insofar as that cannot be ascribed to the objects...”101 What we are interested in when we are dealing with self-organizing things is, however, the origin of our cognitions insofar as they must be ascribed to the objects. Insofar as we might possibly cognize something as self-organizing, our understanding of the particular organization of the thing’s parts, how they are combined in the whole that they are, and the way in which the parts and the whole reciprocally depend on each other just in virtue of their respective forms (meaning, of course, not simply the a priori form of ‘part’ or ‘whole’) must depend on the thing itself, since it is the origin of its organization and form. It is for this reason that Kant cannot accommodate any possible cognition of self-organizing beings.

This means, though, that although self-organizing things, like all organisms, require a distinct transcendental principle (albeit one with only the subjective force of a maxim) to govern cognition of them, the notion of ‘self-organization’ that sets them apart cannot be rendered in

100 See, for example, *CPJ* 5: 386-7, where Kant claims that the second maxim of reflecting judgment—that which pushes us to look for teleological explanations of natural things—is “suggested by particular experiences”.

101 *CPR* B80.
strictly *a priori* terms, since it depends upon the particular empirical determinations of the thing. Thus the parts of an organism are not, as I observed above, merely arbitrarily combined in the sense that parts of a pile are arbitrarily combined. To remove one organ from a living thing is to disrupt that in virtue of which any and all of the parts are combined in the whole that they are, and to disrupt that in virtue of which the whole is what it is. Thus to remove part of a living thing is at best to render it *defective* or *abnormal*, to reduce its proper functioning, and at worst, to render it no longer the living thing that it was (to kill it). Self-organizing beings are not, therefore, merely arbitrary individuals (in the sense that whether we call a pile one or many is arbitrary), but rather determine themselves as individuals. We can possibly articulate a logic of self-organization, but it cannot be articulated in a way that necessarily abstracts from the empirical particulars of the thing—those particulars that, under a Kantian account, would be conceived of as ‘given’.

At the heart of this dilemma is the following problem: to conceive of something as objectively or in fact self-organizing (as opposed to merely treating something as if it were organized) requires that we can account for a kind of combination or organization that is grounded in the thing itself, rather than accomplished from without (by, say, a perceiving subject)—the kind of organization specified, at least minimally, by R1 and R2. Such an account is unavailable to Kant, for whom all combination is accomplished by a perceiving subject. What is needed to develop this account of life as self-organizing is therefore an account of what Kant calls a “real whole of nature” which whole is itself (at least) the ground of the possibility of its parts.\(^{102}\)

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\(^{102}\) I say ‘at least’ here because, as Kant suggests and Hegel insists, this dependence is reciprocal. The issue at present is that Kant can well conceive of the dependence of the whole on the parts, but not the other direction of this reciprocal dependence. It is the possibility of the dependence of the parts on the whole that is missing.
Chapter 2

Hegel’s Concept of the Infinite

2.1 From Finite to Infinite Idealism

Chapter 1 provided an analysis of Kant’s account of life, characterized by him as ‘natural end,’ and the role the concept of a natural end played in his transcendental philosophy. As a result of that analysis, I drew two conclusions regarding the adequacy of Kant’s account:

1) Despite Kant’s insistence that a natural end is natural, that is, that it is cause and effect of itself, and that it cannot be grasped by analogy to designed artifacts, we nevertheless must think of it as if it were a divine artifact, rather than a natural end, in order to grasp its unique character.

2) But we will never be led to do so, because the purposiveness of a natural end cannot be objectively determined or exhibited; there can be no objective feature that picks out natural ends, and so we will never be in a position to judge anything to be a natural end.

We can understand these points more broadly in the following ways: First, for something to be judged to be purposive and natural, we must nevertheless attribute its particular determinacy—the particular determinate character of parts and whole—as determined by some external, intelligent cause. On Kant’s principles, for a discursive understanding, there is no way to represent something as self-determining, since the one candidate that could fulfill that requirement (life) must be judged to be a divine artifact. This is because purposiveness, and even more so, self-determination or self-organization, cannot be exhibited in the causal relations of finite things (that is, discrete,
spatiotemoral physical objects), though it need not (and indeed, if it is ever to be conceived of as objective or real, can not) be incompatible with such relations. In order for something like self-determination or self-organization to be capable of being objectively exhibited, or, perhaps better, for it to be real and not subjectively assumed, one of two things would need to be the case: either reality would need to be able to be described in terms of fundamental wholes determining the relations among their derivative parts—this is the model of self-organization Kant attributes to an intuitive understanding—or those parts would need to be able to demonstrate their reciprocal codependence on, or their incorporation in, an encompassing ideal relation that is immanent to the objective real, and not (as Kant argues it must be for us) reducible or attributable to a perceiving subject. The parameters for what is ‘real’ for Kant—finite objects determined by the forms of intuition and the understanding—cannot accommodate self-organization. Put bluntly, there can be, according to Kant, no necessary connection between the determinate parts of an organism and the organism as a whole simply because there can be no necessary connection between the determinate, intuited parts of any natural object and some organization of those parts into a natural whole. Kant’s position allows him to describe such a necessary relation only in the case of design or artifice.

The first step towards Hegel’s account of the category of life begins with his discussion of the infinite in the Doctrine of Being, the first book of the *Science of Logic*. The concept of the infinite crops up frequently in Hegel’s thought, but perhaps never more so than in his own characterization of his relation to Kant’s critical philosophy, especially as found in his pre-*Phenomenology* essay, *Faith and Knowledge*. There, Hegel articulated the difference between his own speculative
idealism and a Kantian-style\textsuperscript{103} idealism in terms of the relation between the infinite and the finite, writing that in such a philosophy “the infinite and the finite remain absolutely opposed. Ideality (\textit{das Idealische}) is conceived only as the concept,"\textsuperscript{104} whereas in the Hegelian ‘Idea,’ “finite and infinite are one, and hence finitude as such has vanished insofar as it was supposed to have truth and reality in and for itself.”\textsuperscript{103} While I will, in what follows, pursue Hegel’s positive argument as it is presented in the \textit{Science of Logic}, rather than Hegel’s negative remarks directed towards Kantian philosophy, it is worth noting here the centrality of the concept of the infinite for Hegel’s own self-understanding, and his understanding of Kant’s philosophy.\textsuperscript{105}

What role, then, does the infinite play in Hegel’s positive account of the logic of life? In what follows, I will argue that the infinite introduces the notion of what I will call \textit{incorporated difference}. The infinite is the first logical shape that can, without collapsing into mere contradiction, be characterized as the ideal union of itself and that to which it is opposed. That is, the difference between the infinite and the finite is necessarily incorporated into the very nature of the infinite; indeed, it is constitutive of it; at the same time, the finite is only possible in the first place insofar as it is an incorporated moment of the infinite. Put differently, the logic of the finite

\textsuperscript{103} His actual target in the essay being ‘reflective’ philosophy generally, which he identifies with the philosophies of Kant, Jacobi, and Fichte.

\textsuperscript{104} \textit{FK} 61.

\textsuperscript{105} \textit{FK} 66.

\textsuperscript{106} See also Hegel’s similar remark in the Introduction to the \textit{Science of Logic}: “The critical philosophy...was overawed by the object, and so the logical determinations were given an essentially subjective significance with the result that these philosophies remained burdened with the object they had avoided and were left with the residue of a thing-in-itself, an infinite obstacle, as a byword.” (\textit{SL} 51/GW 21:35) See, too, the many places throughout the \textit{Science of Logic} where Hegel describes the result of the Logic, characterized either as Concept, Idea or Absolute, as ‘infinite’: \textit{SL} 580/GW 12:14, \textit{SL} 590/GW 12: 23, \textit{SL} 825/GW 12: 237. Finally, one should compare Hegel’s argument in the Logic regarding the infinite to his discussion of infinity in relation to the ‘inverted world’ in the \textit{Phenomenology of Spirit}. There is much to say about this last connection, but it requires its own devoted study, and cannot be discussed here.
presupposes the logic of the infinite. This notion of the infinite is thus the beginning of a Hegelian response to two features of Kant’s account. First, the infinite is an ideal relation that is necessitated by the incorporated determinate particulars, if only formally, and this necessity is explained through the logic of those determinate particulars. Immanent to the finite, then, is its presupposing of an idealizing infinite context. In other words, by considering the logic of finite being, we are required to admit the real necessity of an infinite being—the infinite is no subjective supposition, but is required by the particular logic of that which is determinately present. Second, and as a result of the first point, the infinite is an ideal relation that can be explained without reference to a subject or perceiver.

These last two points suggest one way in which, for Hegel, the relationship between the ideal and the real diverge sharply from the way it is characterized in Kant’s philosophy—namely, as diverging in virtue of a perceiving subject, to whom the ideal element of reality (the forms of intuition and the understanding) can be attributed. Accordingly, after I provide, in section 2.2, an exposition of Hegel’s argument in the *Logic* that finite being always presupposes, and can only be made consistent by, the concept of the infinite, I will examine in section 2.3 how this argument shapes Hegel’s view of the relationship between ideality and reality. Finally, in section 2.4, I

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107 Indeed, thanks to the ‘Remark’ that directly follows Hegel’s argument regarding the infinite wherein Hegel tells us explicitly that “the proposition that the finite is ideal constitutes idealism”, a number of commentators explicitly interpret what it must mean for Hegel to be an idealist in the terms set by Hegel’s discussion of the infinite. This topic has garnered significant attention, though there is not anything resembling a consensus on the issue. See, for e.g., Stephen Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel’s Logic: From Being to Infinity*. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2005; Karl Ameriks, “Hegel and Idealism,” *Monist* 74: 3 (1991), pp. 386-402; Robert Stern, *Hegelian Metaphysics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009; James Kreines, *Reason in the World*. Ameriks (“Hegel and Idealism”), for instance, is skeptical that there is any meaningful ontological significance, whereas Houlgate (*The Opening of Hegel’s Logic*) defends the idea that the *Science of Logic* is fundamentally an ontological text. Both Robert Pippin (*Hegel’s Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and Brady Bowman (*Hegel and the Metaphysics of Absolute Negativity* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) interpret Hegel’s idealism explicitly as an ‘idealism of finite being,’ though neither examines this claim in the context of the relation between the finite and the infinite as laid out in the *Doctrine of Being*. 
examine Hegel’s claims that the logic of self-reference, a critical component to the concept of the infinite that Hegel develops, is formally analogous to the logic of self-consciousness, and argue that in this way, the concept of the infinite offers Hegel a way to develop an ontology of subjectivity, by providing a primitive sense of ‘mediated identity,’ or an identity that consists in a term and its opposite. Such an account of subjectivity will be extremely significant for Hegel’s account of life, since for Hegel life can be self-organizing only insofar as it is a defined self, and so in this way the concept of the infinite will provide another clue as to what the logic of life must be.\(^{108}\)

2.2 The Infinity of Being

In order to establish the significance of Hegel’s argument regarding the nature of the true infinite, it is necessary to consider the context in which the argument is made. Hegel’s treatment of the logic of infinity comes as part of his analysis of determinate being\(^ {109}\), which is alternatively translated as ‘Determinate being’ (Miller), ‘existence’ (DiGiovanni), and ‘being-there’ (Geraets, Suchting, Harris), which is itself part of the first division of the Logic, the Doctrine of Being. I will, in keeping with the practice of most recent commentators, use Miller’s translation of ‘determinate

\(^{108}\) John Burbidge draws the connection between Hegel’s discussion of the infinite and his discussion of life, writing that since the organism “has a dynamic, self-constituting pattern as part of its internal constitution... ‘infinite’ is an appropriate term to characterize it” (Burbidge, *Real Process: How Logic and Chemistry Combine in Hegel’s Philosophy of Nature*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996, p. 182).

\(^{109}\) *Daseyn*. This term is translated in a number of ways; aside from Miller’s ‘determinate being’ from his translation of the *Science of Logic*, the Geraets, Suchting and Harris translation of the *Encyclopedia Logic* render it as ‘being-there’, while diGiovanni’s recent translation of the *Science of Logic* translates it as ‘existence’. 
Determinate being is one of the simplest forms of being, following directly from Hegel’s progression of being-nothing-becoming. To be sure, it is not the empty indeterminateness that is pure being (and which saw pure being equated with pure nothing)—it is concrete and present—but it is no more than this simple presence. Taken in this way, as simple and immediate, the mediation of its becoming (since it is the result of the ‘becoming’ that is the unity of pure being and pure nothingness) “lies behind it; it has sublated itself and determinate being appears, therefore, as a first, as a starting point for the ensuing development”.

Hegel further characterizes this concept of determinate being as quality, a characterization that will help clarify the difference between determinate being and pure being. Pure being was to be taken immediately, but it could not not be present, or be there, since it was wholly indeterminate—it could not in principle be noticed. In pure being, there was “nothing to be intuited in it,” and “just as little is anything to be thought in it, or it is equally only this empty thinking”.

Determinate being, by contrast, is quality insofar as there is something to be intuited in it, at least in principle,

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110 Houlgate (The Opening of Hegel’s Logic) argues that since ‘Daseyn’ has not, at this stage of the Logic, been shown to be spatial, or in a location, ‘being-there’ is an inaccurate translation, and ‘determinate being’ is therefore preferable. This is certainly an important point, but there is also a danger in the phrase ‘determinate being,’ that we would imagine the subject of Hegel’s argument to be more determinate than mere qualitative presence.

diGiovanni’s translation of Daseyn as ‘existence’ seems harder still to motivate. Translating it in this way means that he must find a unique term for Hegel’s Existenz, for which ‘existence’ would otherwise be the rather obvious choice (and which is in fact what Miller chooses). diGiovanni defends his translation by claiming that “Hegel himself gives us the clue. Existenz is an ontological term; it is the counterpart of essential (Wesen) and the reflective parallel of the more immediate Dasein. [...] But mediation is what generates concreteness (GW 21, 12ff.). For this reason I have translated Existenz with ‘concrete existence...’ (The Science of Logic, trans. George diGiovanni. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. lxix.) The problem with this argument is that Hegel tells us the true infinite, “taken thus generally as [Daseyn]


112 SL 82/GW 21: 69.

113 To clarify, we are not talking about an object of intuition, since the argument here is not epistemological in nature. We are discussing, rather, the logic of the kind of being that could in principle be intuited—i.e. a being that has some quality.
even if it is at this early stage wholly abstract (i.e. even if it is just quality as such). It is simple and immediate, but it is not indeterminate or undifferentiated, which is just to say that it makes a difference whether it is there or not.

Crucially, then, the negation of determinate being, qua simple quality, is not pure nothing, which, like pure being, is the “absence of all determination and content”. If it makes a difference whether determinate being is there or not, whether this quality is present or not, its non-preservation is “likewise a quality but one which counts as a deficiency”. Hegel’s point here is that determinate being is equally constituted by moments of being and of negativity. While qualitative being is present and there before us, or is concrete, its negation is also determinate, and is equally part of what determinate being is. To grasp determinate being as quality is to grasp that both its presence and its absence have qualitative value; for this reason, the negation of determinate being is not pure nothingness but a “deficiency,” a qualitative, determined absence. The fact that both these moments, the positive (determinate being as qualitative presence) and negative (the determinacy of its absence) are jointly constitutive of quality means that its presence is logically equivalent to the negation of its absence, which latter is, following the preceding analysis, equivalent to the negation of some other qualitative presence. To be some particular thing is to be something as opposed to an other. “Thus,” Hegel writes, “something through its own nature relates itself to the other, because otherness is posited in it as its own moment”. That is, otherness, or the qualitative value of an other determinate being, in part determines the nature of any given qualitative presence, insofar as any qualitative presence is necessarily the exclusion of that other qualitative presence,

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114 SL 82/GW 21: 69.
115 SL 111/GW 21: 98.
that other determinate being.

What does this last claim tell us? Consider what it means to say that something “through its own nature” is negatively related to the other: this means that the something is itself both its own qualitative being and at the same time the non-being of its other. Or, to make the point slightly stronger, being what the something in itself is, is, in part, to negate, to mark the non-being, of its other. The single determinateness of the something, qua quality, grounds both of these elements. This determinateness, that at once designates the in-itself quality of the something and the negation of its other, is a limit. Now, while the limit has here been provisionally characterized as that in virtue of which the something negates the other—while the limit has been taken to limit the other’s encroachment upon the something, and not the other way around—it is crucial for Hegel to see that the limit marks out the non-being of the something itself. In the original characterization, a certain privilege was attached to the something, insofar as it limits the other. But in fact there is no such privilege; the other is, insofar as it is determinate, or qualitative, is also itself a something, because the non-being of quality is itself a quality. The limit, therefore, is equally the limit of the other, as itself a something, “whereby it keeps the first something as its other apart from it, or is a non-being of that something”.

An analogy may be helpful here. It is customary to think of a nation’s political borders as belonging to that nation, as something that must, for example, be protected. (That is, we protect ‘our’ borders, colloquially speaking.) In this sense, the border is thought of not as something limiting one’s own country, but as something limiting the neighbouring territory—some might wish to reinforce the border so as to keep others out. Thinking in this way, a nation’s border is

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117 \textit{SL} 126/GW 21: 114.
immanent to it, and it at the same time marks the end of the other nations. In reality, however,
there is one border that itself demarcates the edge of two nations simultaneously. You can say that,
for example, the border running along the 49th parallel marks the southern end of British
Columbia and the Prairies, just as you can say that it marks the northern end of the northwestern
United States. Not only does the U.S.-Canada border limit each nation, it is immanent to the two
countries themselves. Canada is the shape that it is in virtue of the border (and the inverse is
importantly not the case—for Canada’s shape was determined through the determining of the
border through various agreements negotiated throughout the country’s history—see, for example,
the 1783 Treaty of Paris). Similarly, then, Hegel will point out that “through the limit something is
what it is, and in the limit it has its quality”.\textsuperscript{118} To be something, to have a quality, is to be mediated
by some other thing, where the mediating term is the limit immanent to (and constitutive of) both.
The limit is therefore “the mediation through which something and other each as well is, as is
not”.\textsuperscript{119} This means that determinate being, as a something, is finite—the non-being that
differentiates it from other somethings is not some external force, but is immanent to it, or as
Hegel puts it, “non-being constitutes their nature and being”.\textsuperscript{120} To call qualitative, determinate
being ‘finite’ is just to say that it is inherently limited. Put differently, the absolute cannot be simply
qualitatively present since nothing can be qualitatively present but through being distinguished
from something else.

Determinate being as finite, then, contains within it this tension, that what it is for
something to be finite is for it to not be all; finite things are only in a qualified sense. Accordingly, a

\textsuperscript{118} SL 126/GW 21: 114.

\textsuperscript{119} SL 127/GW 21: 114.

\textsuperscript{120} SL 129/GW 21: 116.
finite thing, Hegel tells us, not only is, but also “ceases to be,” which ceasing to be “is not merely a possibility, so that it could be without ceasing to be, but the being as such of finite things is to have the germ of decease as their being-within-self...”\textsuperscript{121} It is important to note, here, that when Hegel speaks of the finite ‘ceasing to be,’ he does not necessarily mean it in a temporal sense (or at least in a strictly temporal sense). Finite things ‘cease’ in the most general sense that they have an end (in that ‘end’ can have both spatial and temporal renderings, as either, for example, the ‘end of the day’ or the ‘end of the line,’ as well as a more general sense, like the end of a thought or dream, which is neither spatial nor temporal).\textsuperscript{122} This means, however, that there are two senses in which a finite thing bears some negativity. In the first sense, a finite thing is negative because it negates some other finite thing: it is this thing, not that thing, or it is here rather than somewhere else. In the second sense, though, a finite thing negates itself—its negation of the other is intrinsic to its own being as finite, meaning that it necessarily limits itself along the boundary of the other. A finite thing ceases to be according to its own nature—to be what it is is to cease to be itself. Finite things thus negate themselves, which is just what it means to say that in determinate being as finite there is a contradiction (as was remarked earlier). Hegel therefore concludes that the finite is the “negative of the negative. Thus, in ceasing to be, the finite has not ceased to be; it has become in the first instance only another finite which, however, is equally a ceasing-to-be as transition into another finite, and so on to infinity”\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{SL} 129/\textit{GW} 21: 116.

\textsuperscript{122} Notice that when Hegel draws out the etymology of \textit{Daseyn} as being-\textit{there}, or being in a place, he writes, “the idea of space is irrelevant here” (\textit{SL} 110/\textit{GW} 21: 97). The relevant feature of determinate being is not that it is spatially located, but that it is ‘there’ in a broader sense, namely that it is present and differentiated from a field of possible others.

\textsuperscript{123} \textit{SL} 136/\textit{GW} 21: 123.
How should we make sense of this transition from finitude to the infinite? The argument here is as follows: since finite qualitative being is defined by a limit that equally demarcates another such qualitative being, and, therefore, the negation or non-being/non-presence of any finite thing is always and necessarily the being or presence of some other finite thing, the logical result is that finite beings are always accounted for in terms of other finite beings. That is, there can be no inherent limit to the becoming-and-ceasing-to-be of finite things; in the passing away of finite things, finite things continue to be. Why can Hegel then say that “in ceasing to be, the finite has not ceased to be”? Why is this not simply (and emptily) a contradictory statement? Because logically the finite beings are equivalent; ‘finite being’ then is as much the starting point as it is the result. To think of finite, qualitative being is therefore to think of a chain of finite beings passing over into each other (or limiting each other), in which ‘finite being’ is the invariant logical structure. So long as ‘finite being’ is all we have in our ontological toolbox, so to speak, we are forced (logically) to articulate a series of finite beings, since each finite being logically implies both its eventual (again, not strictly temporally speaking) non-being, as well as the being of another finite being—and this implication to the next finite being can have no end. Though we are dealing with much more primitive (ontologically speaking) concepts, the argument here has the same structure as a cosmological argument for the existence of an infinite (or uncaused, or self-causing) being, like God. The finite beings with which we are familiar are such that they must be explained, since, as we have seen from the beginning, finite, determinate being is unable to account for itself by itself; finite being requires, logically, some other being to make account for it. At this stage, though, the only thing we can posit to explain any of them is just another finite being. For this reason, we might say that a finite thing must always have another finite thing as a relative ground, but no finite thing can act as an absolute ground of anything (ie something itself ungrounded). Thus, if we try to claim that ‘finite being’ is the fundamental and absolute nature of reality, we are forced into a
contradiction—for this series of finite beings is not itself finite, nor can it be. Rather, thinking through the logical implications of finitude forces us to acknowledge a new ontological domain: that of the infinite.

The transition from the finite to the infinite has thereby been introduced. What follows is a series of negative definitions of the infinite, as Hegel warns against a series of one-sided conceptions of what ‘infinity’ might be, all variations of what Hegel calls the ‘spurious’ infinite. In each case, the mistake that is made in characterizing the infinite is to hold it apart from the finite. This mistake is made in a number of ways largely because there is, inherent in the concept of the infinite, a temptation to treat it in two incompatible senses. First, the infinite is the negation of the finite (hence \textit{in}-finite), and should be different from the finite. Second, and consequently, if the finite is characterized by an immanent limit, if to be finite is to be constituted by a limit that sets it over and against another finite thing, the infinite must, as fundamentally different from the finite, not be characterized by such a limit. Or, in other words, the infinite must be understood to be unlimited. Given that the limit immanent in the finite established, by necessity, an other standing over against it, the infinite, as unlimited, must have no other—it cannot be what it is in relation to some other determination. And yet if the infinite is to be logically independent of the finite, then it will have the finite as its other, as distinct from it in some sense (figuring out in which precise sense is the difficulty). Thinking through this problem, how the infinite can be different from the finite without conceiving of the infinite as delimited by the finite, is the task Hegel sets himself in describing what he terms the ‘true infinite,’ and the solution he arrives at animates much of the rest

\footnote{John Burbidge (\textit{On Hegel’s Logic}. Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1981) captures this point quite nicely: “For it is essential to the meaning of \textit{finitude} that it cannot pass over into \textit{infinity}. But this entails a paradoxical consequence: the finitude of the finite is itself limitless—it does \textit{not} come to an end. The \textit{finite}, which is essentially limited, is still essentially unlimited” (52).}
of the Logic. And what is needed, in short, is a notion of difference that is distinct from the way in which finite things are different from each other (what we might think of as numerical difference).

In order to follow Hegel’s argument here, then, it is imperative that we are always careful to distinguish false conceptions of the infinite (false because they turn out, on reflection, not to pick out ‘infinity’ at all) from the ‘true infinite’, and for two reasons: first, the nature of the true infinite involves its relation to the ‘spurious’ infinite; second, only in this way can we distinguish a contradiction that is in the service of an argument (as in, for example, a reductio argument) and a contradiction that is itself a problem for Hegel’s argument.\textsuperscript{125}

The bulk of Hegel’s argument consists in showing that, if the infinite and finite are held apart as conceivable independently of each other, each determination (i.e. each of ‘finite’ and ‘infinite’) can be shown to actually involve thinking its other. The significance of this argument is that if it is true that one cannot think either the finite or the infinite without invoking the terms of its putative negation, then we are necessarily thinking in logical terms that exceed the logic of finitude (since the logic of finitude is precisely the logic of either/or). This is easiest to show on the side of the infinite: if the infinite is fundamentally different from the finite, or if it is simply and immediately not the finite, then it is one of two possible determinations, and is limited by the finite

\textsuperscript{125} For instance, James Kreines (\textit{Reason in the World}) writes of Hegel’s argument regarding the infinite in the Doctrine of Being, “But this early section, on the infinite, also seems to make conflicting demands. It seems to hold that the infinite has priority over the finite; and yet different ways of making out this priority keep bringing Hegel back to a parallel between or parity of the infinite and the finite. For example, ‘the infinite and the finite are both this movement of each returning to itself through its negation’ (WL, 5:162/117)” (252).

The problem here is that the ‘infinite’ referred to in this passage is clearly the spurious infinite that is conceived of as beyond the finite; Hegel, in the preceding paragraph, clarifies that he is talking about the infinite that is “the beyond of the limit” of the finite (\textit{SL} 147/\textit{GW} 21: 134). As we saw above, it’s true to say that this infinite is on par with the finite, because it is itself the finite--it is itself one of the sublated moments in the true infinite. So Hegel is not simply contradicting himself here, claiming that the infinite is at once the truth of the finite and at the same time treating them as logical equals. To see this, however, requires that we have carefully delineated the difference between the ‘infinite’ that is the sublated moment, itself a beyond of the finite, and hence finite itself, and the true infinite that is the result of this movement.
as its other. Thought of as an indeterminate beyond, the infinite that stands opposed to the finite is
limited by the realm of finite things, and as so limited, is therefore itself finite. That is, to
characterize the infinite as limited by the realm of the finite—to claim that finite, determinate being
is what the infinite is not, in the same sense that this finite thing is not that other thing—is, in fact, to
characterize it as itself finite, governed by the disjunctive logic of finitude: it is either this or that.
This delimited infinite is the spurious infinite that Hegel warns us of, since it is not actually a stable
infinity, but is shown to be merely the semblance of infinity.126

Can a similar conclusion be drawn in the case of the finite? Can we coherently think of the
category of the finite without, in fact, describing the logical equivalent of the infinite? In a sense,
Hegel’s argument to this point has already done this—that since the finite as a category always
presupposes an ‘other’ to which it is related, the logic of the finite cannot adequately describe
reality on its own. But we can see this point in another way. Assume, first, that we can coherently
think the category of the finite without appealing to the logic of the infinite. If we deny this
assumption, of course, and admit that we can only think of finitude by appealing to infinitude, then
Hegel’s point has been made. But to conceive of finitude in this way is to fail to conceive of it as
finitude; finitude is, necessarily, only through contrast, just as something is qualitatively present
only in being distinguished from something else. Conceiving of finitude exclusively on its own

126 Though I cannot develop it here, this criticism of the notion of infinity as ‘beyond’ the finite resonates with Hegel’s
analysis of Kantian morality, especially in the Phenomenology of Spirit (and, accordingly, it is less surprising than it
would otherwise be to see a remark on ‘the Ought’ in Hegel’s discussion of finite, qualitative being). This connection is
suggested by Rebecca Comay, in discussing Hegel’s critique of Kant’s conception of morality: “To secure its own
universality, freedom must define itself against a world of sensuous particularity, toward which it must nonetheless
constantly keep turning to sustain this very self-definition... But since morality...requires a horizon of fulfillment for its
cohesion, it must postulate such realization as ultimately attainable—but only in the ‘dim remoteness’ of an ever-
receding future in which something like jouissance is maintained...at an infinite delay” (Comay, Mourning Sickness:
necessarily postulated but as an infinite beyond towards which we must make endless (infinite in the sense of the
spurious infinite) progress. See, also, Rocío Zambrana, “Hegel’s Logic of Finitude,” in Continental Philosophy Revew,
terms is to court paradox, since the finite is precisely what can’t be accounted for exclusively on its own terms.

It might be objected at this stage that Hegel is simply equivocating between a particular finite thing or quality and finitude as a category, and that while the former certainly presupposes, logically, some other to which it is related and in virtue of which it can be picked out (in virtue of which it can be finite in the first place), only by way of a logical sleight of hand could the same be said of finitude the category. But this objection has no purchase on the Logic. In the course of his argument, Hegel has been consistently attempting to demonstrate the simultaneous necessity and insufficiency of the particular categories of the Logic to coherently describe the logic of reality, of the ‘absolute,’ or, finally, of ‘being’. The reason that we’re tempted to make the above distinction (between finite things and the category of finitude itself) itself demonstrates the insufficiency of the category ‘finite being’: finitude, by its very logical definition, only ever picks out a part of reality, since to be finite is just to be a part of reality, one thing as opposed to another. The finite thus always presupposes a broader context out of which it is manifest. To conceive of the finite, which is necessarily the not-all, as a self-sufficient category, as determined on its own terms, is to fail to think of the finite, but rather to think of its negation. As Hegel writes, then, “the finite...characterized as independent of and apart from the infinite, is that self-relation in which its relativity, its dependence and transitoriness is removed; it is the same self-subsistence and affirmation which the infinite is supposed to be”. 127 To be finite is to be determined in relation to another; the finite cannot be determined solely in relation to itself, independently of its other (the infinite).

In trying to think of the infinite as the fundamentally non-finite, not only have we found

that the infinite is in itself its own other, or in itself the finite (and vice versa), but since this result works for both the finite and the infinite (that is, since each determination passes into its other), the logical process described here ends where it begins—whether we take the finite or the infinite as the starting point, since each can be shown to be really a conception of the other, we can always end up, logically, where we started. There are two crucial points to note about this result. First, this double movement of self-negation is “the complete, self-closing movement which has arrived at that which constituted the beginning; what arises is the same as that from which the movement began...” 128 Second, this movement works the same whether you start with the finite or the infinite; in each case, we are led from the thought of one category to the thought of the other, which in turn leads us back to the first. On the one hand, this gives us two versions of the same result, where the finite passes through its other into itself, and the infinite does likewise. On the other hand, this means that the result, taken generally as the fact that the starting point returns to itself through its other, is completely indifferent to which particular starting point is taken. Really, then, rather than giving us two results, this leaves us with only one result, since the result does not depend on starting with either finitude or infinity. There is a logical movement, a return to self mediated by an otherness which is only a moment. In this progress, both the finite and the infinite are taken to be only moments of the other, and both are therefore moments of the logical movement more generally. “Since,” according to Hegel, “both the finite and the infinite itself are moments of the progress they are *jointly or in common the finite*, and since they are equally together negated in it and in the result, this result as negation of the finitude of both is called with truth the infinite”. 129

Because both the finite and the infinite are moments in the logical movement Hegel has described,

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128 *SL* 147/GW 21: 134.

both the finite and the infinite, considered, as they have been, as fundamentally different, or as
independent of one another, are jointly the finite, negated by the logical movement of a return-to-
self. Furthermore, this result, the negation of the two moments of the finite (namely, the finite and
infinite taken as independent), is the true infinite, or the concept of the infinite that acts as a
solution to the problem outlined above.

To see how this is the case, consider the two parameters of the problem: the infinite must
(1) be different from the finite without (2) excluding it as a mere other. So long as the infinite and
the finite were taken to be independent of each other, there could be no solution to this problem.
But in the result Hegel has established, which he calls the true infinite, the finite is determined as
the moments which jointly make up the infinite as result. The true infinite is therefore different
from its moments, which each take the finite or the infinite to be independently determined, but it
(the true infinite) does not have this conception of the finite as an other, limiting it. Rather, the
finite, as distinct from the true infinite, is incorporated as a moment. Houlgate expresses this idea very clearly: “In Hegel’s view, therefore, we can understand the nature of true infinity only when we give up the idea that ‘differing from’ always amounts to ‘being other than.’ Precisely such an idea of difference is to be found in the relation between a process and its moments. A moment of a process is not the whole process itself and so can be distinguished from it. Such a moment is not other than the process, however, nor is the process other than it, since that moment is a moment of the process itself” (Houlgate, The Opening of Hegel’s Logic, 424).
to think solely in terms of the finite; the logic of the infinite is the repudiation of this logic of exclusion. This is why we must recast the difference between the finite and the infinite if we are to properly think in terms of the logic of the infinite.

It is important to stress the fact that the finite moments are not genuinely other than the true infinite. Brady Bowman, in Hegel and the Metaphysics of Absolute Negativity, warns against reading this incorporation of relation-to-another into a broader logical structure of self-relation as meaning that something is what it is, or is self-identical, only in virtue of the mediation of another; rather, what appears as a relation to another has to be, in truth, a relation of (in this case) the infinite to itself.\(^ {131} \) (Just as while being may appear to be an aggregate of finite, self-sufficient things, in truth those finite things can appear finite only in virtue of being moments of infinite being.) So the finite is not something that mediates the infinite’s relation-to-self from outside, since it is not outside, nor is it truly other; the infinite’s relation to the finite just is its relation to itself. Stated compactly in this way, Hegel’s claim seems merely paradoxical, but I have hoped to show how, when considered in the context of the entire argument, his analysis of the infinite is consistent and compelling—how, that is, we can make logical sense of this seemingly paradoxical claim.

This has one final consequence that is important to note: since this infinite is not a beyond that sits over and against the finite, but has the finite as its moments, it is real and qualitatively present. It was only the infinite conceived of as some ‘beyond’ of the finite, or as standing over and against that which is there (or over and against Daseyn, ‘being-there’), that was indeterminate. Since the true infinite is nothing beyond the finite, but is the finite comprehended as a moment, true

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\(^ {131} \) Bowman, The Metaphysics of Absolute Negativity, 52.
infinity carries all the positive determination of being that was found in finite things. Moreover, rather than being mere determinacy, or simply a something in general, the true infinite is a specific kind of thing, or has some actual content other than the idea of content as such: it is that which is self-related through the incorporation of its other, namely, finite being. True infinity, then, “is reality in a higher sense than the former reality which was simply determinate; for here it has acquired a concrete content. It is not the finite which is real, but the infinite”.

The infinite is real because it is only in virtue of the infinite that we can coherently describe the logic of the finite (in Hegel’s words, the infinite is therefore the truth of the finite), and it is concrete insofar as it is manifest as a determinate reality (unlike finite being, which merely is present as determinate generally).

2.3 The Idealism of the Finite

Having now gone through Hegel’s argument regarding the relation between the finite and the infinite in some detail, we are now able to determine what it means for Hegel to speak of his position as ‘idealistic’. To begin with, let us return to Hegel’s introduction of the term ‘reality’.

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132 See: Doz, André, La Logique de Hegel et les problèmes traditionelle de l’ontologie. Paris: J. Vrin, 1987): “…The infinite is truly present because it does not refuse negativity, because it does not leave the finite to one side but rather contains it immanently, and because it integrates the bad infinity in itself, or, what would be the bad infinity in the absence of the truly infinite” (69; my translation).

133 SL 149/GW 21: 136.

134 Compare to B106, B207-218. In Kant’s formulation, reality is one of the categories of quality and since the Doctrine of Being has a rough if ambiguous correspondence to the mathematical categories (while the Doctrine of Essence has a correspondence to the dynamical categories), so it should not be surprising that Hegel introduces the term ‘reality’ as a determination of quality as
‘Reality’ is used by Hegel as a determination of determinate being that is meant to capture its presence or positivity. Recall that Hegel shows that determinate being, as qualitative, has both positive and negative moments—that to say that determinate being is quality is to say that both its presence and its absence can be noticed. In considering the sense in which determinate being, as quality, has an immanent limit, and is thereby finite, the negative aspect (the sense in which something is negatively related to its other) was more properly discussed. There remains, however, something that is there, and taken in that sense, or as Hegel puts it, “taken in the distinct character of being”, determinate being is reality. ‘Reality’ therefore captures the aspect of quality that is not captured by its negativity—it is what you notice when you notice its presence. Though this is a technical use of ‘reality,’ the designation makes sense colloquially; consider Samuel Johnson’s supposed refutation of Berkeleyan idealism, wherein he demonstrated the reality (as opposed to ideality) of material things by kicking a rock lying on his path. For Johnson, showing that the rock is real requires nothing more than showing that it is there as some positive quality—its being there is qualitatively different from its not being there. Despite the insufficiency of his argument, Johnson does capture an important point—something’s reality consists in its presence before us. We should well. But there is an important difference between the two notions of ‘reality’: in the anticipations of perception, Kant argues that every reality has an intensive magnitude such that every qualitative judgment also has a quantitative aspect, which is much closer to the category of ‘measure’ in Hegel’s Logic. Nevertheless, the basis for Hegel’s claim regarding the real of quality can be found here, too: for while all real in perception for Kant has an intensive magnitude, and can be reduced by a matter of degree, its total absence, the point at which the ‘gradual alteration’ passes from some infinitesimal degree of the real quality to empty space and time, this marks a qualitative shift as well.

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SL 111/GW 21: 98.
note, too, that the spurious infinite is that which is conceived of as distinct from the real in this sense. Thus, Hegel writes that “It is only the spurious infinite which is the beyond, because it is only the negation of the finite posited as real...”.\textsuperscript{136} So ‘reality’ is a determination of determinate being in its presence, or in its positive (as opposed to negative) aspect. Standing over against this reality is the spurious infinite, which is, of course, merely another finite moment.

What we come to see in consideration of the true infinite, though, is that finite being is not, in itself, what it purports to be. Rather than being immediately what it is (the ‘reality’ of simple presence), or being what it is by immediately being there, finite being is only as a moment of the true infinite. In this sense, then, Hegel writes that “ideal being [das Ideelle] is the finite as it is in the true infinite—as a determination, a content, which is distinct but is not an independent, self-subsistente being, but only a moment”.\textsuperscript{137} There are two important points to draw from this. First, ‘ideality’ refers, specifically, to the fact that the truth of a ‘something’ does not lie in its immediate presence—that what it is is a moment of an infinite context that outstrips (but is not independent from) what is present. In describing that context as infinite, as Hegel’s argument makes clear we must, means that we are appealing to a new level of ontological description. Thus, in making this point, we are not simply claiming that finite things depend in some way on all other finite things, though this is on its own true. We are saying, rather, that the appropriate sense of dependence we need to make sense of finite reality can only be articulated if we appeal to a novel logical structure, that of the true infinite. This means that what is true about this finite something that I can notice

\textsuperscript{136} SL 149/GW 21: 136.

\textsuperscript{137} SL 149.50/GW 21: 137.
before me doesn’t lie in its presence, or in the fact that I can notice it, taken on its own. In this way, since the immediate presence of the something was its reality, the truth of the finite something—what it is in the context of the truly infinite—is the negation of that immediate presence, and thus the negation of reality; or, put simply, it is its ideality.

Second, although ‘ideal being’ is what finite being is now shown to be, finite being is only seen to be ideal in the context of the infinite, or as a moment of the infinite—hence, “ideal being is the finite as it is in the true infinite.” One (mistaken) way of thinking of the ideality of the finite would be to think that, while we had originally taken finite things to be real, we have discovered that in fact they are merely ideal or illusory, and that reality lies somewhere else, somehow behind or underneath these illusory finite things. To think of things in this way would, however, be to remain trapped within the logic of the spurious infinite as a ‘beyond’; there is nothing apart from and independent of finite things that can replace finite things as the ‘real.’ But we must understand

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138 Houlgate (The Opening of Hegel’s Logic) makes the point clearly that to call finite being ideal is to claim that it is a moment of a process rather than self-subsistent. This is no doubt true, but we also need to see that is not just a formal negation of finite being—one that simply determines it as ‘not in itself true’—but one that negates the qualitative presence of that finite being. In other words: qualitative presence, the fact that something has a quality, cannot be accounted for by appealing to the logic of finite being.

139 Despite his interest in what it means for Hegel to be an idealist, Robert Pippin’s analysis in Hegel’s Idealism of the explicit connection Hegel draws, here, between idealism and the infinite is rather light. He simply claims that this statement of Hegel’s—that “ideal being is the finite as it is in the true infinite”—“indicates” Hegel’s thesis that “the determinations of finitude required for there to be finite individuals ultimately themselves depend logically on the self-transformations of thought, on Notional conditions” (Pippin, Hegel’s Idealism, 198).

The interpretive strategy here seems backward; rather than understanding Hegel’s eventual claims about the Concept’s self-relation in terms of the primitive self-relation that is the true infinite, Pippin is reading in to the connection between the infinite and ideality a fully-formed, though not yet fully defended, thesis about the Concept, read as the self-determination of self-consciousness, and its relation to finite, existing individuals (a conspicuously Kantian thesis). As I will argue here, it is imperative to understand the specific meaning of this connection between the infinite and ideality simply in terms of Hegel’s analysis of determinate being; otherwise, one risks misunderstanding Hegel’s target. Accordingly, we need to see why determinate being must, by its own standards, be shown to be a moment of an infinite self-relation, a self-relation that is not itself identical with either self-consciousness or the Concept.

140 Terry Pinkard’s (Hegel’s Dialectics, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988) characterization of the true infinite as “background or substrate of alteration” (39) seems to treat it as such a ‘beyond’.
this statement in two senses: first, finite being is, in some sense, *all there is*; but second, there *is* a meaningful *nothing* (the spurious infinite) beyond that finite being. Despite the fact that finite being is all there is, it is conspicuously insufficient in itself to account for reality (understood in the broader, non-technical sense). What this amounts to is the fact that ‘ideality’ has taken the place of ‘reality’. ‘Reality’ has been left behind as a determination of the positive aspect of finite being, where that finite being was taken as in itself determinate and self-sufficient, which has been shown to be untrue.

Having said that, Hegel does in fact describe the true infinite as being real, and it is important to understand the sense in which he means this. Hegel writes that the true infinite “is *reality* in a higher sense than the former reality which was *simply* determinate...It is not the finite which is the real, but the infinite”. On first blush, this statement seems to directly contradict what I said above about the infinite replacing the finite as what is actually real (with the finite being merely ideal). On my reading, though, Hegel is making a different point. His point here is that the true infinite is what determinate being in truth is, and so that determination of being that we were picking out when we called determinate being ‘real’ is not abandoned—Hegel hasn’t changed the topic in shifting from finite somethings to the infinite. To conceive of ‘reality’ as it truly is, not as we originally (and falsely) did, as finite, we have to think of it as infinite. To do this, however, is precisely to think of the ideality of the finite. To say then, as I did above, that ideality replaces the category of reality, is not too strong a statement, despite Hegel’s claim that the infinite is that which

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142 Rocío Zambrana argues this point quite forcefully: “Because the finite infinite—the infinite qua the beyond of the finite—is but the negation of finitude as sheer annihilation, the negation of the negation is a rejection of infinity as beyond the finite. This double negation is a return to the finite, to *reality*. It is, however, a restoration because the finite is now understood as ideal” (Zambrana, “Hegel’s Logic of Finitude,” 224).
is real, for he qualifies this statement by writing that it is “superfluous to repeat an earlier, more abstract category such as reality, in connexion with the more concrete categories and to employ it for determinations which are more concrete than it is in its own self. Such repetition as to say that essence, or the Idea, is the real, has its origin in the fact that for untrained thinking, the most abstract categories such as being, determinate being, reality, finitude, are the most familiar”.

Hegel clearly points out, here, that in calling the infinite ‘real,’ he is giving an aid to ‘untrained thinking’ such that it will catch the full significance of his claim that the infinite is the truth of finite being. The infinite, like essence and the Idea, is an increasingly sophisticated, determinate characterization of what we might informally call reality. This thought is effectively contained in the result that the spurious infinite alone (i.e. not the true infinite) sits beyond the finite realm of somethings. Only in the case of this false infinite do we pass from the reality of finite things to something else entirely. If it is a mistake to take the spurious infinite as the true infinite, it is likewise a mistake to take the infinite, qua ideal, to lie beyond or apart from the reality of the finite.

There is a further point to draw out from Hegel’s qualification here. For according to this passage, what distinguishes, for Hegel, the category of reality (or of finite, determinate being) from that of the infinite is that, apart from the fact that it comes earlier in the course of the Logic,

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143 SL 149/GW 21: 136.

144 Robert Stern’s analysis of Hegel’s ’idealist of finite being’ characterizes it as a “conceptual realism” that holds that “taken as mere finite individuals, things in the world cannot provide a satisfactory terminus for explanation, but only when they are seen to exemplify ‘universals, ideal entities’ (in the manner of Thales’ water onwards) which are not given in immediate experience, but only in “[reflective] thinking upon phenomena”’ (Stern, *Hegelian Metaphysics*, 79). Taking the relationship to be one where finite beings ‘exemplify’ ’ideal entities’ seems to involve positing the infinite as just such a ‘beyond’ of finite things. The infinite is, according to Hegel, that which ’is there,’ not some ideal, universal entity exemplified by finite things. Stern’s characterization seems rather to evoke Hegel’s description of the stable ‘realm of laws’ posited by the Understanding in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* but this ideal entity (or set of such entities) was precisely not to be understood as infinite.
‘reality’ is a more abstract category than the infinite, or, what is the same, the infinite is itself more concrete. What could motivate this seemingly counter-intuitive claim? Is not reality—even if we grant Hegel’s point that it is ontologically insufficient by its own standards—at the very least the more concrete, as opposed to the infinite, which is the ideal logical movement of that finite being? Was not this precisely Samuel Johnson’s point in kicking the stone that lay along his path? Hegel’s point here is that if it is true, as he has argued, that what looks on first blush to be self-sufficient finite being turns out in truth to be possible only as a moment of a more inclusive, ideal process called ‘the infinite,’ then to treat that finite being as nevertheless fundamental and self-sufficient is to abstract it out of its proper context. ‘Reality,’ which is a term that captures the determinate, qualitative presence of finite being, is an abstraction from the truth of the matter, which is the infinite context in virtue of which that determinate presence can be what it is. ‘Reality’ is thus an abstraction in two senses: first, because it leaves out the determinate characteristic of the infinite, and second, in the more familiar or colloquial sense: it highlights a general quality apart from the specific thing that is there—for the infinite is what truly is there.\textsuperscript{145}

In stressing the logical significance of ideality, that it marks the finite as a moment rather

\textsuperscript{145} Clarifying Hegel’s use of ‘reality’ here, in its opposition to ‘ideality,’ is important, because it helps strip us of the widespread prejudice that to say that something is real is to, as it were, grant it the highest ontological honour. Houlgate affirms that, the truth of the infinite notwithstanding, “finite things are undeniably real” (Houlgate, The Opening of Hegel’s Logic, 429), and that they “constitute moments of the real process that leads to the emergence of human consciousness” (ibid), in order to emphasize that “Hegel is not now denying that finite things exist; he is not depriving them of ‘true’ being in that sense” (ibid). The difficulty here is that the distinction between ‘reality’ and ‘ideality’ is being used to distinguish Hegel from both Kant and Berkeley, whom Houlgate groups together as ‘subjective idealists.’ The argument is that although both Kant and Berkeley “insist that the material objects we see are ‘empirically real’” (ibid), they are unable to account for the genuine, mind-independent reality of these objects. Hegel, on the other hand, is able to account for this reality, because unlike Kant and Berkeley, the sense in which these objects are ideal is not tied to the nature of our conscious subjectivity. Setting aside the question of whether this argument turns on a misunderstanding of Kant’s use of the phrase ‘empirically real,’ we should note that it cannot be supported by Hegel’s argument regarding the ideality and reality of the finite. To say that finite things are real is not to say that they exist, let alone that they exist independently of all minds. Whether or not that is the position Hegel articulates in the Phenomenology, it is not his position here. While his argument here does have an ontological consequence, this consequence is quite different: it amounts to the claim that finite being neither exhaustively constitutes nor accounts for what is designated by the term ‘reality’.
than as self-subsistent, I don’t wish to thereby weaken Hegel’s claim about ideality, or to strip it of ontological significance—I don’t want to reduce ‘ideality’ to merely a name that Hegel gives to being determined as infinite, one that we might want to translate into a less historically (philosophically) contentious term. Though he admits that there is no real significance to the opposition between philosophical idealism and realism, this does not mean that idealism holds no ontological consequences, or that it is merely a new terminology that says nothing different about what we take to be reality (in the colloquial sense). We should not lose sight of the fact that the truth of determinate being—what determinate being actually is—is not simple qualitative presence. Rather, that reality that we attempt to pick out by, for example, kicking rocks along our path, is in truth a logical—or ideal—relation between finite moments. Moreover, this is not a conclusion that Hegel has reached by interpreting finite reality in light of some presuppositions, like, for example, the claim that all that we directly perceive are ideas. Instead, he has reached this conclusion by showing that, taken on its own, this is what finite, determinate being has revealed itself to be. What that reality (in the technical sense, that is, the somethings that are present before us) turns out to be is an infinite movement that is neither beyond the world of finite things, nor, more importantly in this context, simply or immediately present, either. What reality is, in truth, isn’t something that can just be pointed to—and this conclusion must be seen as ontological rather than epistemological, since it is motivated not by an epistemological premise about the nature of consciousness or experience, but rather (as with every argument in the Logic) by the logic of what finite being must be according to its own logic. Already, then, we can see that being is a logical movement that must be grasped in thought.

146 Unlike, say, Ameriks, in “Hegel and Idealism”.

147 SL 155/GW 21: 142.
When Hegel says, then, that the “ideality of the finite is the most important proposition of philosophy, and for that reason every genuine philosophy is Idealism,” we can read his somewhat bold claim in the following way: there is something about the way finite things really are that cannot be captured in their simple qualititative presence, or their ‘reality’ (in the technical sense). That we, as philosophers, attempt to say something true about finite things (or the collection of them that we call ‘the world’) by appealing beyond their qualitative presence to logical, ideal relations, already demonstrates that we are, at least minimally, committed to something like the idealism Hegel is referring to here. We do not (at least, many philosophers do not) think that we can capture everything true about finite things simply by observing their presence before us, and not because there are other facts, external to these finite things, that we take to be true, but because the truth of these very finite things—that which they are—is not exhausted by their being there.

Finally, by suggesting that ideality can describe the infinite itself, as I have here, I am not departing from Hegel’s use of the term. Though it is the finite that is recast as ‘ideal being,’ it is so recast in the context of the true infinite, from which it is not independent, but for which it is rather a constitutive moment. The infinite has the finite within it (logically) as an ideal moment, and is therefore constituted by ideality (bearing in mind that ideality does not mark out something ‘other than’ determinate being). Accordingly, Hegel writes,

here we must note, in passing, this twofold aspect which showed itself in connection with the infinite, namely that on the one hand the ideal is concrete, veritable being, and on the other hand the moments of this

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148 El 152/GW 20: 133. Compare to Sl 154/GW 21: 142, where he writes that “The proposition that the finite is ideal [ideell] constitutes idealism...Every philosophy is essentially an idealism or at least has idealism for its principle, and the question then is only how far this principle is actually carried out.”
concrete being are no less ideal—are sublated in it; but in fact what is, is only the one concrete whole from which the moments are inseparable.\textsuperscript{149}

The key to understanding this characterization of the ideal, as both itself concrete being and the moments incorporated in that being, lies in Hegel’s remark that this “twofold aspect showed itself in connection with the infinite.” The logic of the ideal, expressed here, just is the logic of the infinite, which itself “is and is there, present before us”,\textsuperscript{130} and at the same time has the finite and spurious infinite (which is itself another determination of finitude) as ideal moments in it. On my reading, the ideal just is another characterization of the infinite, determined by the fact that finite being is originally characterized as “real”; as such, the ideal is that which is itself by containing its other (the moments of concrete being, determined in their finitude as ‘real’) in it as a moment of the whole. Or, put slightly differently, ‘ideality’ captures this feature of the infinite.

2.4 The Infinite as Self-Relation

I have just said that infinity, qua ideality, is itself in virtue of containing its other as an incorporated moment within it. This characterization, however, elides one of the distinctive and crucial aspects of the true infinite (indeed, the element that is integral to the passage from determinate being, or being-there, to being-for-self): the true infinite is a logical \textit{movement}, or as

\textsuperscript{149} SL 155/GW 21: 142-143.

\textsuperscript{130} SL 149/GW 21: 136.
Hegel puts it, a process of *becoming*. The infinite is not immediately and statically itself, but becomes itself in the articulation of the incorporated relationship between itself and the finite. In the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, Hegel describes the infinite as that which “consists rather in remaining at home with itself in its other, or (when it is expressed as a process) in coming to itself in its other.”

While the finite stands in an unchanging, negative relation to its other, the infinite is that which is only as the articulated relationship to an other that is not truly other, or an incorporated other. The infinite is, therefore, fundamentally characterized by a relation to itself, a relation that is mediated by its other (the finite); it is “the consummated return into self, the relation of itself to itself.”

The language of the ‘relation to self’ is indeed rather abstract, but the idea itself is relatively straightforward. The infinite is the ideal whole of subjugated moments, which moments are distinct from the ideal whole though not thereby independent entities. What makes this relation a self-relation is the fact that the nature of that ideal relation needs to be articulated in terms of those very subjugated moments—they play a necessary role in determining the nature of that ideal relation, and so the ideal whole is necessarily in relation to itself *qua* subjugated finite moments. The nature of the infinite is thus not indifferent to the finite moments incorporated within it, unlike a set,

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131 “This determination of the true infinite cannot be expressed in the formula, already criticized, of a *unity* of the finite and infinite: *unity* is abstract, inert self-sameness, and the moments are similarly only in the form of inert, simply affirmative being. The infinite, however, like its two moments, is essentially only as a *becoming*, but a becoming now further determined in its moments” (*SL* 148/*GW* 21: 136).

132 *EL* 149 (§94 *Addition*).

133 This reading of the infinite as the introduction, in the *Science of Logic*, of the concept of self-relation is supported by Rolf-Peter Horstmann, “Substance, Subject and Infinite: A case study of the role of logic in Hegel’s system,” in Katerina Deligiorgi ed., *Hegel: New Directions*. Chesham: Acumen, 2006: “Hegel first introduces the concept of self-relation as a structural characteristic of a specific categorical form in the so-called ‘logic of being’. It makes its appearance there in the description of what Hegel calls ‘infinity’” (Horstmann, 77). Dieter Henrich, by contrast, claims that in the logic of ‘Being,’ *none* of the conceptual structures Hegel analyzes are explicitly shown to be “self-referring structures” (Henrich, *Between Kant and Hegel*, 320).

which can in principle contain any number of different kinds of elements. In being a relation of specifically these moments, namely, the finite moments of the finite and the finitized infinite of the ‘beyond’, the true infinite thus is in relation to itself. And it is thanks to this fact, that the infinite is explicitly self-related, that it can mark the transition from there-being to being-for-self. One consequence of this fact is that to fully grasp the logic of the true infinite, we should consider briefly what the transition to being-for-self means for the course of the Logic, since “In being-for-self, qualitative being finds its consummation; it is infinite being” (SL 157). While we have already seen how the infinite, as a determination of being, introduces the category of ideality, and commits us (insofar as we follow Hegel’s logic), as philosophers, to idealism, examining the infinite as self-related will expose another significant dimension of Hegel’s understanding of ontology: namely, that being has a self in a way that is at least formally analogous to the sense in which there is a self for self-consciousness.

First, in order to draw out the relevant logic of being-for-self, consider the first appearance of ‘becoming’ as a category for Hegel (i.e., before its advent in the form of the infinite). In contrasting the two—the original category of becoming and the infinite—we will be able to see exactly what is novel about the infinite’s self-relation. In the first ‘becoming,’ the logical movement has for its moments ‘pure being’ and ‘pure nothing’. As in the infinite, in ‘becoming,’ the two moments pass over into each other, the thought of the one being revealed to be, in fact, the thought of the other, but are not thereby simply unified. ‘Becoming’ reveals itself as at the same time both the identity of pure being and pure nothing and their difference. It is therefore “a

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movement in which both are distinguished, but by a difference which has equally immediately resolved itself”\textsuperscript{156}. We can see how this combination of identity and difference of opposites is constitutive of the infinite, as well: each of the finite and the (spurious, finite) infinite begins as the opposite of the other, independently determined as what it is, and then is shown to be that very other. In the case of the infinite, however, this movement resulted in a true infinite, since this movement constituted a true transcendence of limit, which is just what the infinite was supposed to be all along. In the alternating movement between pure being and pure nothing, however, the case is different. Pure being (and pure nothing for the same reason) was meant to be “indeterminate immediacy equal only to itself…it has no diversity within itself”\textsuperscript{157}. For this reason, the movement that gets described as ‘becoming,’ the passing of pure being and pure nothing into each other is, as a result, different from pure being, and marks a genuine progression into new logical territory. In this movement, each of the two moments “immediately vanishes in its opposite”\textsuperscript{158}. The logical passage being-nothing-becoming therefore does not mark any kind of return, since the only result, the logical movement of becoming, is decidedly not where we started.

What is distinct about the becoming that is the infinite is that it does constitute such a return, and that return is critical in establishing the primitive form of ‘self’ found in being-for-self. The stress placed on the fact that the infinite is, in its return, a becoming of itself, or that it is a result rather than a pre-determined starting point, refers to the fact that the infinite can only be characterized by describing the logical process of which it is the result. Moreover, this return into itself is not the endless, repetitive oscillation of pure being and pure nothing, but a productive

\textsuperscript{156} SL 83/GW 21: 70.
\textsuperscript{157} SL 82/GW 21: 68-69.
\textsuperscript{158} SL 83/GW 21: 69.
return—a phrase which, as a kind of oxymoron (how can it be productive if we’re returning to the point from which we started?) captures the difficulty in grasping the logical nature of the true infinite. The infinite has determined itself in its finite moments. The infinite is the relation to itself qua related terms (that is, qua finite). But despite this putative difference, infinite qua relation and qua related, the infinite is not actually related to anything genuinely non-infinite, since the related moments are constitutive of the infinite relation. This is why, earlier, we were able to say that the infinite is concrete, determinate being, or that “it is and is there,” rather than being the mere beyond of the spurious infinite. In this way, the infinite is self-related in the form of being other-related.

What Hegel points out in introducing his discussion of the category ‘being-for-self’ is that this logical structure of the infinite, that it finds itself through its other, and is therefore for itself, is similar to the logical structure that we find in consciousness. He writes, “Consciousness, even as such, contains in principle the determination of being-for-self in that it represents to itself an object which it senses, or intuits, and so forth; that is, it has within it the content of the object, which in this manner has an ‘ideal’ being; in its very intuiting and, in general, in its entanglement with the negative of itself, with its other, consciousness is still only in the presence of its own self”.159 Thus, on the one hand, in my consciousness of the table in front of me, I am conscious of an object that is other than me and external to me, and all of this quite independently of me; on the other hand, it is in my consciousness, and in that capacity, it is in me ideally, as a moment constitutive of my conscious experience. In other words, despite the fact that this logical feature of consciousness might not be explicit in experience, consciousness is at least in principle being-for-self.

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159 SL 158/GW 21: 145.
This difference between the true infinite, *qua* being-for-self, and consciousness is, however, significant; there is nothing in the mediated self-relation of infinity that suggests that the finite is maintained as an other external to infinity. Rather, Hegel’s argument is in part an argument against the externality of the finite to the infinite, whereas this is at least in part the experience of consciousness, that its object is beyond it (in external existence, for e.g.). To this point, Hegel makes a very interesting remark:

*Self-consciousness*, on the other hand, is being-for-self as *consummated* and *posited*; the side of connexion with an other, with an external object, is removed. Self-consciousness is thus the nearest example of the presence of infinity; granted, of an infinity which is still abstract, yet which, at the same time, is a very different concrete determination from being-for-self in general, the infinity of which has a determinateness which is still quite qualitative.¹⁶⁰

There are two things to notice here. First, self-consciousness is a better example of the infinite precisely because there is no supposed connection with an other that remains other, or that has not been incorporated into the structure of self-consciousness itself. Unlike in consciousness, self-consciousness explicitly finds itself in its other. When I am conscious of myself, I am conscious of the various finite elements of my experience as being for me, and am conscious of myself, or return to myself, as neither the spatio-temporal manifold present to me, nor the consciousness to which they are present, but as an infinite unity that includes each of these as moments. Second, Hegel writes of infinity as a logical form that can appear in various determinations—in self-consciousness, but also in being-for-self generally. This means, I take it, that we can speak of the

¹⁶⁰ *SL* 158/GW 21: 145.
infinity of being-for-self, or the infinity that is the culmination of determinate being, without thereby making the direct (and radical) claim that being has already been demonstrated to be explicable only as identical with some self-consciousness.

Having said that, we might ask exactly how far apart these two determinations of infinity are, or what it is that separates them. If we don’t adopt—as I don’t think Hegel would expect us to—the claim that the infinite, as encountered in the Doctrine of Being, just is self-consciousness, we can ask what the force of the analogy is. In the context of this question, consider a very similar point that Hegel makes in the Encyclopaedia Logic. There, he writes, “To put the point formally, ‘finite’ means whatever comes to an end, what is, but ceases to be where it connects with its other, and is thus restricted by it. Hence, the finite subsists in its relation to its other, which is its negation and presents itself as its limit. But thinking is at home with itself, it relates itself to itself, and is its own object. Insofar as my object is a thought, I am at home with myself. Thus the I, or thinking, is infinite because it is related in thinking to an object that is itself. An object as such is an other, something negative that confronts me. But if thinking thinks itself, then it has an object that is at the same time not an object, i.e., an object that is sublated, ideal. Thus thinking as such, thinking in its purity, does not have any restriction within itself.”

Though this passage replaces the language of self-consciousness with the language of thought and the ‘I,’ the connection is not difficult to establish; the ‘I’ that has itself as an object in thought just is what self-consciousness is. What it is for the ‘I’ to be infinite just is for it to have included its other, the object before it, as an ideal moment in it, negating the putative independence that object held. And as Hegel observes,  

\[\text{EL} \, 67 \, (§28 \, \text{Addition}).\]

\[\text{EL} \, 153 \, (§96 \, \text{Addition}).\]
this is precisely what thinking is. Notice, too, that in both the passages from the \textit{SL} and \textit{EL}, Hegel uses the term ‘ideal’ to refer to, alternatively, the way in which consciousness has its object in it, or the way in which the object, for the ‘I,’ is not an other—which of course amount to the same thing. Notice, finally, a point that is always worth stressing in considering the infinite: when we say that the infinite incorporates its other as a moment, we cannot mean that it ‘swallows it up’ or that it annihilates the difference between it and its other. For consider how such an understanding of what it is to be a ‘moment’ would affect the analogy to self-consciousness. If, in being self-conscious, the I that was conscious of itself swallowed itself up, or removed any distance or difference between the I that is conscious of itself and the I of which it is conscious, self-consciousness would have \textit{no object}, and could not be ‘consciousness’ of any sort. That is, in self-consciousness, the I introduces difference into itself, a ‘difference that is not a difference,’ since it must be able to take itself as object, where ‘object’ here means, roughly, intentional object, meaning that the self-conscious I functions as both intending subject and intended object.

The key to understanding the difference between the infinite, as taken up in the Doctrine of Being, and the ‘I’ of self-consciousness, lies in Hegel’s comment, from the \textit{SL} passage quoted above, that the infinity of self-consciousness “is a very different concrete determination from being-for-self in general, the infinity of which has a determinateness which is still quite qualitative.”\textsuperscript{163} Recall from the discussion of the ideality of the infinite, above, that the infinite is concrete in virtue of having a determinate content consisting of finite, qualitative being. This is what is meant in distinguishing the true infinite from the spurious infinite by pointing out that only the latter is beyond the ‘reality’ of determinate being. On this understanding, the sense in which any infinity

\textsuperscript{163} \textit{SL} 158/GW 21: 145.
would be a ‘concrete determination’ would depend on the moments incorporated in it. This would make sense of Hegel’s claim that the infinity that is being-for-self in general would have a determinateness “which is still quite qualitative,” since the relevant moments here—the finite and the spurious infinite—are determinations of being considered as quality, or as generally determinate. What makes self-consciousness an example of infinity is that it shares the same logical structure of referring to itself through incorporated otherness, though the moments are not finite being and the spurious infinite as the beyond of the finite. This is why we can say that self-consciousness is formally analogous to the infinite Hegel examines in the Doctrine of Being.

What I wish to suggest here, then, is that what is already present in the infinite of determinate being is a self understood not as a subject or person, that is, not as a self-consciousness, but understood as an inwardness that is formally analogous to self-consciousness. The infinite contains within it—ideally, not spatially—its finite moments. Being is thereby no longer understood, in its truth, as simple presence, or as mere quality, or, to return to an earlier discussion, as ‘reality’; that which being in truth is contains within itself that which is simply present, but is not exhausted by it. Further, the infinite is an inwardness in which it shows up for itself. Infinity refers itself back to itself explicitly. Infinite being is, then, constituted by, in addition to an inwardness, recursion. These two characteristics, inwardness and recursion, signify that the truth of being, determined as infinity, is not to be seen as an extension of the finite, nor as something containing its finite moments from some outside or third-person perspective (as I can see that my glass contains water, a fact that has meaning for me, but not for the glass itself), but as a within in which it encounters itself. To compensate for just how abstract this concept is, Hegel offered the ‘I’ of self-consciousness as the “nearest example,” as an illustration of what a ‘within in which it encounters itself’ looks like. Finally, the infinite is a process in which it establishes itself, an
inwardness that both finds and founds itself in its recursion, rather than something that is simply or immediately there. The radical nature of this conclusion should not be occluded by the fact that Hegel’s discussion of the infinite makes up one relatively brief and early step in the Doctrine of Being. Being has shown itself in truth to be the very opposite of what, as determinate being, it was originally taken to be, namely finite, simple qualitative presence. Already, at this very primitive stage of the Logic, Hegel has shown how we cannot take reality (in its colloquial sense) to be something that is merely or simply there to be noticed—a prejudice that is remarkably common.

If we think about these two aspects of the infinite that I have discussed, namely, the ideality of the infinite and the fact that it is being-for-self (which I further parsed in terms of ‘inwardness’ and ‘recursion’), and understand these aspects to capture the truth of being that Hegel has established by the end of his study of Dasein, we can grasp the full import of the fact that determinate being turns out in truth to be the infinite. That import is as follows: neither finite things, nor presence, nor immediacy are ontologically self-sufficient. They are, rather, derivative concepts, moments brought together in ideal unity in the context of infinity. Whatever happens going forward, we cannot revert to taking these categories to express something originary about reality (taken colloquially), or about the absolute.
Chapter 3

Reflection and the Self-Determination of Being

3.1 Introduction: From Being to Essence

Chapter 2 attempted to elucidate the logical structure that Hegel refers to as the 'true infinite'. As a result, it focused exclusively on the logic of 'being', which logic has, for Hegel, as its defining characteristic, the notion of immediacy. This is the immediacy of pure quality, the sense in which whiteness or redness is simply there. We can think of this immediacy as the ‘impressions’ of empiricism, that which is simply manifest, without the need for any inference or reasoning.

‘Determinate qualitative being’ captures the reality of what is simply present. When we acknowledge, however, that determinate being is present—that there is something there—we must also acknowledge (if we are philosophers) that this is possible only because the determinate being that is there is so on the basis of a context of infinite being out of which the present, determinate being is distinguished (or, what is the same, to which it is negatively related). Thus in the case of the infinite, the finite is constitutive of what the infinite truly is; as should now be familiar, the finite is not truly other than the infinite, but, in keeping with its logical determination of ‘real presence,’ is the real presence of the infinite, where ‘of’ is functioning here in two senses: it expresses the fact that the infinite is in some sense present, though in an indirect way (this is the way in which the infinite is present), and the fact that what is present (determinate being) is ‘of’, or belongs to, the infinite. This allowed us to determine, logically, what it is for something to have a ‘mediated
identity,’ or to be something that consists in the identity of the thing itself and its opposite. The infinite is only in and through the finite determinacy incorporated in it. This offers us the first step to a logical account of self-determining individuality, since such an account must, in part, be able to make sense of the way in which individuality is comprised of differentiated and opposed moments.

The crucial point to grasp in moving on to the argument in Chapter 3 is that once we have advanced to the logical structure of the infinite, we are no longer dealing with something that is putatively immediate; the difference between infinite and finite is constitutive of the former. We are thus no longer thinking in terms of the logic of 'being'. Instead, we are thinking of a thing that is present in virtue of something different, though not something other. That is, we are thinking about the way in which something shows up, where we can now distinguish between what the thing is and the way in which it shows up. Or, for Hegel, we are thinking in terms of the logic of 'essence'. Determinate being was simply the way in which it was present (that is, determinate being simply is quality, reality, finitude, since these are the terms in which it is present, or in which it is itself). Essence, by contrast, is distinguished from the way in which it is present, though (and this is important), not in the sense that the presence or showing up of essence is something other than essence itself—we can suppose no 'veil of perception' here separating appearance from reality, since, following from the logic of the infinite, there is no irreducible gap (epistemological or otherwise) presupposed between essence and the showing of essence, at least initially.

What this means, both for present purposes and for the development of Hegel's logic, is that the logical structure of essence, a logical structure that distinguishes between the thing itself and the way in which it is present, is a direct consequence of trying to think through the logical structure of that presence in the first place. The metaphysical significance should not be underestimated; Hegel's insight is that the notion that something shows itself (where, again, the showing is distinct
from the thing itself) is not to be conceived of as a contingent, epistemological fact that holds true only because we happen to exist as perceivers with various subjective biases. We should also be careful, though, not to overstate his case. The point is not that we can therefore deduce, *a priori*, the existence of finite particulars and their appearing in a certain manner, nor that we can deduce *a priori* the finite, empirical subjects (people) to whom they would appear. The point is rather the opposite: we cannot attribute the *difference between* something's showing up and that something itself to a fact about our being subjects with a particular perspective on the world. We can only (and indeed must) acknowledge the minimal conclusion that the notion of the difference between something and the way in which it is present is a *necessary logical condition* for thinking coherently about something being determinately present at all (which is to say, something *being*). Finite, determinate being shows itself to be the mediated showing up of something.

In section 3.2, I will briefly introduce the notion of ‘reflection’ as it expresses the logical relation of essence to the show of essence, considering the different senses in which something can be said to be ‘reflected.’ In sections 3.3 and 3.4, I will turn back to the *Science of Logic* to examine Hegel’s argument that there are three critical aspects of reflection that we need to grasp: the sense in which reflection is *positing*, the sense in which reflection is then *external* to what is posited, and the sense in which reflection is *determining* of the relation of positedness. Finally, in section 3.5, I will argue that by thinking through the logic of reflection, the logical relationship that defines the notion of ‘essence,’ as a *negative self-relation*, we will be able to see what it means to attribute the determination between a thing and its constitutive moments to the thing itself. In articulating why

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103 Since ‘Appearance’ is a concept that holds a specific place in Hegel's discussion of essence, and to use it here would risk serious confusion, and since Miller’s translation of *Schein* as ‘illusory being’ is even more misleading—a thing’s properties do not constitute an illusion—I will use the term ‘show’, with the aim of evoking the sense in which a thing’s properties determine the way in which it ‘shows up’.
reflection must be ‘determining,’ the logical culmination of such a negative self-relation, Hegel develops the logic of a thing where the distinction between the constitutive yet opposed terms (those that formed the ‘mediated identity’ of the infinite) is derived from their identity, and where that identity is itself only possible in virtue of the determinate opposition of the constitutive terms. It is, in other words, an account of the reciprocal determination of the identity of the whole and the difference of the constitutive moments (or logical ‘parts’). This will allow us to make sense of Hegel’s remarks in the Science of Logic about Kant’s notion of reflecting judgment (that form of judgment responsible from which we can determine the transcendental principle of the purposiveness of nature, and which deals with our experience of natural ends), and we can see what is at stake in moving from a transcendental (and hence subjectively ideal) logic of objects to a speculative logic of self-determination.

3.2 The Logic of Reflection

Where the logic of 'being' was characterized by the immediacy of its concepts—that is, a logic whereby no distinction is made between a thing’s being and its presence, as the brown of the table is only as a present, qualitative determination of my visual field—the logic of 'essence' will be characterized, fundamentally, as a dependence relationship between two terms: essence and its showing. Hegel gives this new (insofar as the Logic is concerned) logical structure the name of 'reflection'. We should thus understand ‘reflection’ to be the corresponding term to 'immediacy,' where the latter captures the logic of a single term, and the former captures the relationship of dependence between two terms. But why is the term 'reflection' appropriate for this use? Consider two colloquial ways in which we typically use the word 'reflect'. In the first case, a mirror can reflect various objects in it—thus I might say that my face is reflected in the mirror as I stand before it. In
this sense, 'reflected' captures the sense that my face is present, but in virtue of the mirror. That is, what shows up in the mirror is distinct from the way in which it is shown, so I can distinguish between my face and its reflection, and yet at the same time, it is my face that is reflected in the mirror. In the second case, I might say that I had been reflecting on a passage from Hegel's Logic. In this sense, I would mean that I had been taking what was immediately present—the words on the page—as not in themselves sufficient to capture the truth of the situation; I would mean that I was trying to move beyond the words on the page to an understanding of what the text really means. This sense of 'reflect' thus captures the sense that what is immediately present is not in itself sufficient to itself, or is not itself true, without designating the truth as something radically apart from or other than what is determinately present (the meaning of the text does not subsist independently of the words on the page).

Together, then, these two ways in which we speak, casually, of 'reflection', capture the logic of reflection insofar as we have already seen it manifest in the case of the infinite. But there is, between these two uses of the word 'reflect', an important difference. In the first case, we speak of what is reflected in the mirror; the emphasis is on the end result, or on the reflection qua product. In the second case, we speak of my reflecting on what is present; the emphasis is on the process or activity (or, to borrow a term from Hegel, the movement) of reflection (qua productive) itself. I am, in reflecting on the text, actively bringing about the distinction between what shows up and what is in truth, a distinction that was in some sense already implicit in the text itself. It is important to note the way in which this distinction (between result and process) is different from that made above.

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165 For a more complete rendering of this sense of reflecting on the meaning of a text—or, what is the same, of reading—as it relates to Hegel's notion of reflection, see John Russon, “Understanding: Reading and Différance,” in Infinite Phenomenology: The Lessons of Hegel's Science of Experience. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2016, pp.57-73. See also Robert Pippin, “Hegel’s Logic of Essence,” in Schelling-Studien, Band 1, 2013, p. 79.
The difference is subtle but important. One might think, to begin with, that reflection \textit{qua} result just is the presence of the reflection, that reflection \textit{qua} result is the same as essence \textit{qua} determinate presence, and that reflection \textit{qua} process is the activity accomplished by essence \textit{qua} infinite (which infinite was conceived, recall, as a \textit{movement}). In the first distinction (between determinate being and infinite truth, or between the showing of the thing and the thing shown), however, we are pointing out that \textit{there is a difference} between the thing shown and the manner in which it shows up (the way things seem and the truth of that seeming). In the second distinction, we take that first difference as already acknowledged, and then further distinguish between two ways of thinking of that difference—namely as static and already accomplished (result) or as being situated in the process of distinguishing itself. In other words, we first distinguish between two related terms (say, for example, appearance and reality, or mind and body, or cause and effect, or substance and property), and we can then distinguish between two ways of thinking of the difference between the two terms, namely, as given or as something to be articulated.

There are therefore \textit{two} important relationships captured in the concept of 'reflection'—first, the relationship between essence and its showing up, and second, the relationship between the result and the process—both of which will figure prominently in the analysis that follows. Put differently, in the second case, the relationship we are driven to consider is the relationship between the terms \textit{qua} differentiated and the terms \textit{qua} identified (insofar as both are moments of the overall logical structure of essence). This means that when we think of something 'showing up,' we are tacitly distinguishing two pairs of related moments. In shifting from the notion of infinite being to the notion of reflection, we have seen how what, in the form of the true infinite, initially seemed to be a stable result, is actually ground for further investigation. Specifically, we need to take into account the \textit{negative} character of the infinite self-relation, namely, the fact that the infinite...
is a self-relation only in virtue of being a relation among distinguished (and opposed) moments.

3.3 Positing Reflection

Hegel's analysis of the structure of reflection, or negative self-relation, takes three stages, each of which I will analyze in turn. The first of these stages Hegel calls *positing reflection*. Hegel's claim, in characterizing reflection as 'positing', is that for reflection, 'show' needs to be something *both* posited (as opposed to originary—we might here say 'derivative') and *something presupposed by reflection itself* (that is, as logically prior to reflection, which would itself then be in some sense derivative). If the logic of reflection is the logic of the relationship between essence and show, or a thing and its properties, this first stage of reflection describes the most immediate sense in which reflection is a dependence relationship—that is, the most immediate sense in which 'property' depends on 'thing,' and, conversely, in which a 'thing' is a thing only in virtue of its properties, and is thus dependent upon there being properties that belong to it for it to be a thing. This reversal of

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166 There is far from any consensus on this issue. Slavoj Zizek, following Dieter Henrich’s seminal *Hegel Im Kontext*, maintains that both the moments of positing and presupposing of show falls within the sphere of what Hegel calls “positing reflection” (Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. New York: Verso, 2008, pp. 255-6). Stephen Houlgate, on the other hand, agrees that positing reflection involves the presupposing of immediacy in some sense, though he argues that, pace Henrich’s account, the immediacy presupposed by reflection cannot be taken to be ‘independent’ of reflection, since the ‘independence’ of what is presupposed is characteristic of the next logical stage, *external reflection* (Houlgate, “Essence, Reflection, and Immediacy in Hegel’s *Science of Logic*,” in *A Companion to Hegel*. Ed. Stephen Houlgate and Michael Baur. Wiley-Blackwell: 2011, p. 144). Following an altogether different interpretive line, Robert Pippin appears to take ‘positing reflection’ to be the positing, in the face of given determinate particulars, of an essential ground that would be manifest in or ‘shine through’ those given particulars (Pippin, “Hegel’s Logic of Essence,” in *Schelling Studien*, Band I, pp. 89-90).
the assumed direction of dependency is a familiar Hegelian observation,\textsuperscript{167} but we should be careful not to simply reduce the logic of positing reflection exclusively to such general terms.

Hegel begins his discussion of positing reflection by reminding us of a critical aspect of the logic of essence: the show of essence (what Miller translates as "illusory being") does not have its true being in some other term,\textsuperscript{168} just as the infinite was not something else beside finite, determinate being (since, in this latter case, to treat it as ‘something else’ in this sense would be to treat it precisely as finite, as one among many). This is what makes the negation of reflection self-related: finite things are negatively related to each other, since the existence of one finite thing demarcates the nonexistence of another. Finite things are thus negated 'from the outside': they are negated by beings that share their ontological status as immediately being themselves, as determinate being. But the logic of essence is precisely not supposed to be understood in such terms, insofar as a thing’s essence isn’t just another property alongside all the other properties of that thing. Because for reflection there is no 'outside' referred to—reflection does not posit an equivalently present reflection against which it is negatively defined, or by which it is limited—reflection must, in some capacity, negate itself, or introduce an immanent difference.\textsuperscript{169} Insofar as it has been determined in the opening pages of the Doctrine of Essence, essence is that which truly is, and the logic that characterizes it, reflection, specifies that it is in virtue of a present-as-incorporated (or present-as-negated) determinate being (what Hegel calls 'show'). Show doesn’t

\textsuperscript{167} Recall, for instance, the Master who is dependent upon both the Slave’s recognition of her (the Master’s) mastery and the Slave’s actual mastery of the physical world, or the Sceptic whose own sceptical attitude is itself dependent on, and can only be articulated in terms of, the flux of the apparent world.

\textsuperscript{168} “Illusory being is nothingness or the essenceless; but this nothingness or the essenceless does not have its being in an other in which its illusory being is reflected: on the contrary, its being is its own equality with itself. This interchange of the negative with itself has determined itself as the absolute reflection of essence” (\textit{SL}, 400/GW 11: 250).

\textsuperscript{169} We can characterize this immanent difference as ‘self-negation’ because in it essence is distinguished, or negatively related, to something that, while constitutive of essence, is nevertheless distinct from it.
have essence outside of it anymore than the color and shape of my laptop have the laptop qua thing outside of them; show and essence have different ontological statuses, and the ontology of essence necessarily includes as subordinate the ontology of show. To say that the one is not ‘outside’ the other is to say that they are not to be conceived of as opposed but equivalent elements of one ontological domain or level of description. Put differently, the difference between essence and show is immanent to essence (where essence in the second position is understood as the totality this logic is describing).

From this point Hegel very quickly draws an important conclusion, one that prefigures the rest of his analysis of reflection: if we are trying to understand the show of essence as show (that is, as not in itself its own truth, or, as an insufficient description of the reality it picks out) without thinking of essence (or its truth, the putatively sufficient description) as something outside or beyond it, we need to think of reflection as expressing both a negative self-relation and a relation of self-equality. Recall here the infinite: it was itself precisely in being this negative relation, this expression of self-identity as constituted by negatively related elements (that is, as constituted by the finite). A finite thing, on the other hand, bears a negative relation to other finite things. Thus, as Hegel writes, “This self-related negativity of essence is therefore the negating of its own self. Hence it is just as much sublated negativity as it is negativity; or it is itself both the negative, and simple equality with itself or immediacy. It consists, therefore, in being itself and not itself and that, too, in a single unity.” Again, though this particular formulation emphasizes the strangeness of reflection, this is a logical structure to which we have, by now, already been introduced—for what is

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170 See Robert Pippin, “Hegel’s Logic of Essence”: “Essence’s seemings are its own (“remains within itself”), not something other than, qualitatively different from, another thing, as in the Logic of Being, even though no seeming or set of appearances expresses in their immediacy all that that essence actually is” (86).

171 SL 400/GW 11: 250.
the infinite if not both itself and not itself? Indeed, the infinite is *infinite*, without limit, precisely
insofar as it is both itself and that to which it is nominally opposed, all in a single logical structure.
The logic of reflection therefore captures this peculiar (though at the same time familiar, insofar as
it governs our experience of things in the world) logic, whereby a thing is, or establishes its own
identity, by distinguishing itself from an element of itself.

We can see this logic at work if we consider the ontological status of a thing and the relation
between that thing and its properties; let us take as example, following Hegel in the
*Phenomenology*\(^{172}\), a single grain of salt. The grain of salt *is* white, cubic, salty, solid. This is how
the grain of salt is manifest in reality, and insofar as I experience a grain of salt, I do so in virtue of
these properties. But these properties are manifest as precisely *not* identical with the grain of salt
*itself*; the properties have no independent existence, but are there (in the sense in which the
determinate being of ‘Quality’ *is there*, or is *Dasein*) only insofar as the grain of salt is; the salt’s
whiteness and cubic shape are nothing apart from the salt itself. The grain of salt *shows up* via a set
of determinate properties that are precisely determined as themselves not the salt, not the
ontological ground but the showing up of that ground. But this showing up captures the very being
of the salt: the grain of salt *is* only by way of determinate properties that are necessarily themselves
*not* the grain of salt, and that, apart from that salt, are *nothing*. And yet, of course, the grain of salt
is not some other thing beside the cubic shape and salty flavour and white colour etc. The salt is
not immediately present, and what is immediately present is in itself not the salt, and yet the salt
(like the infinite) is nothing beyond those qualities, but is that which is by incorporating them as
moments of a logical structure. This illustrates Hegel’s meaning when he claims that reflection is

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\(^{172}\) PS 68.
“the movement of nothing to nothing and is the negation that coincides with itself”.\textsuperscript{173} Thinking about the grain of salt, we can identify two such senses of ‘nothing. The first sense of nothing is the nothingness of the determinate qualities, qualities that are in themselves nothing, and that are something only through their being incorporated in the salt. The second sense of ‘nothing’ picks out the nothingness of the salt itself: there is literally nothing aside from these properties of the grain of salt that we can identify as the grain itself. The grain of salt is only in and through its properties just as the true infinite is only in and through the incorporated finite moments.

Reflection, in this sense, negates the negation of the show (which can be rendered as "What is present is not") and is nothing other than this negation of show, this distinguishing of the show of essence as ‘other’ than what truly is (which show isn't, therefore, really other). Hegel's aim, here, is to draw out the consequences of establishing both the self-identity of reflection and its difference from some opposed, immediate moment through this act of self-negation.\textsuperscript{174}

Our task, then, at first, is to distinguish the sense in which reflection is a negative relation between two different moments (say, for now, essence and show) and the way in which, as a self-relation for which there is no meaningful 'outside', it is simply equal with itself, and the way in which these two moments are consequences of one logical relation. We are attempting, in other words, to demonstrate how the logical relation of reflection (and, retroactively, as it were, the logic of the infinite) simultaneously establishes both an identity claim and introduces a distinction between non-identical elements.

\textsuperscript{173} \textit{SL 400/GW 11: 250.}

\textsuperscript{174} In other words, when Hegel tells us that reflection consists in “being itself and not itself and that, too, in a single unity,” we want to see what the consequences are of this distinction made between these two elements—reflection’s self-identity (its “being itself”) and its difference from some opposed though incorporated moment (its being "not itself")—and how these come to be established as moments of reflection (“and that, too, in a single unity”).
In order to grasp the first moment, that of self-equality, we need to evaluate in greater detail Hegel’s claim that reflection is “the movement of nothing to nothing and is the negation that coincides with itself”. In parsing this claim, we want to focus on the way in which this structure is simply, or immediately—without relation to anything other than itself—itself. Hegel’s phrase, here, characterizing reflection as the ‘movement of nothing to nothing,’ is meant to evoke the sense in which this ‘movement’ or relation between terms is not actually going to be a relation between terms determined (or understood) as numerically distinct. In order to see this, consider the way in which the show of essence—or, equivalently, the determinate presence of a thing, understood as logically distinct from the thing itself (so, the presence of the thing qua properties)—is determined as not in itself real being; it is only insofar as it is the determinate presence of some thing. There is, in this account of ‘show’, a negative relation at work, insofar as show is not x, where x is just ‘being’; properties are not in themselves, but are only in a derivative sense, thanks to that of which they are properties, and grasping something as a property is to grasp it as derivative, as not identical with the thing that truly is. But this negative relation does not work in the way that, in the realm of finite being, one finite thing is negatively related to another, since, as we have said, insofar as essence is, it isn’t some other thing limiting show. As Hegel says, show “is nothingness or the essenceless; but this nothingness or the essenceless does not have its being in an other in which its illusory being is reflected” [“Der Schein ist das Nichtige oder Wesenlose; aber das Nichtige oder Wesenlose hat

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175 It is in this sense that we can think of essence as reflected in its ‘show’: show’s nature, the nature of the concept, points to essence explicitly. To grasp something as a property is to grasp it as a property of some thing. John Burbidge puts this point in the following way: in the logic of essence, “each concept points to, and responds to, its counterpart. ‘Show’ reflects the essence, and ‘essence’ reflects the show. In other words, the mode of thinking we call reflection is not simply an approach we introduce from outside; it is also found within the very concepts being thought” (John Burbidge, The Logic of Hegel’s Logic. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2006.).
sein Sein nicht in einem Anderen, in dem es scheint..."[176] Because the logic of essence is the logic by which something is determined as different from its manifestation, from the way in which it is determinately present or ‘is there,’ the negative relation operates within essence itself. Essence is distinguished from the determinate presence that is not in itself self-sufficient being, and so is negatively related to that which is already negated, or that which is already determined as not being; but essence is in all this not negatively related to some other, just as in distinguishing the salt qua thing from its properties, we are not distinguishing it from something else, but from an element of itself. This negative relation is therefore a negative self-relation, and, more importantly, this negative self-relation just is what Hegel means by reflection. It is the distinguishing between the thing and that in which the thing is manifest or reflected, which is a distinction that is thereby just as much cancelled, insofar as we are not really distinguishing between two things. It is an account not of the difference between two things, but a difference immanent to essence itself.

It is in virtue of the fact that this distinction is equally cancelled—that the distinction made is as between two moments of essence—that Hegel tells us that reflection is “the negation that coincides with itself.” The decisive point here is that the ‘self-related’ negation inherent to the logic of essence is not directed at some already (that is, immediately) positive content. We can see this in

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176 SL 400/GW 11: 250. I have quoted the German in order to show that what Miller translates as “in which its illusory being is reflected” (“in dem es scheint”) might more simply be translated as “in which it shines” or “in which it shows up”. The point Hegel is making here is just that show isn’t the show of some other thing. This highlights, however, the inadequacy of the translation of Schein as ‘illusory being,’ since an illusion is precisely that which seems or shows up as other than what it really is. That is, an illusion operates at the level of determinacy: things appear to be one way, have certain qualities, when in fact they are some other way, and have some other qualities. Thus, on a sunny summer day, the highway appears to have a puddle on it, but this is mere illusion; in fact, the road is perfectly dry. The difference between the illusion and the reality—the apparent puddle and the dry road—is wholly different from the difference between the salt’s properties and its essential character as a grain of salt, for the simple reason that the salt qua thing doesn’t show up via some other set of determinate qualities, but is rather that which has the qualities we see. There can be, then, nothing ‘illusory’ in the logical structure of the show of essence.
a few ways, but, crucially, we already know that essence cannot be a self-related negation that is a negation of some immediately positive content because we know, from the Doctrine of Being, that there can be no immediately positive content whatsoever. Insofar as determinate being is, it is in virtue of a series of relations which we can capture with the logic of the infinite. It is thus precisely not immediately present. Or, we could say: the immediate positive content of determinate being—quality as reality—cannot be logically first. The logic of essence is the logic in virtue of which reference to such immediate positivity is possible, and this logic is a logic of self-related negation. Put differently: there is no determinate presence without the self-negating logic of reflection.

Rather than negating some already given positive content, then, the negation of reflection is, truly, a self-related negation; it is “this interchange of the negative with itself.” Insofar as reflection is self-related negation, it must be itself in and through being the negation of itself. It is the negated being of show that points back to the essence, the otherness of which is in turn negated. If the question motivating the arguments in the Doctrine of Essence is ‘how can something (the salt) be the identity of being itself (salt qua thing) and not itself (salt qua cubical, white, hard etc.)’, the answer Hegel gives is the logic of self-referential negation, which, at a purely formal level, is as the

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177 Perhaps the easiest way to make this point—though also perhaps the least helpful—is that if reflection just is self-related negation, it has to be this self-related negation that is negated, on pain of contradiction.

178 Stephen Houlgate characterizes this point in “Essence, Reflexion and Immediacy in Hegel’s Logic” in the following way: “Essence is non-immediacy, or the negative, that can never be simple, immediate being, and can never be simply and immediately the non-immediacy that it is either. It is so lacking in immediacy, therefore, that it is utterly self-negating. As such it is nothing but the movement of its own mere seeming. That movement of seeming is thus the movement of ‘absolute negativity’ (SL 399/ LW 13) that Hegel calls reflexion” (142).

179 Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit begins with a similar argument: we begin by taking the truth of experience—what we truly know—to be some immediate positive content, whatever is intuited by ‘Now’, for example, only to see that there is no possible way to immediately capture such a ‘Now’; we can point to ‘Now’ only retroactively, in virtue of the mediating relation Hegel there calls the Universal, which is in turn studied as the object of Perception, that mode of consciousness that encounters things bearing properties. See PS 58-66.

180 SL 400 GW 11: 250.
negation of itself, and is in that way also itself (since it is the negation of itself), and is in that way both itself and the negation of itself. We cannot think essence straight away, without this recursive logic of self-negation, because to do so would be to treat it as something that is immediately what it is, which is to treat it under the rubric of ‘pure being’. But in characterizing it in this way, as self-related negation, notice that we have nevertheless captured what this reflection is. Whereas finite being is determined in relation to another such finite being (such that there is an infinite regress of references to further finite beings), essence is in relation to itself (and is as a relation to itself). In all of the somewhat Escher-like self-relations, we have never moved on from describing the logic of, fundamentally, one thing. Hence, Hegel tells us, the negation of reflection “coincides with itself,” and we can therefore characterize this relation as the way in which reflection is. In capturing reflection’s being in this way, we have captured the moment of self-equality.

To complicate matters even further, Hegel refers to this self-equality as ‘immediacy,’ which should seem prima facie incorrect. The whole point of the foregoing was to capture the precise way in which this self-equality is not immediate, but rather the result of a self-referential negative relation. In what way can we rightly call this result ‘immediate’? Hegel is no doubt equivocating a bit on this term; the point to be made here is that reflection is equal to itself insofar as it describes a kind of totality, where no outward reference to a logically equivalent other is made. It is thus “immediacy simply and solely as this relation or as return from a negative, and hence a self-sublating immediacy.” In other words, as will be developed below, reflection on the one hand can be characterized without reference to an other logical structure or equivalent thing, and so it is “simply and solely as this relation,” but this ‘immediacy’ is nevertheless qualified, since it has this

self-identity only as the result of its self-negation; it is not, as we have said, immediate in the manner of pure being.

In characterizing the moment of self-equality of reflection, however, we should be extremely careful not to thereby erase the opposition between the two negated moments, because doing that just brings us back to the logic of Being, for which there is no such constitutive opposition. What distinguishes the self-equality of reflection from that of being is precisely that the self-equality of reflection is necessarily manifest as the opposition between two negatively related moments. Accordingly, we can now consider the second moment of reflection, the moment of being unequal with itself. We have just determined the sense in which reflection is equal to itself, in being the equality of the negative with itself (or the negating of the self-negation, the negating of the difference between itself and the other distinguished from it). Notice, now, how both 'immediacy' and 'equality-with-self' are precisely not ways of characterizing negation. Negation is, at least for Hegel, a relational term, and it is not immediate, but the loss of immediacy. Pure being was immediate and equal with itself insofar as there was nothing in it to be distinguished or against which it could be distinguished—but negating just is this distinguishing (as was seen in the consideration of quality in the previous chapter). In being equal with itself, then, the negative takes on a distinctively non-negative character.

The advantage of the foregoing analysis is that we can now see how reflection is meant to be the self-negation it is: the double negation (negation of negation itself) takes on the character of equality-with-self or immediacy in what appears to be a derivative fashion, by constituting the negative's "return into itself" (just as the infinite was such a 'productive return'). This immediacy, Hegel tells us, "is immediacy as the sublating of the negative," since the negative is not determined as an 'other' (though it is different from immediacy), but rather as a moment of the immediacy; and
yet it is immediacy "simply and solely as this relation or as return from a negative, and hence a self-sublating immediacy". Why, then, does Hegel call this immediacy "self-sublating"? It is so because, despite the fact that in negating itself reflection is immediate or equal with itself, it is so derivatively, as a 'return' from the negative that it is. It is an immediacy that 'sublates itself' because it is itself only by being the self-equality of the negative, or by being the self-equality of the distinguishing movement. Its immediacy is the result of the negating of itself; its immediacy or self-equality can only be defined negatively, in relation to that which it is (in a by now thoroughly qualified sense) 'not'. Or, finally, it is immediacy only through being negation—it is a mediated immediacy, paradoxically, by its own terms. The immediate self-equality of reflection and reflection understood as differentiating between two moments constitute, jointly, the logic of reflection as such, just as the finite and the finitized or spurious infinite jointly constitute the logic of the infinite. We can see, then, that part of what makes the logic of reflection such an especially thorny passage in Hegel's Logic is that the term 'reflection' is the name for the logical identity of two differentiated and opposed moments, where the opposed moments are, precisely, the self-equality or identity of the moments and their differentiation. But this self-referential logic is required to capture the logic of thinghood, the logic of an essence that is distinct from the immediacy through which it is manifest, the logic of that which is not that which it immediately is.

This immediacy, therefore, "consists in being that which it is not". Finally, Hegel tells us that this mediated immediacy is called posited being. This posited immediacy is that which *constitutes the determinateness of illusory being and which previously seemed to be the starting
point of the reflective moment”. That is, though it is tempting to think of the show of essence as the 'nothing from which reflection moved, we can see that reflection cannot, in fact, simply start with show, since that immediate determinate being is in fact posited—to be explained—by reflection's negative movement itself (and, further, since there can be no immediacy first, from which we can logically make our start). In understanding this show of essence to be posited, we understand it to be a derivative moment of reflection's self-negation.

This picture of reflection positing immediacy or being is not, it turns out, the full picture, since it leaves out an equally important sense in which that immediacy cannot simply and solely be a result. The difficulty turns on the reflexive nature of reflection's activity, and specifically on the seemingly paradoxical nature of negative self-reference. Since we have conceived of reflection's

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185 As has been stressed, however, it is critically important to avoid thinking of this as the positing or creating, by essence (or by absolute negation) of something other than it, of a finite world. This posited being is posited precisely because it is a moment of essential self-negation.

186 In “The Logic of Negation and its Application” in Between Kant and Hegel: Lectures on German Idealism. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008, Dieter Henrich describes the logic of ‘autonomous negation,’ which logic he thinks is “the core and the key” to Hegel’s Science of Logic; he claims, further, that “whether or not we can state such a meaning of negation is the eternal question that haunts the possible soundness of Hegel’s position” (319). The logic of ‘autonomous negation’ that Henrich describes is, effectively, the logic of reflection as I have described it here: without some positive presupposed content, negativity must necessarily be self-referential (since it is relational), and it thereby introduces moments of self-identity and differentiation, since “if we have only negation, which necessarily means negated negation, then we have also the opposite of negation” (318). With negation, Henrich claims, Hegel aims to “construct self-reference and determinateness as direct implications of one elementary, independent, and autonomous term” (319). Henrich’s account begins, however, with the positing of negativity as a first, or with the stipulation that we consider negation in an absolute sense, without reference to anything else: “Let us,” he writes “take our beginnings with negation alone” (317). What Henrich gives us, then, is helpful insofar as it is an account of reflection in abstraction from its place in the Logic—namely, a discussion of essence; abstracted from that context, though, which specifies precisely why we should entertain such a thought (why, that is, it is not simply adventitious to ‘begin with negation alone’—compare this to the true beginning of Hegel’s Logic—but why, rather, we cannot think of positive being without thinking of it as the result of such self-referential negation), it is perhaps unsurprising that the plausibility of such a construction should continue to “haunt the possible soundness of Hegel’s position.” Moreover, by tracing the connection, as I have hoped to do here, between the logic of reflection or ‘autonomous negation’ and the logic of the infinite, we can see how this kind of self-referential negation was already present in a nascent form in the latter, contrary to Henrich’s claim that in the logic of ‘Being,’ none of the conceptual structures Hegel analyzes are explicitly shown to be “self-referring structures” (320).
equality-with-itself as a result, we are forced to think of a starting point out of which that result can emerge. To see why this is the case, think of the following scenario: you say to me “This sentence is false.” Is what you have said true or false? In order to evaluate the meaning of this negatively self-referential sentence, which tells me that whatever the propositional content of the sentence is, it must be false, I must first determine what that content is. That is, the immediate content is just that the content of the sentence is false, which means we need to articulate a second-order content (the falsity of the first-order content) as distinct from a first-order content (that which is proclaimed to be false) in order to evaluate the truth of what you’ve said. The fact that there is no stable content we can identify as the first-order content (and hence no stable second-order content either) is what turns this statement into a paradox. But I nevertheless, in evaluating the statement and running through its paradoxical true-if-false-if-true-etc. self-negations, need at each stage to presuppose some value for the first-order content; I need to start by assuming that the sentence’s to-be-negated content is either true or false in order to then negate that content (since the statement tells me that it is false) and arrive at the final meaning of the statement. Such negative self-reference requires that we assume or presuppose some starting point from which we can perform the requisite self-negation.

We must remember, though, that the specific way in which the result of reflection—posited being—is obtained is by reflection’s negating itself. We must remember, too, that the character of reflection was originally determined as the negation of that immediate being that is not what it is. In other words, whereas above we understood reflection’s equality with itself to be the result of reflection, in explaining what it is for it to be equal with itself, we have described the show of essence that is to be negated in the first place. Notice, though, that this is exactly the result that we need, since only in this way can we still understand reflection to be the negation of itself—since, that
is, ‘show’ needs to be specified as a moment of reflection. As above, then, reflection needs to be understood as both equality-with-self and negation-of-self, and these "in a single unity." But this means that just as, in one sense, we can determine the immediate equality-with-self as *posed* being, or as the result that is derivative of reflection's negative activity, we must equally determine it as that from which reflection proceeds, as the starting point, since reflection is defined in terms of a negation of such immediacy. This immediate self-equality must therefore be presupposed by reflection. This is not to say just that we must presuppose some notion of reflection’s self-equality in order to coherently think the nature of reflection, though that is true. Hegel's point is a stronger one, and corresponds the claim that reflection *posits* this immediacy: the logical structure of reflection depends, logically, upon the idea of its immediate self-equality as a constituent moment that is *to be negated*. That reflection’s self-equality must be presupposed so that it can be negated (and thereby become itself) is clear even from the more basic idea that reflection is *constitutively* self-negating. If reflection is what it is only in negating *itself*, then it must in some sense be presupposed so that it can negate itself in the first place. But this means that as soon as we recognize reflection’s equality-with-self to be the result of its own negative activity, we must also recognize it as presupposed by this negative activity; or, as Hegel writes, “Reflection, in its presupposing, determines the return-into-self as the negative of itself, as that, the sublating of which is essence.”^{187} The return of reflection into itself—its self-equality—is opposed to it as that which is itself reflective of essence (or as the show of essence). Positing reflection is therefore equally *presupposing* reflection: understood properly, the two moments of reflection are logically co-dependent, but we do not yet have the resources to understand this relationship other than, on the one hand, the presupposing of that immediacy on which the negation acts, and the positing of that

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187 *SL 401/GW 11: 251.*
immediacy that is the result of such negation.

Stephen Houlgate\textsuperscript{188} argues that while the immediacy of reflection’s equality-with-self (what I have here identified with ‘posited being’) is just as much presupposed by this stage of reflection as it is posited, the presupposed immediacy must nevertheless be, \textit{qua} presupposed, dependent on reflection: “Presupposing, as a moment of reflexion in its initial “absolute” form, is not the presupposing of what is independent of reflexion. It is, rather, the presupposing of what is simply and immediately \textit{negative} (and wholly dependent on reflexion itself)... The simple, immediate negative that is presupposed by reflexion is nothing but a posit of reflexion itself: it appears to come first, but it actually owes its “prior” status to the very movement of reflexion to which it appears to give rise.”\textsuperscript{189} He further uses this claim to mark the distinction between ‘positing’ or ‘absolute’ (in his terms) reflection from ‘external’ reflection, which we will consider below. External reflection, on this reading, is distinct from positing reflection precisely in virtue of the fact that what is presupposed by external reflection \textit{is} in fact presupposed as independent of reflection. Thus, Houlgate writes, “When it becomes external reflexion, however, reflexion posits or presupposes genuine, free-standing immediacy...It is presupposed by reflexion, therefore, as that which is not posited by reflexion at all but \textit{found} by it.”\textsuperscript{190}

But this feature of external reflection, that what is presupposed by it is presupposed as independent and hence is ‘found’ by it, cannot possibly distinguish it from positing or ‘absolute’ reflection, since Hegel makes the very same point with respect to the latter, writing of positing

\textsuperscript{189} Houlgate, \textit{ibid.}, 144-5.
\textsuperscript{190} Houlgate, \textit{ibid.}, 146.
reflection that “It is only when essence has sublated its equality-with-self that it is equality-with-self. It presupposes itself and the sublating of this presupposition is essence itself; conversely, this sublating of its presupposition is the presupposition itself. Reflection therefore finds before it an immediate which it transcends and from which it is the return. But this return is only the presupposing of what reflection finds before it. What is thus found only comes to be through being left behind; its immediacy is sublated immediacy.” What can we conclude from this passage? At the very least, to call reflection’s self-equality a presupposition is precisely to determine it as independent and logically antecedent, as something ‘found before’ and thus not explicitly the product of reflection qua negativity, and, further, on which reflection qua negativity itself depends. The whole thrust of Hegel’s argument is that despite the initial claim that essence is the truth and ground of determinate being, or of show, we can see just by thinking about the logical relation between the two opposed moments that the dependence must, in some sense, run both ways. This is the conclusion of the section Hegel titles ‘Positing Reflection,’ and it is the consequence of thinking of a logical structure of self-related negation in which the negation serves to distinguish two distinct (though constitutive) moments.

This moment of immediacy or self-equality, as Houlgate writes, then, is not independent of reflection in an unqualified sense, but not because in truth it is (at this stage) merely posited as such. Rather, this self-equality is not independent because it is the self-equality of reflection itself. Reflection is in this sense an "absolute recoil upon itself," forever oscillating between presupposition or logical starting point and derivative result—and, importantly, for ‘positing reflection’, it is nothing other than the treating of the moment of self-equality (since there is nothing

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191 SL 402/GW 11: 252.
192 SL 402/GW 11: 252.
other than this show of essence) alternately as posited or as presupposed, meaning, as that which depends on it or as that on which it depends, respectively. "For the presupposition of the return-into-self—that from which essence comes, and is only as this return—is only in the return itself...the transcending of the immediate is the arrival at it". From one perspective, reflection is the negating and the movement away from some given immediacy, and from another, reflection is the result of this movement, a result that is itself the immediacy of self-equality. This recalls Hegel's formulation, quoted above, from the beginning of this section: reflection "is just as much sublated negativity as it is negativity; or it is itself both the negative, and simple equality with itself or immediacy."

The claim central to the Doctrine of Essence, and the claim that will eventually be demonstrated to be just as inadequate as the Doctrine of Being’s claim that what is simply is, is that what really is is distinct from what immediately is, and that what immediately is is only in virtue of what it really is; in other words, what immediately is is the appearance of what truly is, and that appearance is (that is, has being) only as derived from what truly is. The broad terms of this logic—the distinction between two moments, one of which is characterized as dependent on the other—are thereby inadequate to render the conclusion we have already reached, which is why Hegel’s conclusions regarding positing reflection (like, for instance, that it ‘finds before it’ an immediacy which only later ‘comes to be’ what it is) sound so paradoxical. What we want to see is how, nevertheless, as a moment of the logical structure of reflection that can be isolated, we can see how reflection’s other moment, that of self-related negativity, is reciprocally dependent on it. To grasp that immediacy as presupposed is to grasp it as logically antecedent and as independent, but we

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193 SL 402/GW 11: 252.
194 SL 400/GW 11: 250.
must also just as much grasp it as dependent, posited, derivative. Though Hegel demonstrates why both of these determinations must apply to the relationship between reflection’s two moments, and thus how they must be part of one selfsame logical structure, we have yet to see, however, how we might coherently reconcile these two claims.

3.4 From External Reflection to Determining Reflection

If we think of the logic of positing reflection (as explicated above) as articulating the identity between the different moments of reflection’s self-equality (or identity) and negativity (or differentiation), we can notice that in this characterization of reflection as the ‘absolute recoil upon itself,’ the self-equality of reflection is captured, but at the expense of the differentiation of the distinct moments. Though we can acknowledge the two moments of negative self-relation and immediate self-equality, what makes Hegel’s argument here so notoriously difficult to follow is that at this level of analysis, the two moments are accounted for only in and through their self-equality.

Positing reflection describes these two putatively opposed moments insofar as they are, in the final analysis, equal to each other. In this sense, the entire argument in this section (i.e. In ‘Positing Reflection’) is effectively summarized when Hegel writes, “The immediacy that reflection, as a process of sublating, presupposes for itself is purely and simply a positedness, an immediacy that is in itself sublated, that is not distinct from the return-into-self and is itself only this movement of return.” As we have seen, insofar as there is some being or immediacy posited by reflection, it is

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195 SL 402/GW 11: 252.
in itself both derivative and constitutive of the ‘movement’ of reflection as self-related negativity. The argument of the foregoing is meant to establish how ‘show,’ which we can now define as ‘posited being,’ is “not distinct from...this movement of return” which just is the movement of reflection’s negativity. This portion of the argument, then, in broad terms, seeks to demonstrate the sense in which these two seemingly distinct logical shapes are part of one and the same structure.

Of course, in thereby articulating the self-equality of reflection, or what reflection ‘immediately’ is, we are eo ipso articulating the self-equality of two necessarily distinct moments. These moments (themselves the logical moments of reflection’s self-equality and negating differentiation) are necessarily distinct in two senses: first, these two moments are at least prima facie logically opposed, even if not in the final analysis, and second, they are each uniquely (though jointly) responsible for constituting the logic of reflection. In other words, reflection, as the logic of essence—the logic by which a thing is distinct from what it immediately is—requires both moments to constitute the logical structure of self-negation. But this means that the difference between them is itself essential to capturing the logic of reflection. We can think of this conclusion from a different perspective, as well: if the logic of reflection is the logic of self-related negation, and if that logical structure must be determined as the self-equality of the opposed moments of its own self-equality and negative differentiation, then the self-equality of those two moments must itself be equal to the difference between the moments. For consider the alternative: if reflection’s self-equality is captured as the identity of two moments whose difference, ultimately, is elided in their more fundamental identity, then the self-equality achieved is not the equality of self-equality and negative differentiation, since it is achieved at the expense of the differentiation of the two moments.
If, however, we are to include, explicitly, the difference between the constitutive moments of reflection in our account of reflection, we are thus explicitly introducing determinacy into what reflection is; as Hegel writes, the immediacy of posited being “is determined as negative, as immediately opposed to something, therefore to an other. Thus reflection is determinate…” The important point is that although the logic of determinacy, as we saw in the previous chapter, is not itself adequate as an account of Being, or the Absolute—that is, although it is not an adequate final description of reality—it remains nonetheless a logical category of reality, as does ‘being’ in a more general sense. Just as, in the case of the infinite, the logical structure we end up with includes the determinate opposition between finite and finitized (or spurious) infinite, so too the logic of reflection includes the determinate opposition between its two moments.

In the previous chapter, I argued that if the infinite isn’t taken as in the first place other than the finite, if we don’t posit the infinite as beyond the finite, we can’t establish the mediated identity of the two which the true infinite is. One cannot account for the true infinite just in terms of its incorporating of the finite; the presupposed opposition between the two is essential. The difference has to count as real, first, in order for the identity of the different moments to be articulable and defined. But to make this difference real, the infinite needs to be posited as different from the finite in finitude’s own terms; recall that it is only the spurious infinite, the explicitly non-finite, that is opposed to the finite. Analogously, in the case of reflection, the difference between the two moments, which is a determinate difference insofar as the one moment is the negation of the other, must be expressed in the terms of determinacy: “since, in accordance with this determinateness, [reflection] has a presupposition and starts from the immediate as its other, it is

196 SL 402/GW 11: 252.
In treating the related moments of reflection as determinately differentiated, the two moments are external to each other, in that the difference between the two moments is not taken to be exclusively the product of their subsumption in the logical structure of reflection. This rendering of the difference between the two moments of reflection as determinate is thus characterized as ‘external’, or, tellingly, real reflection by Hegel, since the two moments are treated as ‘real’ in the sense discussed in the previous chapter.

In thus shifting from ‘positing’ to ‘external’ reflection, we are not simply contradicting the conclusion we reached, above, that the two moments are jointly moments of one selfsame logical structure. Rather, the point is that to get the right logical structure of self-negation, we need to posit the two moments as determinately related, as other to each other, for otherwise their self-equality comes at the expense of the negative differentiation. So we are trying to describe the logical structure—that of reflection—that will properly give us the result we sketched out as necessary at the beginning of the chapter. In order to account for the self-equality of reflection we described in the previous section, we must think in terms of the determinate difference between the related moments of self-equality and negative differentiation.

We can see, finally, an analogous point made by Hegel in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, when Hegel considers the logic of ‘Force,’ an object of consciousness defined as just such an identity of self-equality and immanent difference:

“...Force is also the whole, I.e. It remains what it is according to its Concept; that is to say,

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197 *SL* 402*/GW* 11: 252.

198 “But external or real reflection presupposes itself as sublated, as the negative of itself. In this determination it is doubled...” (*SL* 403*/GW* 11: 252).
these *differences* remain pure forms, superficial *vanishing* moments. At the same time there would be no difference at all between Force proper which has been driven back into itself, and Force unfolded into independent ‘matters’, if they had no *enduring* being, or, there would be no Force if it did not *exist* in these opposite ways. But that it does *exist* in these opposite ways simply means that the two moments are at the same time themselves *independent*.\(^{199}\)

Though the point here is rendered in the terms of consciousness—hence ‘enduring being,’ for example—it is structurally equivalent to the argument we have just considered. Force is meant to be the *one* phenomenon that consists of *two* moments: Force ‘proper’ or ‘driven back into itself,’ namely Force *qua* self-equality or unity, and Force ‘unfolded into independent ‘matters” or Force *qua* determinate difference, or manifest Force. That is, Force is the identity of these two moments, and is necessarily constituted by these two moments, and these two moments are necessarily different from each other. (A Force that is never realized is not truly a Force, just as there can be no cause without a corresponding effect.) But, and this is Hegel’s point, for there to be a difference between these two moments, for the two moments to be different from each other, they must be each found at the level of determinate difference, the level at which one thing (something) is different from an *other*. The only way in which Force’s self-quality, Force ‘proper,’ can count as *different than* Force ‘unfolded into independent matters’ is if Force proper is itself manifest as different than Force ‘unfolded’, as another existing Force. It has to be, put simply, different in the ‘terms of difference,’ the terms of ‘this’ as opposed to ‘that’. If these two moments of Force are essential to what Force is—which, *ex hypothesi*, they are—then they must themselves be expressed as different in Force ‘unfolded,’ since Force ‘unfolded’ is what it is precisely by being the

\(^{199}\) *PS* 82.
expression (or reflection) of Force ‘proper’. The difference between Force’s two moments must thereby be expressed in manifest Force.

Similarly, then, if the two moments of self-equality and negative difference are essential to reflection’s logical structure, and if the moment of posited being (reflection’s self-equality, taken alternatively as derivative and presupposed) is meant to be that determinate being that reflects reflection’s own nature, the difference between the two moments must there be manifest. Or: if the difference between essence and ‘show’ is essential to what essence (as the total structure, not the abstracted moment) is, that difference must be reflected in the determination of ‘show,’ since ‘show’ is how ‘essence’ ‘shows up’. The logical structure that is essence cannot be manifest by a simple, undifferentiated immediacy, precisely because essence is, logically, only in and through differentiation.

This last conclusion helps make sense of an important claim Hegel makes at the beginning of his discussion of ‘external’ reflection, namely, that insofar as reflection is ‘external,’ “…it is doubled: it is what is presupposed, or reflection-into-self, which is the immediate; and also it is reflection that is negatively self-related; it is related to itself as to its non-being.” Reflection is ‘doubled’ in this sense since in order to be differentiated from the posited immediacy of ‘show,’ it must itself be found at the level of show, as determinately (that is, negatively) related to it. Where above the ‘show’ of essence was characterized as simple immediate self-equality as posited by the self-directed negativity of reflection, we can now see that this structure of reflection is possible only if the posited show is itself determinate, if the negative differentiation of reflection is itself reflected.

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200 SL 403. The ‘doubling’ of reflection is even more stark in the German text: “Sie ist in dieser Bestimmung verdoppelt, dascinemal als das Vorausgesetzte oder die Reflexion-in-sich, die das Unmittelbare ist. Das andremal ist sie die als negativ sich auf sich beziehende Reflexion...” (GW 11: 252-253, my emphasis).
in ‘show’, or if ‘show’ is determinately opposed to ‘essence’, which, as that which is immediate, or in the form of posited being, is distinguished from that which is the self-relating negativity. There are two points to draw from this claim:

1) This splitting or doubling of reflection is a specification of the notion that reflection is self-related negativity. In positing reflection, we saw one sense in which reflection is negatively self-related, as the negation of a moment of itself (which moment, posited being, or show, is determined as opposed to reflection). In external reflection, now, we can see that there is a second sense in which it is self-related negation: not only does reflection negate itself in positing show, it negates itself by doubling itself in the form of the posited being to which it is opposed (that is, essence is itself treated as a determinately opposed to show). Hegel is quite clear on this point, that it is essence that is itself posited as determinate: “External reflection, when it determines, posits an other—but this is essence—in the place of the sublated being...” In this sense, we have two pairs: first, there is the pair essence/show, and second, within, as it were, essence itself, there is the pair essence qua negative movement and essence qua determinate thing. Moreover, the first pair can only be distinguished (that is, essence can only be distinguished from show) insofar as we also

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201 Zizek (The Sublime Object of Ideology) highlights the significance of this doubling, referring to it as a ‘split’ in essence itself: “We find ourselves in external reflection when the essence—the movement of absolute mediation, pure, self-referential negativity—presupposes ITSELF in the form of an Entity existing in itself, excluded from the movement of mediation...This is the decisive but usually overlooked lesson of Hegel’s theory of reflection: we can speak of the difference, the fissure separating the essence from appearance, only in so far as the essence is itself split in the way described above—only, that is, in so far as the essence presupposes itself as something alien, as its own Other. If the essence is not in itself split, if—in the movement of extreme alienation—it does not perceive itself as an alien Entity, then the very duality essence/appearance cannot establish itself” (256-7). When Houlgate (“Essence, Reflexion, and Immediacy in Hegel’s Science of Logic”) suggests that external reflection takes what is presupposed to be independent, he is right, though as I have tried to argue above, this describes equally well the presupposition of ‘posing’ reflection. The point is that that independence can only be properly rendered insofar as the difference between the two moments is itself manifest in show, or posited being; this is what it would mean for the two moments to be externally related. Only if reflection is doubled and manifest in show can show be represented as “falling outside reflexion,” since only in this sense are the two moments in the domain of ‘falling outside one another,’ namely, the logic of determinate being.

202 SL 405/GW 11: 255.
distinguish the two forms of essence or reflection. Reflection needs to differentiate itself in order to be what it is, namely, that which is the negation of posited being or show. As from the beginning, reflection is only by negating itself.

2) Despite the fact that as external, reflection is itself posited as determinately opposed to show, or is itself posited as immediate (in the precise sense in which show was immediate)—despite the fact that this externalization of essence over show as itself a posited determinate being is essential to reflection’s logical structure—this opposition must already be canceled, insofar as what is thereby posited, as essence, isn’t fundamentally opposed to show, since they are moments of the one structure.

This second point will lead us to understand why reflection, according to Hegel, needs to ultimately be understood as ‘determining’ reflection. The central claim here is as follows: insofar as ‘essence’ and ‘show’ are not immediately identical—insofar as there is a meaningful logical difference between the two related terms—they must be conceived of as determinately related, and hence show is in this sense ‘presupposed’; it is taken to be in itself negatively related to (distinct from) essence. But at the same time, ‘show’ cannot simply be presupposed, since it is show precisely by being posited by essence, by having its being only in relation to what is essential, to that of which it is the determinate manifestation; it must therefore just as equally be posited by, or defined solely in relation to, essence. Consider, first, the initial picture characterized as ‘external

\[\text{To be distinguished from reflection conceived of as ‘determinate,’ as well as from the section that looks at the ‘determinations’ of reflection. Hegel’s phrase here is ‘Bestimmende Reflexion’; when Hegel, in introducing external reflection, tells us that reflection is determinate, he writes “So ist die Reflexion bestimmt…” (GW 11: 252). Finally, when Hegel starts the next section—on the ‘determinations of reflection’—he tells us that “Reflection is determinate reflection” (SL 409), which, in Hegel’s German, reads: “Die Reflexion ist bestimmte Reflexion” (GW 11: 258). The point here is just to acknowledge that where Miller gives us different formulations—determining as opposed to determinate—this is tracking a distinction in the German text, and thus we are warranted (and, according to the argument, required to do so) in treating the two as distinct logical concepts (and, indeed, the difference between the static adjective ‘determinate’ and the active, verbal adjective of ‘determining’).}\]
reflection’: there is an essence that ‘finds before it’ a presupposed immediate being that is in itself only the show of essence, only that in which essence is manifest. There is a fundamental asymmetry, logically speaking, between these two determinately opposed beings. At the same time, essence can only be determined as essence insofar as it posits this being to which it is related; or, put differently, show must be determined as what it is only in virtue of its relation to essence (since it is the ‘show’ of essence). In order, as I have argued, for there to be a difference at all between essence and show, which is required by definition, show, that posited immediacy, must be determinately (that is, negatively) opposed to essence as itself posited. This posited immediacy of show “consequently becomes the negative or the determinate...” This posited immediacy must be presupposed as opposed to essence, and yet at the same time cannot be truly opposed to essence, since it is essence’s necessary manifestation or expression. This opposition, this determinate, negative relationship between the posited immediacy of show and essence is therefore just as equally incorporated into essence itself—essence just is itself and its expression, where its expression just is different from essence.

What this means, then, is that the difference manifest at the level of show, the determinate difference posited between reflection and its posited self-equal immediacy, is, to borrow a particularly Hegelian phrase, a ‘difference that is no difference.’ It is a difference between two essentially identical moments, though a difference that must be posited. From this point Hegel draws his conclusion: “In this way, the immediate is not only in itself—that means, for us, or in external reflection—identical with reflection, but this identicalness is posited.” The identity between reflection and posited being is no longer simply asserted (as in ‘positing reflection’), nor is

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204 SL 403/GW 11: 253.

205 SL 404/GW 11: 253.
it only implicitly true of two determinately opposed terms (as in ‘external reflection’). But, then, in what precise way is the immediate—posited being—identical with reflection? Notice, first, that here essence—the essence that is determinately opposed to show—is itself only essence in relation to posited show. Essence is in this way itself posited—it can be explained only by appeal to show, to the determinate being to which it is opposed. In this sense, then, there is a formal equivalence between essence and show, just as Hegel argues with respect to cause and effect later in the *Logic* or with respect to ‘soliciting’ and ‘solicited’ Force in the *Phenomenology*: each is only what it is determined to be in its relation to the other, and each is thus ‘posited’. Notice, second, that through the result that each of show and essence are ‘posited’ by the other, what is expressed in posited being is the self-negating negation of reflection itself, “the movement of becoming and transition...in which the differentiated moment is determined simply as that which in itself is only negative, as show.” In this capacity, for both of ‘show’ and ‘essence,’ each is determined as “the other as the negation in itself." The determination of essence over against, or opposed to show is itself the manifestation or expression of show, it is that through which show is determined as show. Insofar as reflection is characterized in the terms of external reflection, namely, as the totality of a determinate being’s simultaneous positing of an other by which it is itself posited, it is precisely not external to posited being, but is the explicitly determined logical structure of posited being.

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206 *SL* 558-571/*GW* 11:397-409.

207 *PS* 83-4.

208 *SL* 399/*GW* 11: 249.

209 *SL* 399/*GW* 11: 249.

210 Richard Dien Winfield (“How Should Essence Be Determined? Reflections on Hegel’s Two Divergent Accounts,” in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 48: 2, 2008, pp. 187-199.) argues that we should understand the passage from positing to determining reflection in terms of the content of what is posited, or the content of what I call ‘show.’ In positing reflection, show has the *form* of posited being—it is formally acknowledged as derivative of essence—but its
Moreover, since reflection—following Hegel’s argument—must be described in the terms of external reflection, it is only in virtue of, or in relation to, posited being. This last claim is the decisive one: recall that in external reflection, reflection is ‘doubled,’ characterized both as an immediate being (‘essence’) determinately opposed to posited being (‘show’), and as “reflection that is negatively self-related”. Hegel’s argument initially shows how ‘essence’ is itself just as much posited being as ‘show’, each reciprocally determining the other. But the final point is that reflection as negatively self-related, the second reflection, is itself possible only in relation to this posited being, that is, as the logic of the negation immanent to that posited being, and so is itself posited. The negative self-relation can be only as the negative self-relation immanent to posited being itself.211

In other words, reflection is only as reflected by this dynamic of the opposition of posited being within itself, this posited difference (between ‘essence’ and ‘show’) that is nevertheless no real difference. There is no essence that is first essence in itself and only later expressed in show; Hegel’s argument is that when this concept of essence is put to the same dialectical test to which finitude was subjected, it is demonstrated that essence is only as the expression of this cancelled

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*content* is here presupposed, as something that essence “appropriates rather than creates” (196). When we reach determining reflection, “essence now fully appropriates what reflects it, both positing its reflection and incorporating the full content of what it posits” (197). Moreover, in determining reflection “essence relates to itself as removing the externality of the content of what it posits” (197).

In framing determining reflection as the moment where the content of the show of essence is taken to itself reflect the articulated structure of (and opposition immanent to) essence, I take this account to be in broad agreement with my own. Winfield’s characterization of essence, at this stage, as relating to itself “as removing the externality of the content of what it posits” does not explain in virtue of what this externality is ‘removed’ (or, in Hegel’s terminology, *Aufheben*). The structural isomorphism that is recognized at this stage between essence and show is crucial to grasping the significance of determining reflection.

211 “The fact is, therefore, that external reflection is not external, but is no less the immanent reflection of immediacy itself...” (*SL* 404/GW 11: 254).
distinction; essence comes only afterward, logically speaking, despite the determination of logical priority it enjoys.\textsuperscript{212} Reflection is therefore ‘determining’, since it is itself only as the determinate opposition between the posited ‘essence’ and ‘show’, which determinate opposition is determined by the logic of reflection. To be constituted as negative self-relation—the defining characteristic of reflection—means to be the kind of thing that is determined as distinct from that which constitutes it, but where this distinctness is its own product (and in this way it determines itself—the difference is a difference by its own logic); this determining counts as a negative relation because it is the introduction of difference, but it is a self-relation because it is an introduction of immanent difference, or the distinguishing of moments that are ‘different from but not other than’ each other, the difference of which is the result of the identity of the thing in the first place. Reflection is, in this final analysis, that which is the principle of the difference between (and therefore the posited identity of) its constitutive moments.

3.5 The Origin of Difference

The category of the infinite introduced the concept of the ‘ideal,’ Hegel’s way of characterizing the finite insofar as it is “a determination, a content, which is distinct but is not an

\textsuperscript{212} For this reason, Hegel finds the German word for ‘essence’—wesen, which resembles the past participle of the verb ‘to be’ (gewesen)—appropriate. Essence “is past—but timeless past—being” (\textit{SL} 389/\textit{GW} 11: 241). In other words, there is a logical, not chronological, pointing back, a negative definition, but of that which, logically, is positioned as having been first. Compare with Pippin’s characterization: “…essence is a retrospective reflection of \textit{what had been made manifest},...it is rooted in \textit{gewesen}, the past participle of \textit{sein} or “what has been”…” (“Hegel’s Logic of Essence,” 81). For a more developed account of this ‘retrospective reflection’ in Hegel’s thought, see Rebecca Comay, \textit{Mourning Sickness: Hegel and the French Revolution}. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011. See especially pp. 126-7, where Comay uses this concept of retrospective reflection or, in her words, ‘untimeliness,’ to examine the structure of forgiveness and absolute knowing in Hegel’s \textit{Phenomenology of Spirit}. 
independent, self-subsistent being, but only a moment.” The infinite thus ‘contains’ the finite qua ideal in that finite being constitutes a determinate moment, or a constitutive logical element, of the infinite. This conception of being as logically infinite, Hegel tells us, is determinate insofar as it “contains negation...but as this negation further is essentially negation of the negation, the self-related negation, it is that determinate being which is called being-for-self.” What makes the infinite in this respect ‘being-for-self’ is that the logical relationship that obtains between the infinite and that to which it is negatively related is at the same time a logical relation to itself; Hegel further clarifies this comment in the following chapter, telling us that “we say that something is for itself in so far as it transcends otherness, its connexion and community with other, has repelled them and made abstraction from them. For it, the other has being only as sublated, as its moment...” The difference between the finite and the infinite is thus incorporated into the logic of the infinite.

But the difference between the finite and the infinite, while ‘canceled’ or ‘sublated’, insofar as it is not taken as specifying two mutually exclusive logical categories, remains presupposed in the characterization of the infinite. As Hegel says, the infinite is the equivalent, in the “sphere of being,” to what we considered here as external reflection, insofar as “the finite ranked as the first, as the real; as the foundation, the abiding foundation, it forms the starting point and the infinite is the reflection-into-self over against it.” Like external reflection, then, the infinite ‘finds before it’ finite being in the sense that the difference between the two categories is presupposed in the characterization of each (a somewhat obvious point, in that they are called finite and infinite). But

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213 SL 150/GW 21: 137.
214 SL 150/GW 21: 137.
216 SL 403/GW 11: 253.
the infinite is not characterized as itself generating the difference between the two; we cannot look to the infinite to explain or account for the difference between itself and the finite. They are, rather, immediately opposed to one another as different. The task of the foregoing has been to follow, by contrast, how Hegel argues that essence can only be understood as the posited (or reflected) identity between two terms, the difference between which is also posited, or which is also to be accounted for by appeal to this further logical structure, rather than (as in the case of the finite) simply presupposed. What is critical is that this last step, the arrival at a logic that is able to account for the difference between the related and incorporated moments of the whole, is a necessary step. This difference cannot be left unaccounted for if these categories are meant to provide sufficient descriptions of the form reality takes. This is also, however, a necessary step along our path, since what is being sought is precisely the logic of a self-determining whole, a whole for whom there is a sense of immanent difference, immanent not just in the sense that it can describe incorporated though distinct moments, but immanent in that it has its source in the whole itself—it is not a difference merely described from without. What we are interested in, here, is a logical account of how difference can not just describe a relation between whole and incorporated moment, but how that difference can itself be determined by the whole—natural, rather than artificial, difference, we might say. How, precisely, does the foregoing argument regarding the logic of reflection advance us along this path?

We can think of the argument that takes Hegel from positing to determining reflection in the following light: The doctrine of essence is an argument about how Being might be exhaustively described in terms of the relationship between what is essential and the manifestation of that

\[217\] What we will see, in Chapter 4, to be the ‘Concept’.
essence. Now, if the difference between the two moments of that basic structure—the difference between essence and show—is not itself taken to be posited by, or accounted for by that structure itself, or, what is the same, if it is taken to be fundamental with respect to the description of that structure (ie if it is presupposed by such a description, or is only locally fundamental), then we must posit some third logical point of reference, something beyond or apart from essence, on the one hand, and show, on the other, in virtue of which it can be accounted for. For consider: if we take the difference between these two to be fundamental, and yet if we also (ex hypothesi) take this logical structure to be a sufficient description of reality, then the difference between essence and show is itself a reflection of Being—it is how Being itself is. But in that case we need something to explain why Being is itself articulated as the distinction between essence and show. Recall, too, that the whole point of designating part of reality as ‘essence’ or ‘essential’ is to point out that the manifestation of that essence, what Hegel calls ‘show,’ isn’t essentially different from it, but only ‘appears’ different. What are needed, then, are the terms in which this distinction could be articulated, namely, that according to which they are different. But these terms, which again, ex hypothesi, cannot be reducible to either the terms of essence or show (since we assumed that the difference is locally fundamental), necessarily introduce some third logical point of reference.

In the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant acknowledges a similar point. Take, for example, the difference between the properties of some empirically real object and the object itself. Now, the structure of a spatiotemporal object is articulated in terms of substance and accident, but the difference between these two logical ‘points of reference’ is not itself explained by the structure of objects. This difference is, then, according to the formulation above, fundamental with respect to the description of the structure of an object (or, we can say, it is ‘locally’ fundamental). But this is not taken to be a brute fact by Kant; it is, rather, to be explained by the consciousness for which
this object counts as presentation, as *appearance*. That is, the structure of the object is the apparent structure of reality, and we can see the difference between the object and its properties as posited by, or to be accounted for by, that consciousness to which it is present as object. This is one way of thinking about the significance of Kant’s transcendental idealism: that objects have such a structure is not a brute fact about reality, but is to be explained by the fact that objects are appearances, constituted (formally) by a conscious subject.

We can come at this idea from another angle. The essence/show logical structure cannot be the ultimate description of Being (if, we might add, the difference between essence and show is taken to be locally fundamental, though of course this is necessarily what we do when we take the essence/show structure to be a sufficient or an ultimate description of reality) since to take the difference between the moments as relatively fundamental is, paradoxically, to posit some third point of logical reference. But, we might ask, why could not the relationship between the newly posited point of reference and the structure of essence/show with which we began itself be described in terms of the logic of essence? Why must we develop a new logical framework for this structure? The answer to this is fairly straightforward: if we think of this newly posited point of reference as itself the ‘essence’ manifest as the essence/show structure with which we started, where we treat the new ‘essence’ exactly as the old one was treated, meaning that the difference between the new ‘essence’ and the original structure of essence/show is itself taken to be locally fundamental, then we will of course need to posit some further point of reference to account for this difference, and a vicious regress ensues. It cannot, in other words, be essences ‘all the way down.’ But, if this is right, then some new logical relation is needed in order to capture that in virtue of what essence and show are apparently distinguished.

So what are we to do when faced with such a regress? We cannot go backwards, since we
were driven to think of Being in terms of the distinction between essence and show by the arguments in the Doctrine of Being, and those arguments continue to hold us to think in these terms, at least provisionally. Hegel’s solution is then to acknowledge that the difference between essence and show is itself a reflection of the structure of Being, positing a third logical point of reference, but also establishing a new logical category to understand this three-term relation (just as the move from Being to Essence involved positing a second logical point of reference, or involved characterizing reality as a two-term relation): the Concept.218 In other words, we will no longer proceed by thinking in terms of putatively one-directional dependence, as we start by doing when thinking of essence. But we have found, in considering the move from thinking of reflection as ‘external’ to thinking of it as ‘determining’, an initial account of how this would differ from a logic of essence and show. This is a logical structure that describes reality as the posited identity of two determinately opposed terms, whose determinate opposition is itself posited by the reality as a whole. Put slightly differently, this is a structure whose self-equality or self-identity is dependent upon the opposition of two moments that are themselves dependent upon the structure of the whole for their determinacy (that is, the moments qua different are dependent upon the structure of the whole). Categorized still in the two-term language of essence, this reciprocal dependence between the three logical points of reference is difficult to describe, since the logic of essence is insufficient to describe such a three-term relation, and it is for this reason that we need to move on to the logic of the Concept.

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218 John Russon articulates the progress from Essence to Concept in these helpful terms in Infinite Phenomenology: The Lessons of Hegel’s Science of Experience, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2016, pp. 264-65: “Second, reality will always be mediated (reflected) in itself, which means it will have an identity, a meaningful ‘itself-ness’ that pervades and permeates the entire range of its determinacy. This is essence, the realm of two-term relations of, basically, a self and its appearance...or generally essence and show. Third, reality will ultimately always be realized only through intrinsic relations to an opposed other. This is reality as concept, reality as intrinsically having the form of being-through-another, a three-term relation of an identity accomplished through self-opposition.”
How does this help us articulate the logic of life *qua* self-determining? This logical structure of ‘determining reflection,’ what we will consider in the next chapter as the Concept, is the logic of self-determination, of a determination of the self attributed to the self, or of a logical structure that is *in itself* determined according to its own nature. We should accordingly consider Hegel’s ‘Remark,’ situated between the sections on External and Determining Reflection, wherein he discusses Kant’s notion of ‘reflective judgment.’ In this remark, Hegel explicitly identifies Kant’s notion of reflecting judgment—that form of judgment responsible for the principle of purposiveness, and which features in Kant’s account of natural ends—with the logical shape of ‘external reflection’, and it will be instructive to consider what Hegel takes to be the common thread.

The relevant detail that grounds this comparison is, for Hegel, the fact that reflective judgment thinks a *given* particular under a universal that is as of yet undetermined, but that is posited by some reflecting that is itself external to the given particular (that is, for Kant, we reflect on the particular). Hegel writes,

> Here, then, to reflect is likewise to go beyond an immediate to the universal. On the one hand, it is only through this reference of the immediate to its universal that it is determined as a particular; by itself, it is only an individual or an immediate, simply affirmative being. On the other hand, that to which it is referred is its universal, its rule, principle, law, in general, that which is reflected into itself, is self-related, essence or the essential...[This] is clearly also only external reflection, which is related to the immediate as to something given.\(^{219}\)

\(^{219}\) *SL 404/GW 11: 254.*
In what precise sense does Hegel take reflecting judgment to exhibit the logic of external reflection? It lies in the fact that the reflection that would identify the self-equality of some diversity immediately manifest before it—that would identify the universal under which they equally fall, or of which they are equal expressions—is taken to be external to, to lie outside, the field of that given immediacy. This is what it means to say that the immediate is given, as Kant says of the manifold of intuition. The difference here between the given immediacy and the reflection that would determine it as the manifestation of some self-equality is presupposed in this formulation, and the identity between that given immediacy and its self-equality (the universal under which it falls) is attributed to this externally reflecting subject.  

Kant’s attachment to theoretical subjectivity as the seat of the determination of objects was, of course, a vexing issue for Hegel. Hegel tells us in the Introduction to the Logic that the material covered in the first volume, the Objective Logic (consisting of the Doctrines of Being and Essence), would correspond, roughly, to what Kant calls ‘transcendental logic’ in the Critique of

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220 Indeed, for consciousness to grasp a field of determinacy as the expression of a self-determining totality, rather than as simply given and requiring the work of reflecting judgment to express its self-equality, consciousness would need to adopt an entirely different approach. Peter Simpson (Hegel’s Transcendental Induction. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998) argues that the attitude of consciousness developed in Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit—the phenomenological attitude—is an inductive attitude that, like reflecting judgment, moves from the field of determinate particulars to the universal, but that, unlike Kantian reflecting judgment, precisely does not take that field of determinacy (in the case of the phenomenological subject, its own experience) to be merely given or immediately presupposed, but rather takes it as “expressing its own universal principle,” as a “totality that differs from itself and mediates itself through these actions” (100). We start with the posited determinacy—with this particular experience—in order to grasp the self-determining totality precisely because, as we have seen, while the determinate, particular moments are not self-sufficient, it is only through them that the self-determining totality can be expressed, and hence only through them that it can come to be in the first place. There is, therefore, no way to grasp the totality that does not already include a grasp of the determinate particulars.

A further point must be made here in connection with the passage from external to determining reflection: in adopting this inductive attitude toward its experience, the phenomenologist recognizes that it is not thereby standing apart from this field of determinacy, articulating a universal principle from without; rather, the phenomenological attitude is the name for the inductive expectation that knows how to ask experiencing to show itself and that knows itself to be the self-comprehension of experiencing” (101). In other words, in order to grasp some determinacy as the expression of a self-determining totality, that ‘grasp,’ the consciousness of the determinacy as such an expression, cannot be simply and immediately external to what is expressed, for otherwise it is not truly grasping a totality that is self-determining. (Or, finally: the externality of consciousness would need to be recognized as incorporated into the phenomenon it grasps.)
Pure Reason. But Hegel criticizes Kant’s ‘transcendental logic’ in the following manner:

[Kant] distinguishes [transcendental logic] from what he calls general logic in this way, \((a)\) that it treats of the notions which refer \textit{a priori} to objects, and consequently does not abstract from the whole \textit{content} of objective cognition, or in other words, it contains the rules of the pure thinking of an \textit{object}, and \((β)\) at the same time it treats of the origin of our cognition so far as this cognition cannot be ascribed to the objects. It is to this second aspect that Kant’s philosophical interest is exclusively directed. His chief thought is to vindicate the \textit{categories} for self-consciousness as the \textit{subjective} ego. By virtue of this determination the point of view remains confined within consciousness and its opposition...

What it means to ‘remain confined within consciousness and its opposition’, I take it, is to remain within a framework that takes the difference between those terms, and their opposition, as \textit{presupposed}, or as locally fundamental. In shifting from ‘external’ to ‘determining’ reflection, then, we leave behind the corresponding opposition of reflection and posited being, or of essence and show.

Now, this is not to say that we can conclude from the foregoing that Kant was simply mistaken, and that the difference between the reflection that appears to take place in consciousness and the particular given determinacy over which it reflects ought to be cancelled. The point is, rather, that in the case of reflecting judgment, that according to which the given determinacies are combined under one universal lies independently of either, in the judging of the subject to which all that immediacy is given. We are interested in the logic of self-determination, but this is a logic that could never apply to any object of experience according to Kant, precisely because the source of the determination of an object—the source of the difference between the thing’s constitutive moments, and their unity in the whole—could never be identified with the whole of the object itself,

\footnote{SL 62/GW 21: 47.}
as I have argued in Chapter 1. The move from ‘external’ to ‘determining’ reflection, which situates the source of the determinacy immanent to a thing in the logic of the thing itself, is therefore the move from a Kantian logic of empirical objects to the logic of self-determining objects, or living things, and is, at the very same time, the move from the Objective Logic—that which would replace Kantian transcendental logic—to the Subjective Logic, the Logic of the Concept.

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222 See especially my comments on Kant’s discussion of ‘combination’ in the B-Edition Transcendental Deduction.
Chapter 4

The Self-Determination of the Concept

4.1 The Concept in General

Hegel’s discussion of the Concept in the *Science of Logic* is notorious for shifting the reader from the discussions of being and essence—two concepts with which a philosophically trained reader will feel familiar—to the discussion of ‘something we know not what,’ something that takes a familiar name (‘concept’ is far from an archaic or abstruse term today) and puts it to thoroughly unfamiliar work. Though it takes a certain amount of technical training to handle the terms with precision, we feel as if we already basically know what it means to say that something is, or that it has an essence. But what does one do with the ‘Concept’?

Part of the difficulty involved here is that the logic of essence is the logic of things, and this happens to be the logic at work in most of our everyday experience of the world. This is not to say,

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223 Throughout, I distinguish the logical term *der Begriff*, which forms the third in the series Being-Essence-Concept, and is the name for the subject of the third book of the *Science of Logic*, by treating it as a proper noun (hence the Concept), as opposed to simply ‘concept’, which will be used to refer to individual concepts in the colloquial sense. Thus it can make sense to talk of the concept of Hegel’s Concept. I also use, in writing about *der Begriff*, the more widely accepted ‘Concept,’ rather than Miller’s translation of it as the ‘Notion.’ When quoting directly from Miller’s translation of the *Science of Logic*, I have simply replaced ‘Notion’ with ‘Concept’.

224 For an example of the confusion this leads to, see Terry Pinkard, “Hegel’s Idealism and Hegel’s Logic,” in *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, Bd. 33, H. 2 (1979), pp. 210-226; Pinkard concludes, simply, that Hegel makes an “invalid leap” in moving from the Doctrine of Essence to the Doctrine of the Concept, since he passes from “the notion of a self-contained system of reciprocal causation to the notion of a self-contained system of inference and identifies the two. But unless the inferential relation between propositions is assimilated to the relations of cause and effect, that move is clearly invalid” (217-218).
of course, that in our familiar experiences we are aware of the logic of reflection; only that, in
dealing with my computer, my mug, my books, the bus, the department building, I am dealing with
what I take to be things that are at once unified things, in one sense—this book in front of me is
properly one thing—and that nevertheless are these unified things in virtue of a manifold of
apparent properties. While I invariably take the mug or the book or the computer to be one thing,
it is never apparent to me as such (this is the point Hegel makes when discussing the grain of salt in
the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and which we addressed in the previous chapter). We are, most of
the time, dealing with an apparent manifold of being that is the appearing of some unified essence,
that which makes the mug a mug and not merely a pile of overlapping properties, including the
given hardness, weight, colour etc. In recognizing that my mug is one thing, a thing with which I
must engage through its determinate properties (I have to navigate its particular weight and shape
and volume, for example), I am appealing to the logic of essence, though not explicitly.\(^{225}\) In the
foregoing chapter, this logic was examined in detail (as the logic of reflection), and, like the logic of
finite, determinate being, we were able to see how it progresses to a new logical structure, a logic
that eclipses the two-term relationship of essence-appearance. We need to see, then, how the
Concept is “the third to *being* and *essence*, to the *immediate* and to *reflection*. Being and essence
are so far the moments of its *becoming*; but it is their *foundation* and *truth* as the identity in which
they are submerged and contained.”\(^{226}\)

These difficulties noted, we must still ask: what is the logic of the Concept *about*? If

\(^{225}\) Indeed, any philosopher who appeals to ‘substance’ as the fundamental ontology of things in the world is doing the
same, though obviously not in Hegel’s terms. To treat the world as fundamentally a collection of substances is to treat
the logic of essence as absolute; and while, for Hegel, this would be a mistake (for reasons we have seen in the
preceding chapter), it is a mistake that does seem motivated by our experience.

\(^{226}\) *SL 577/GW* 12: 11.
essence is, at the most general level, that which shows up or is manifest in a posited other (appearance/consequent/effect/accident etc...), the Concept is that which is manifest as the apparent or posited distinction between itself and its opposite. It is the logic of this self-development—that which determines itself as the showing up of itself—that is to be explored in the Doctrine of the Concept, and it is the Concept that is that which develops itself in this manner. In short, the Concept is that which determines itself as the distinction between itself and its other, which means that it is in and through this other as other that the Concept shows itself. This means that the sense of ‘otherness’ operative here is not relative to some external determination; the other is necessarily determined as other according to the logic of the totality of which it is a member. The otherness here is therefore not conditional, but is rather unconditioned, absolute. Or, put differently: the core idea of the logic of being is that being is present, or shows up. The correlative idea in the logic of essence is that that which shows up is distinct from the way in which it shows up. And, finally, the third in this series of ideas, that which emerges in the logic of the Concept, is of that which a) shows up as the pair of itself and its other, and b) is nothing but this showing up as itself and its other—there is no ‘behind’ or ‘beyond’ that which shows up. In order to describe the Concept properly, however, we will need to do away with the language of ‘things’ and ‘show’, since these terms make sense in the context of the two-term logic of essence. As I will argue below, we must understand this logic of the Concept as, fundamentally, the logic of selfhood.

In what follows, we will see that Hegel replaces the language of essence with three terms that pick out the determinate moments of the Concept: universality, particularity, and individuality. I will begin, in section 4.2, by identifying the three essential moments that make up the self-identity of determining reflection, and will then proceed to examine each of these moments in turn as Hegel describes them in the Doctrine of the Concept—namely, as universality, particularity, and
individuality. In section 4.3, I will turn to an example of these three moments taken from the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, arguing that the moments of the Concept can be found in Hegel’s analysis of ‘Now’ in ‘Sense Certainty.’ In Section 4.4, I will expand on my claim that the logic of the Concept is a logic of selfhood, examining Hegel’s claim that the free, “concrete existence” of the Concept is the “I” of pure self-consciousness, though I will argue that we should therefore understand the logic of the Concept as a more general logic of selfhood, rather than identifying the Concept with pure apperception. Grasping the way in which the logic of the Concept is the logic of selfhood is essential, since this notion of logical selfhood is the final concept we need to make sense of Hegel’s account of life. Finally, in section 4.5, I will discuss Hegel’s division of the Doctrine of the Concept into “Subjectivity,” “Objectivity,” and “The Idea,” demonstrating that only the Idea can truly exhibit the self-determining individuality that is both required by a logic of life, and shown to be necessary by the logic of the Concept.

4.2 The Moments of the Concept

The logic of determining reflection in the previous chapter captured what it would mean for the distinction between essence and show to be grounded in the totality of the related moments, rather than a distinction grounded in some external reflection. The difficulty with the

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227 The corresponding German terms used by Hegel are, respectively, *Allgemeinheit*, *Besonderheit*, and *Einzelheit*.

228 *SL* 583 *GW* 12: 17.

229 Robert Pippin, for example, interprets the logic of the Concept in this fashion: see *Hegel’s Idealism*, pp.232-234.
formulation of determining reflection, and the reason the Logic must advance on to the Concept, is that the terms of determining reflection remain the terms of the logic of Essence, whose logic, as we have seen, holds the differences between negative self-identity and the posited expression of that identity (essence and show) determinately apart. We know, however, from the outcome of the Doctrine of Being that the distinction between essence and show is a necessary one; there is no possible adequate logic that avoids this distinction (this is what is shown, albeit implicitly, in the deduction of the concept of the true infinite). We can therefore say that the truth of essence—as the movement of absolute negativity—shows up as, or is reflected in, the pair of essence and show with which we started. Further, we can say that the truth essence is nothing but the showing up of the pair of essence and show, both of which are understood as moments of the original, self-negating essence. As a result, the union of posited being and reflected essence is itself posited, to be explained, rather than immediate. This also helps us understand Hegel’s talk of essence being “reflected in itself”: essence is hereby reflected out of the moments that are not fundamentally different from it. Essence simply is the determining of itself as these opposed moments of essence and show, or the immanent determination of these non-essence-like posited determinacies. If the logic of the Concept is the logic of self-determination, we should be able to see in the concept of determining reflection the three moments that will be properly articulated in the logic of the Concept as universality, particularity, and individuality.

Consider, first, that the overarching difficulty in thinking through the logic of reflection in its various stages was that we needed to somehow reconcile the two distinctive moments of reflection, its self-equality and its negativity, the latter of which was the source of differentiation. In considering positing reflection, we saw how these moments logically implied each other, and yet seemed logically opposed to each other. The fact of their determinate opposition led to the
doubling of reflection that marked the passage into what Hegel called “external reflection.” He wrote, “...external or real reflection presupposes itself as sublated, as the negative of itself. In this determination it is doubled: it is what is presupposed, or reflection-into-self, which is the immediate; and also it is the reflection that is negatively self-related; it is related to itself as to its non-being.” This means that there is a determinacy to reflection itself; it is related to itself in the form of a self-opposition, or it is negatively self-related. So too, though, is the positedness to which it is opposed; by positing essence as determinately opposed to show, there is just as much a determinacy within the field of posited being. Finally, through this determinate opposition within posited being itself, posited being is related to itself in the form of opposition, just as reflection is. For this reason, Hegel tells us that the identity between reflection and posited being is itself posited.

We want, first, to think of the nature of that identity. The identity of these two opposed moments consists in the fact that each is, considered on its own, constituted by its own immanent difference, or each is constituted by the negative self-relation of determinate opposition.

Accordingly, Hegel writes of reflection that “its positing in which it negates itself”—its negative self-relation, its opposition to that which is a constitutive moment—“is the union of itself with its negative, with the immediate, and this union is the immediacy of essence itself.” Moreover, this means that through their identity these moments constitute a totality that has the form of immanent difference or self-related negativity characteristic of each of its moments. We can characterize the first moment, then, as the self-related negativity that obtains in each of the determinate moments of essence, in virtue of which they are identified, and which, therefore, describes their identity. It is

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230 SL 403/GW 11: 252.

231 SL 404/GW 11: 253-4.
the self-equality of essence that is not undermined by the apparent or posited opposition between its moments, just insofar as each moment expresses this inner negativity. This moment, then, we can call “universality”; it is that which is universal to the diverse moments of essence.\textsuperscript{232}

Second, we need to return to the “doubling” of reflection, or the recognition that reflection must be “related to itself as to its non-being.” The self-equality I have just labeled “universality” rests on this determinate opposition within reflection itself (and, we should recall, this “doubling” of reflection was necessary in order to account for the difference between reflection and posited being in the first place, as I argued in Chapter 3). But this means that just as much as essence is equal to itself in virtue of this negative self-relation, it is this negative self-relation, and can be essence only through such a negative self-relation. Essence’s universal self-equality rests on this internal difference, a difference in which it is distinguished from its ‘non-being’, or a difference that is an opposition. We can therefore identify this second moment of essence’s identity as the moment of self-relation realized as opposition, where essence is itself necessarily determined as against one of its moments; “it is the negation or determinateness which is self-related” which Hegel calls “the individual.”\textsuperscript{235}

Finally, there is a third moment that we need to identify. I have already described two distinct moments, though both of these moments characterize the self-identity of essence—what essence is, logically speaking—once it is grasped as self-determining. Both of these moments involve the difference posited by the self-related negativity that is the mark of this structure. We

\textsuperscript{232} Jean Hyppolite also notes this connection between the determinacy inherent in the Concept’s universality and the determinate moments of essence: “[The Concept’s] self-determination is the judgment that reproduces at the level of the concept the diremption of essence, the appearance of the particular in the universal, and of the universal in the particular” (Hyppolite, Logic and Existence, p. 176).

\textsuperscript{235} SL 582/GW 12: 16.
need, therefore, to acknowledge this difference or determinacy inherent not in each of the opposed moments, but inherent in the identity of the totality itself, in virtue of which these moments are distinguished. There is therefore a *particularity* to the moments of the whole; it is essentially whole considered as totality, as the identity of multiple particular moments. This particularity is not just sheer determinacy though, since, as we have seen in Chapter 2 (and as is constitutive of the structure of the Concept now under consideration), determinacy is a relation to another. This particularity, though, implies no relation of the structure as a whole to some other, but is the immanent difference in virtue of which the two moments of self-identity (universality and individuality) obtain.

We therefore now have the tools to see how the characterization of the Concept that Hegel gives at the beginning of the Subjective Logic (in the section called “The Concept in General) meets the demands of the logic of self-determination:

Because being that is in and for itself is immediately a *positedness*, the Concept in its simple self-relation is an absolute *determinateness* which, however, as purely self-related is no less immediately a simple identity. But this self-relation of the determinateness as the union of itself with itself is equally the negation of the determinateness, and the Concept as this equality with itself is the *universal*. But this identity has equally the determination of negativity; it is the negation or determinateness which is self-related; thus the Concept is the *individual*. Each of them, the universal and the individual, is the totality, each contains within itself the determination of the other and therefore these totalities are *one* and one only, just as this unity is the differentiation of itself into the free *illusion*.

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234 Miller is translating the term *Schein*, here. This 'show' of duality is precisely *not* an illusion, though. I have articulated elsewhere why the term ‘illusion’ is inappropriate in this case, but it is especially important to note here that the immanent differentiation of the Concept’s moments—while immanent, and thus not an immediate relation to another—is constitutive of the Concept’s identity, and so it cannot be merely ‘illusory.’

C.f. Houlgate, “Why Hegel’s Essence is not the Concept of Things”: “The being that is generated through essential negativity is real, not illusory: it is the world we see around us.” (33)
of this duality...  

Significantly, this demonstrates a conclusion that shapes the rest of the Logic, and the concept of Life in particular: any identity claim, understood properly, must consist of the paired moments of self-equality and negativity or opposition. Thus the identity of the Concept must be demonstrated in part through that in virtue of which its moments are all moments of the Concept (just as the identity of the solar system, for instance, consists in part of that in virtue of which the objects comprising it are members of the solar system—namely, the fact that they all revolve around the Sun), and in part through its being distinguished, on its own terms, from the plurality of its constitutive moments. Hegel does not, in this passage, name the moment of particularity, but it can easily be seen in the determinacy or differentiation required for the articulation of both the moments of universality and individuality. With these considerations in mind, we can pass on to consider the Concept’s moments in greater detail.

Universality

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235 SL 582/GW 12: 16.

236 In a similar vein, Terry Pinkard claims that “Ontologically expressed, a concept is that which ideally included its other” (Pinkard, “The Logic of Hegel’s Logic,” in Journal of the History of Philosophy, 17: 4 (1979), p. 430). Expressed at this level of generality, however, the concept is indistinguishable from the infinite of the Doctrine of Being. Pinkard clarifies the nature of this inclusion, writing that it is “to be understood in terms of Hegel’s theory of determinateness: a concept is determinate only by virtue of its other, in this case, that with which it is continuous” (Pinkard, “The Logic of Hegel’s Logic,” p. 430). Pinkard is right that the logic of determinacy plays a role in the particularization (and therefore, by extension, the identity) of the Concept, but the ideal unity of the moments of the Concept (the sense in which the Concept “included its other”) cannot, as I have argued, be accounted for with the logic of determinacy alone.
Universality is the moment of the Concept’s self-equality insofar as it is equally present in the Concept’s determinate, particular moments. If the Concept is the posited totality that determines itself in various determinate moments, we can isolate the aspect of universality by thinking of how, in relating to each of these determinate moments, the Concept is equally present, since, ex hypothesi, the moments are each explicitly determined as moments of the Concept—much like how the infinite is ‘for itself’ in its determinate moments. Because the determinate moments are explicitly the showing up of the universal totality of the Concept, the relation obtaining between the Concept qua universal and these determinate moments is not a relation-to-other, but a relation-to-self (or to an aspect of the self). In this sense, what we have isolated here is not really anything new, but is rather a feature that has been common to all of the infinite, reflection, and the Concept (as each is a particular form of self-relation). Thus, we can make sense of Hegel’s claim that the universality of the Concept is the Concept’s “simple relation to itself” which is “only within itself.” Universality is the Concept’s simple relation to itself insofar as it is that self-related negativity in virtue of which the moments of the Concept are moments of the Concept, and thus in any apparent difference within the Concept, the Universality of the Concept is that which is present as selfsame, as invariant.

What is new and distinctive about the Concept qua universal over against the form of self-equality discussed in the logic of reflection is that it is not something mediated—that is, it is not a result of mediation that sits apart from the other determinate moments. Unlike the essence that is equal to itself in spite of the apparent diversity of its show, the universal is that mediation in

\(^{237}\) *SL 602/GW* 12: 33.

\(^{238}\) “…this identity is within itself absolute mediation, but it is not something mediated. The universal that is mediated, namely, the abstract universal…” (*SL 602/GW* 12: 33).
virtue of which the determinate moments are moments of a totality. The universal is the thoroughgoing unity of all the diverse, determinate moments, in virtue of which they can be said to be the determinations of a totality, a self-identical system. The self-equality of the universal therefore does not stand apart from the determinacy of its moments, but is rather only through them. Hegel explains this idea by reminding us that the universal is this mediating self-equality by being the absolute negativity we encountered in the previous chapter—it is the relation to itself in being the negation of negation, the negation that acts only on negation itself. But this first negation is just determinacy. This means that determinacy is in fact a moment of absolute negation, properly understood, and so the determinate moments into which the Concept, qua determined, is resolved, do not stand against the Concept qua universal. On the contrary, the determinate moments of the Concept each themselves exhibit the logic of self-related negativity, in virtue of which the Concept qua totality is the identity of these moments.

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239 Hegel explicitly characterizes the ‘first negative’ with determinacy: “By virtue of this original unity [of absolute negativity] it follows, in the first place, that the first negative, or the determination, is not a limitation for the universal which, on the contrary, maintains itself therein and is positively identical with itself” (SL 602/GW 12: 34).

240 In his analysis of the relational structure of the Concept, Brady Bowman emphasizes the way in which the Concept is comprised of this negative self-relation at each level, demonstrating how it extends the Kantian notion of apperception. He writes: “Two relata are essentially involved such that the first is itself a relation (self-consciousness) and the second some given term (the sensible manifold) to which the first term must be related in order to relate to itself and thereby constitute the self-relation it essentially is. Recall, though, that the manifold qua sensible is itself defined by way of its relation to (self)consciousness. So what we have is a complex structure whose elements are defined in purely relational terms such that the whole structure is itself a relation.

This ‘Kantian’ picture of the structure is not yet the whole picture of the Hegelian Concept. Hegel introduces a further relational element into the Concept: the term represented above by the sensible manifold is to be understood as itself constituted by a relation that is homomorphic to the relation represented by self-consciousness. So if self-consciousness (relation-to-self) is essentially mediated by a term that is external to it (relation-to-other), that “other” is itself mediated by its relation to self-consciousness and hence it is relational in itself (Bowman, The Metaphysics of Absolute Negativity, pp. 37-38.). This characterization captures quite well the universality of the Concept—that this
The Concept *qua* universal is, then, the determination that those moments are in fact moments of this totality. It is the rendering explicit of the fact that the determinate moments are not self-contained, self-sufficient things, but must be regarded as members of a larger system to which they owe their determinacy. Thus, Hegel writes, the universal "does not merely *show*, or have an *illusory being*, in its other, like the determination of reflection...The *universal*, on the contrary, is posited as the *essential being* of its determination, as the latter’s *own positive nature.*"\(^{241}\) The universal is nothing apart from the determining of the different moments as being moments of a whole, and as such has these moments as its content “without *doing violence,*"\(^{242}\) since these moments are what they are only as moments of the universal totality. In this sense, we can think of Hegel’s account of the Concept *qua* universal as a kind of nominalism; if the universal were some abstract entity existing over against the determinate moments—which are, in truth, the particulars—it would not, properly speaking, be the universal of the Concept.\(^ {243}\) In this vein, Hegel acknowledges that we can abstract from the determinate, concrete moments of the Concept to arrive at an abstract universal, but this leaves us only with “an isolated, imperfect moment of the Concept [that] has no truth.”\(^{244}\)

mediated relation-to-self (what I have called negative self-relation) is the overarching relation and also the structure of each of the relata—though this account leaves out the priority attached to the individuality of the Concept, which I discuss below.

\(^{241}\) *SL* 602-3/*GW* 12: 34.

\(^{242}\) *SL* 603/*GW* 12: 35.

\(^{243}\) As Stephen Houlgate writes, “For Spinoza, being is ultimately substance that is immanent in but also logically *prior* to its modes: it is the immanent *cause* of its modes. For Hegel, by contrast, being is ultimately concept that is wholly identical with its unfolding differences. [...] The concept is thus not their logically prior “ground” or “cause,” it is simply the process of differentiating itself into those differences.” ("Why Hegel’s Essence is not the Logic of Things," p. 37.)

\(^{244}\) *SL* 604/*GW* 12: 35.
Consequently, the universality of the Concept is logically dependent on the particularity of the Concept, on the immanent differentiation between moments of the Concept (just as the particularity is logically dependent on the element of universality, on that in virtue of which the different moments are moments of the Concept’s self-identity, and in virtue of which the particularity is not just the sheer determinate negation of the logic of Being). The Concept is universal only insofar as it is the totality of diverse particulars, and those determinate moments are particulars only in virtue of their being particular instances of a universal. Each is, in this sense, posited; neither universal nor particulars can be prior to the other. Someone might object, at this stage, that although the particulars need to be related to a universal in order to be particular as such, this fact on its own does not suggest that the particulars as determinate beings themselves depend on the universal—merely that their status as particulars does. On this line of thinking, the moment of ‘particularity’ in the Concept is dependent on the moment of ‘universality,’ but the things to which the concept of ‘particular’ is applied do not. It should be clear, however, why this objection is untenable; insofar as we are considering Hegel’s Logic, here, and not some finite thing in our experience as it relates to some empirical concept, there is no possibility of having the finite ‘things’ apart from their Conceptual context—that this is impossible, that the context of the Concept is necessary, is precisely what Hegel has argued in the Doctrine of Essence. To expect this argument to apply directly to our experience of finite things and the empirical concepts (or abstract universals) under which we subsume them is to be guilty of a category mistake.

*Particularity*
We are now in a position to explore in greater detail what the nature of the Concept *qua* particular is. Particularity captures the determinacy of the Concept, the immanent difference distinguishing its various determinate moments.\(^{245}\) In order to grasp properly this moment of the Concept, we need to reconcile two seemingly contradictory claims that Hegel makes about the nature of the particular and its relation to the universal. On the one hand, Hegel tells us that the particular, determinate moments of the Concept “are not different from the universal but only *from one another.*”\(^{246}\) On the other hand, Hegel tells us that the particular is the universal’s “difference or relation to an other...but there is no other present from which the particular could be distinguished, except the universal itself...”\(^{247}\) That is, according to Hegel, it seems that the particular is required to be at once different and not different from the universal, determined against only other particulars and determined against the universal itself.

Take the first claim, that the particular does not stand opposed to the universal. This is an extension of what I said above about the nature of the universal—the universal is the mediating unity of the particulars, that which expresses their equality as moments of the Concept. From this it is relatively straightforward why Hegel would say that the particulars are different from each other—they have specific differences, and stand determinately opposed to each other—but not from the universal. In a related sense, we can talk about the difference between the orbit of Earth and the orbit of Mercury, but we cannot talk about this difference as it obtains between Earth and the Solar

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\(^{245}\) *Determinateness as such belongs to being and the qualitative sphere; as determinateness of the Concept it is particularity* (SL 605/GW 12: 37). It is the fact of the inclusion of that determinacy *within* the totality of the Concept as one unitary logical structure, and the fact that this determinacy is constitutive of that totality, that distinguishes particularity from the determinacy of qualitative being.

\(^{246}\) *SL 606/GW* 12: 37.

\(^{247}\) *SL 606/GW* 12: 38.
System, because the Sun, the unifying principle of the Solar System, is that in virtue of which Earth and Mercury can have orbits at all (and the specific orbits each does). Hegel further specifies this relationship by saying that the particular “contains universality”, \(^{248}\) not only is each planet a planet of the Solar System, and therefore not different from it; each planet also thereby contains reference to the System as a whole. To make this point clearer, consider a pebble that is part of a pile of such stones on the side of the road outside my house. This pile is no system, and accordingly, the pebble that is one of its constituent parts contains no such reference to the whole. This pebble does not contain the universality of the pile, since the pile is nothing apart from the accidental proximity of a few pebbles. I need not make reference, in other words, to the pile of pebbles in order to explain the one I am looking at, whereas the same cannot be said of the particulars of the Concept. In this sense, the particularity of the Concept, “through its determinateness...exhibits” \(^{249}\) the universal; the various elements of a system exhibit the system that is precisely the totality and interrelation of those elements. \(^{250}\)

At the same time, we need to acknowledge the formal difference between the particular and the universal, for while the universal is the Concept qua simple relation-to-self, or simple

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\(^{248}\) SL 605/GW 12: 37.

\(^{249}\) SL 606/GW 12: 37.

\(^{250}\) Richard Dien Winfield (From Concept to Objectivity: Thinking Through Hegel's Subjective Logic. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1988.) argues that the specific difference distinguishing particular moments from each other is not a feature of particularity itself, but rather must be accounted for by the individuality of the Concept. He writes, “the universal cannot possess its encompassing unity as a one over many unless the plurality of its particulars can be sustained. Particularity, however, only determines something as an undifferentiated embodiment of the universal. Qua instance, particulars stand in identical relation to the universal in which they participate. Identifying a factor as an embodiment of a universal in no way distinguishes it from any other embodiment. Yet, unless instances can be distinguished from one another, their plurality collapses into one and the universal loses its own constitutive character as a one over many. Consequently, the encompassing unity of the universal depends upon the differentiation of particulars, which is what individuality provides for each” (57-58). It is difficult, however, to reconcile this account with Hegel's claim, cited above, that the particular moments of the Concept, qua particularity, “are not different from the universal but only from one another” (SL 606/GW 12: 37).
equality-with-self, the particular is the Concept *qua* relation-to-other, the element of difference immanent to (and constitutive of) the whole. The particular is the result of the universal’s self-determining negation, of its determining of itself in the form of otherness. The implications of the two aspects of the universal’s character (equality-with-self and mediating principle of the particulars) are here being made explicit, but the structure is effectively the structure of determining reflection. The universal has, as a moment of its absolute negativity, the first negation, or determinacy. This moment of determinacy, which is now considered under the rubric ‘particular’, must be different from the aspect of the universal that was equality-with-self, since the particular is not simply equal to itself amid the differences of its moments. As we saw with essence, the posited being of show could not, on its own, sufficiently express the character of essence. The result of Hegel’s analysis showed that it is really only the pair of essence (as existing over against show) and show (as determined against essence) that expresses the nature of essence as absolute negativity. Similarly, here, to say that the universal determines itself as particularity, or as difference from another, is to say that it determines itself in a twofold manner, that it determines itself into an opposed pair of, on the one hand, the constitutive moments *qua* differentiated, and on the other hand, the abstract universality of the Concept’s self-equality that negates the differentiation of the moments (or the universal as posited determinateness, the universal that is ‘as opposed to’ the particular).

Hegel lays out the logic of this self-determination in the following passage:

...The Concept sets itself on one side as *immediate* indeterminate universality; this very indeterminateness constitutes its determinateness or makes it a particular. *Each* of them is the particular and is therefore *co-ordinate* with the other. Each of them as a particular is also *determine as against* the universal, and in so far can be said to be *subordinate* to it. But even this universal, *as against* which the particular is determined, is for that reason itself *merely one* of the opposed sides. For if we speak of *two*
opposed sides, we must supplement this by saying that it is not merely together that they constitute the particular—as if they were alike in being particulars only for external reflection—but rather that their determinateness over against one another is at the same time essentially only one determinateness, the negativity, which in the universal is simple.\textsuperscript{231}

There is an apparently tricky balancing act taking place here, with the Concept setting itself ‘on one side,’ and not obviously setting anything on the other. Hegel’s point, though, is that the determinate particular of the Concept is a moment that is only as the correlate to the immediate (notice the significance of this term—this is not the mediating universality with which we began) indeterminate universality, or that, more precisely, particularity, as the moment of difference in the Concept, is this opposition between determinate particular and immediate, abstract universal. The Concept’s self-determination is here rendered as the universal’s determining itself as the opposition of difference and abstract identity. Or, particularity is the difference between the particular and the abstract universal. In effect, the logic of this passage is simply the inverse movement that we find in ‘Determining Reflection’. In keeping with the overall retroactive structure of the Logic, we are here seeing as possible what has already been revealed to be necessary. We have seen from the side of reflection how the seemingly fundamental relation between essence and show itself presupposes the more complex self-determining of essence. We are now considering this logical movement from the perspective of the Concept, from the perspective of that in virtue of which we can acknowledge essence.

This passage might nevertheless seem to draw upon a kind of logical creation ex nihilo; while it is perhaps possible to see how the Concept must be presupposed by the distinction

\textsuperscript{231} SL 606.7/GW 12: 38.
between essence and show, it is harder to see how from the universal we can ‘deduce’ the particular as the realm of the determinate. Hegel’s point is that even to frame this question is already to have passed from the consideration of the Concept as totality or universal to the consideration of the Concept *qua* particular, since it requires thinking of the universal as not already determinate, that is, of thinking of the abstract universal that is already the result of a particularization of the totality of the Concept. The lesson, here, is that seeing the moment of particularity requires an act of *abstraction*, not an adding of detail or determinacy to something previously abstract or indeterminate. Insofar as the alternative to particularity is seen as abstract or indeterminate, our thinking remains at the level of the Concept *qua* particular. And yet, it should be stressed, this determination of the Concept as particular is one the Concept itself makes (entails), both insofar as its universality is immanently determinate and insofar as the Concept is the result of the logic of essence.

*Individuality*

The third moment, and that which will play a central role in the logic of life—individuality—is the Concept as reflected back into itself out of the other moments of universality and particularity. Let us briefly recall that both the universality and the particularity of the Concept refer to its being determinate (or, rather, self-determining). Universality was the mediating equality-with-self among the determinacy, whereas particularity was this mediated determinacy in which the universal expresses its equality-with-self. But insofar as each moment points to the determinacy of the Concept, we are not dealing with an indeterminate Absolute about which nothing can be said;
we are dealing, rather, with a *this*. Individuality is the moment of the Concept that refers to the fact that there is a Concept actually manifest in the self-equality of the determinate particulars, that there is a *this* that shows up, a structure that, in effect, points itself out. Consider the following, where Hegel characterizes individuality as “being-for-self”\(^{252}\): “The individual, therefore, as self-related negativity is the immediate identity of the negative with itself; it is a *being-for-self*. Or it is the abstraction that determines the Concept according to its ideal moment of *being* as an *immediate*. In this way, the individual is a qualitative *one* or a *this*.\(^{253}\) First, Hegel tells us that the individuality of the Concept is the Concept as the “*immediate identity*” of the negative self-related negation. As the *immediate* identity of the negative with itself, rather than the mediating identity of universality, it is the identity of the negative in contrast with the manifest determinacy of the particular moments. Thus, Hegel also tells us that the individuality of the Concept is “the *immediate* unity in which none of these moments is posited as distinct or as the determinant,”\(^{255}\) and, further, that it is “the *reflection* of the Concept out of its determinateness *into itself*.”\(^{256}\)

Individuality is that aspect of the Concept that emphasizes the opposition between the moments of self-equality and difference; as the *immediate* identity of the negativity of the Concept, it is thereby

\(^{252}\) Recall, here, that “*we say that something is for itself in so far as it transcends otherness, its connexion and community with other, has repelled them and made abstraction from them. For it, the other has being only as sublated, as its moment...*” (SL 158/GW 21: 145).

\(^{253}\) *SL* 621/*GW* 12: 51.


\(^{255}\) *SL* 620/*GW* 12: 50.

\(^{256}\) *SL* 618/*GW* 12: 49.
distinguished, set apart, from the determinate plurality of posited moments as from an other.\textsuperscript{257}

The moment of individuality incorporates the difference between what was, in the logic of essence, posited being and reflection, but it captures that difference as the determinate opposition in virtue of which the Concept is itself. For this reason, the individual is not a mere essence ‘behind’ the posited determinacy of the Concept; rather, it is a concrete individual distinguished from a field of determinate others.

Accordingly, the individual is not simply one moment among many, but has a priority attached to it within the logic of the Concept. It is the identity of the Concept as singled out. If the Concept \textit{qua} universality ‘finds itself’ in the determinate moments as that in virtue of which they are equal to each other, the individual is the identity of the Concept as opposed to its determinacy. The Concept is thus that which is the same, or is itself, across and in virtue of the particular difference that it itself generates, or of an opposition posited within it. Its selfhood across difference, and the difference involved, are moments of itself; for the thing (of the logic of essence), on the contrary, this identity across difference, and the specific difference, is implied or simply found. Thus, Hegel writes,

\begin{quote}
The \textit{this is}; it is \textit{immediate}; but it is only this in so far as it is \textit{pointed out}. The ‘pointing out’ is the reflecting movement which collects itself inwardly and posits immediacy, but as a self-external immediacy. Now the individual is certainly a this, as the immediate restored out of mediation; but it does not have the mediation outside it...\textsuperscript{258}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{257} “It is the self-\textit{mediation} of the Concept in so far as its \textit{otherness} has made itself into an \textit{other} again, whereby the Concept has reinstated itself as self-identical...” \textit{(SL 618/GW 12: 49)}.

\textsuperscript{258} \textit{SL 622/GW 12: 52}.
We can see Hegel’s meaning by considering the way in which this notion of individuality differs from the understanding of a ‘thing.’ Let us return, for example, to the grain of salt: the fact that the grain of salt is an identity across difference, or is one thing despite being a plurality of determinate properties, is not itself a moment of the salt’s identity. It is not constitutive of what a grain of salt is to be one thing through difference; it simply is one thing that is also a determinate set of properties. For the Concept, by contrast, that it is equal to itself only by being particular, or differentiated, is in fact explicitly part of its identity. Moreover, a finite thing is determinate in virtue of a relation to other finite things, or in virtue of properties. The Concept qua individual is that which is in itself determinate, that which is determinate in relation to nothing other than the moments in which it is expressed.239 The Concept qua individual is the this that shows up as itself, whose show is determined as the totality of its moments. The individual is thus the totality of the Concept as show, or as posited. The individual is thus “pointed out” in the sense that it is determined as the identity—the point of reference of the plurality of moments—that is itself distinct from that plurality. Or, finally: the Concept is that which is reflected out of that determinacy, that which appears as itself for itself.

4.3 The Universality of the Now

Despite the fact that the Concept is only explicitly revealed in the *Phenomenology* as that

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239 Brady Bowman captures this contrast effectively: “The thing-of-many-properties is not such as to be able to integrate this heterogeneity so as to be ‘one with itself in its other.’ This failure constitutes its finitude and makes it subject to the self-externality and passing-over into others (flux) that distinguishes finite structures from the Concept.” (Bowman, *The Metaphysics of Absolute Negativity*, p. 141)
with which the Understanding has been wrestling, we can see the three moments of the Concept—universality, particularity, and individuality—in their joint constitution of a logical totality if we consider Hegel’s analysis of the ‘Now’ in the first section of the *Phenomenology*, ‘Sense Certainty.’ The putative aim of that section, recall, is to demonstrate that knowledge takes the form of an immediate consciousness of a simple, immediate reality—‘I’ am conscious of ‘Now.’ What we come to see, according to Hegel, though, is that there is, in fact, no such immediate engagement with reality, no such simple and direct consciousness of the present as the present. The present, the ‘Now,’ is not simply or immediately now; it is, rather, that mediated ‘reflection-into-self’ that Hegel calls the Universal, but which is, for our purposes, formally equivalent to the Concept.

Consider, first, the ‘Now’ as we are immediately conscious of it—what we take to simply be the present. This Now is something with which I take myself to be immediately engaged, which I can direct my consciousness to without reference to anything else. And yet, as Hegel argues, any consciousness of the Now must implicitly make reference to all other possible Nows, all other possible present moments. Why is this the case? What we call ‘Now’ at any given moment will no longer exist as the present the moment it is picked out. The present is evanescent; it cannot be fixed as something stable to which we might refer. Thus, Hegel writes down what one is committed to in declaring the moment to be ‘Now’: “Now is night.” In specifying when Now is, we are fixing our referent, what moment we are picking out by ‘Now’. But the present is in constant flux, and so any fixing of the reference of ‘Now’ to a particular moment will fail to adequately grasp what Now is. As soon as I specify when Now is, that moment is no longer truly Now. The point Hegel is committed to is not that we cannot possibly identify discrete moments in time, for we can

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260 *PS* 100-103.
retroactively pick out moments from the past; the point, rather, is that we cannot stably identify any such discrete moment as being ‘Now,’ be cause ‘Now’ is not any one particular moment in time. Thus, Hegel writes, “The Now that is Night is preserved, i.e., it is treated as what it professes to be, as something that is; but it proves itself to be, on the contrary, something that is not. The Now does indeed preserve itself, but as something that is not Night...”\(^{261}\) The nature of Now is such that even though it is no longer true that ‘Now is Night,’ (reading this sentence on the following morning) ‘Now’ continues to refer to whatever moment it happens to be—the Now is thus preserved, but it is preserved precisely by negating the ‘Now-ness’ of the past moment that I had previously identified as ‘Now’.

This simple point leads to two important conclusions. First, we can tell that Now has this property of truthfully obtaining across an in principle infinite number of particular moments. Every moment will, in principle, be Now at some point. Put differently, ‘Now’ can refer to all possible moments in time. This, then, captures the universality of Now. “A simple thing of this kind which is through negation, which is neither This nor That, a not-This, and is with equal indifference This as well as That—such a thing we call a universal.”\(^{262}\) When I am conscious of Now qua Now, I am therefore not immediately engaged with a simple, immediate reality, but am rather conscious of something whose nature it is to persist through all possible moments, a reality that exceeds the bounds of any determinate moment.

But more than that, Now persists precisely through the negating of those past moments to which ‘Now’ could, in principle, also apply. Thus, second, the Now is only as reflected out of those

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\(^{261}\) PS 60.

\(^{262}\) PS 60.
moments which are not Now—its nature is constituted through a double negation. In picking out Now, I pick the present moment out of a field of possible Nows—other moments—to specify that this moment is Now. Now therefore negates those other moments that are not-Now, or negations of Now. Now cannot, in other words, just immediately be now; it is Now only through being distinguished from other moments, which are themselves negations of the present moment, insofar as they are all not Now. Now is, therefore, only through being opposed to a range of other determinate moments, moments that are not strictly ‘other,’ since Now qua universal applies indifferently to all moments (though, again, not all at once). In this way, Now is the individual moment reflected out of the field of determinacy that is incorporated into the nature of Now (since it is only through negative reference to those moments that Now is Now at all).

Hegel describes the individuality of Now in this way, breaking down the different moments of the self-negation that specify this Now:

(1) I point out the ‘Now’, and it is asserted to be the truth. I point it out, however, as something that has been, or as something that has been superseded; I set aside the first truth. (2) I now assert as the second truth that it has been, that it is superseded. (3) But what has been, is not; I set aside the second truth, its having been, its supersession, and thereby negate the negation of the ‘Now’, and thus return to the first assertion, that the ‘Now’ is... A This is posited; but it is rather an other that is posited, or the This is superseded; ant this otherness, or the setting-aside of the first, is itself in turn set aside, and so has returned into the first. However, this first, thus reflected into itself, is not exactly the same as it was to begin with, viz. something immediate; on the contrary, it is something that is reflected into itself, or a simple entity which, in its otherness, remains what it is: A Now which is an absolute plurality of Nows.263

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263 *PS* 63-4.
Now can only ever be pointed back to, since it is constituted through this double negative reference. Without this ‘pointing back,’ or the negation of the non-Now, we have no Now, no present moment. Now can only be individual in Hegel’s technical sense by being differentiated from an incorporated other (incorporated insofar as its otherness constitutes the Nowness of Now). The indexicality of Now, the sense in which it *points to* the present moment, can therefore be seen to be a consequence of Now’s individuality (and hence we can see this as a more general feature of the logic of the Concept): Now points to a moment precisely because Now is constituted through the negative reference to a distinguished *other* moment (and hence, finally, we can see the necessary *particularity* of Now, that it is necessarily constituted by multiple distinct moments); the ‘double negation’ functions, here, to determine the field from which the present is distinguished.

This foreground/background structure is key to grasping the individuality of the concept; the first negation establishes the determinate field as other and the second negation negates this otherness, both in the sense that it points back to the present moment and in the sense that this negated field is cancelled as strictly other and is rather incorporated into the nature of Now. To say ‘Now’ is therefore to determine it as against this background of past (and future) Nows, since this background, the determinate field from which Now is distinguished, is a constitutive (logical) moment of Now.

The advantage of considering this example is that we can see how the three moments of the Concept might be exhibited in a phenomenon that is not *simply* or immediately identical with self-conscious selfhood, or pure apperception. By examining how these moments are manifest in the structure of the ‘Now’ as the object of inquiry in “Sense Certainty,” then, I have tried to demonstrate how these moments constitute logical relations without needing to understand the various forms of relation-to-self as the conscious relations of a subject to itself (even if, as an object
of consciousness considered in the *Phenomenology*, the ‘Now’ always carries some relation to consciousness). With this in mind, we need to also consider more fully what it means to describe this logic as a logic of the self, and why the advent of the Concept in the *Science of Logic* is also the beginning of the Subjective Logic.

### 4.4 The Concept as Logic of the Self

Part of my aim in the preceding chapters has been to trace a nascent form of subjectivity from the advent of the being-for-self that is the true infinite in the Doctrine of Being through to the self-developing reality that we can now recognize to be the Concept. Having examined the three constitutive moments of the Concept in their isolation, we are now poised to ask: What makes it appropriate to talk of this logical structure of the Concept, generally, as the logic of selfhood, and why is this more appropriate in the case of the logic of the Concept than in the case of the infinite, which was also discussed in terms of ‘being-for-self’?

What qualified the infinite as ‘being-for-self’ was the fact that the infinite could only be articulated in terms of a kind of self-reference, a relation to some other term where the otherness of that term (the finite) had been cancelled, insofar as the infinite incorporates the finite, such that the infinite’s relation to the finite was, logically, a relation to a moment of itself. Recall here Hegel’s characterization: “we say that something is for itself in so far as it transcends otherness, its connexion and community with other, has repelled them and made abstraction from them. For it,
the other has being only as sublated, as its moment... As we saw in Chapter 2, though, because the ‘otherness’ of the finite is cancelled—because the identity of the infinite is constituted by the finite, in part—there is no explicit or manifest opposition between the two terms. In fact, the finite is only determinately opposed to the finitized infinite, which is, essentially, a finite term. In one sense, of course, this relationship of incorporated difference, where a putative relation to a distinct term is incorporated into the identity of the first term, such that the relation is in truth a relation between that term and an aspect of itself, is the logical structure we have been considering in increasingly sophisticated detail throughout, whether under the banner of ‘the infinite’ or ‘determining reflection’ or ‘the Concept’. It should not be surprising, for this reason, when Hegel refers to the Concept as “the infinite mediation and negativity of being within itself,” or that he characterizes, in the Phenomenology of Spirit, the “absolute Concept” as “this simple infinity”.

What distinguishes the Concept as the proper logic of selfhood is the fact that the Concept is not only the logic of this infinite, mediated self-relation, but is also the ground of the posited distinction between itself and the incorporated other from which it distinguishes itself. The logic of the Concept is a logic of something (a self) that is what it is only through a (negative) reference to

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264 SL 158/GW 21: 145. This point is especially important for my interpretation; in the Science of Logic, something need not be conscious or aware in order to be “for-itself”. James Kreines, by contrast, reads the logic of the Concept specifically in terms of conscious subjectivity: “...[Hegel] calls his universals or kinds ‘concepts’ in part because the central example of the metaphysically absolute form of them is the concept of concept-users, or a case in which a concept is ‘for itself’” (Kreines, Reason in the World, p. 23). This, however, is difficult to square with Hegel’s characterization of what it means for the Concept to be ‘for itself’ in the Introduction to the Science of Logic. See, for instance, where Hegel writes, “Thus what is to be considered is the whole Concept, firstly as the Concept in the form of being, secondly, as the Concept; in the first case, the Concept is only in itself, the Concept of reality or being; in the second case, it is the Concept as such, the Concept existing for itself (as it is, to name concrete forms, in thinking man, and even in the sentient animal and in organic individuality generally, although, of course, in these it is not conscious, still less known; it is only in inorganic nature that it is in itself)” (SL 61/GW 21: 45)

265 SL 596/GW 12: 29—my emphasis.

266 PS 100.
some other from which it thereby distinguishes itself (a world), which other is consequently incorporated into the identity of that first thing (the self). In this sense, the self of the Concept is itself the ground of its distinction from the non-self, from its non-self, from what it determines as opposed to itself, or from its world. This conception of the self situates it as, in the terms of Chapter 3, the origin of the difference between itself and its world. This means that the Concept is not the posited totality of two opposed but indifferent terms; rather, the Concept is itself posited as distinct from another term, which term is posited as ‘that which is distinct from the Concept’ and yet also as that which is essential to the Concept. To put this more plainly, the other term is not simply ‘an other term’ but is rendered as a logical background against which the Concept (as negatively related to this other term) can be distinguished. The moment of ‘otherness’ in the Concept is incorporated as other; the Concept necessarily and by its own nature includes a reference to a logically distinct moment that is determinately opposed—meaning related to as ‘different from’—the Concept. Because the Concept is that which is only as the opposition to an other, which other is explicitly rendered as ‘determinately opposed,’ there is a sense in which the Concept ‘points back at itself’ out of this related other; the Concept includes, in other words, an indexical element.

This indexical element of the Concept—the sense in which it is logically distinguished as ‘this’—is what is captured in the moment of individuality. We can get a more concrete sense of it by considering the lone example Hegel offers of the Concept, the I of self-consciousness. The I,

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267 See Bowman, The Metaphysics of Absolute Negativity, p. 219: The logical structure of the Concept is “is extramental; that is, it is not bounded by the cognitive activity of finite subjects, but rather constitutes the space in which such subjects come to find themselves over against a world of finite things.”

268 SL 583/GW 12: 17. It is clear that Hegel intends his reference to the ‘I’ to function as an example, and not as the true or ultimate referent of the term ‘Concept,’ from a number of remarks he makes. Hegel tells us that “I will confine myself here to a remark which may help one to grasp the notions here developed and may make it easier to find one’s
Hegel observes, is “as self-related negativity”—that is, as exhibiting the negativity we examined in Chapter 3—“absolutely determined, opposing itself to all that is other and excluding it,” and is thereby “individual personality.” How should we interpret this claim?

First, consider the sense in which the I ‘opposes itself’ to all that is other and excludes it as other. Despite the fact that I come to be conscious of myself as I in and through my consciousness of the various elements of the world present before me, I am nevertheless conscious of myself as that which is distinct from that world manifest in my consciousness. Moreover, this difference between myself and the world I consciously inhabit is not a merely implicit difference, one that I can, upon reflection, conclude to be the case; rather, this difference is manifest in the determinate field of my conscious awareness. Things in the world are present to me as distinct from me. Or, we might say that everything of which I am conscious always refers back to me as distinct, insofar as transfers in them. The Concept, when it has developed into a concrete existence that is itself free, is none other than the I or pure self-consciousness” (*SL* 583/*GW* 12: 17). He further tells us that in the *Logic* “the Concept is to be regarded not as the act of the self-conscious understanding, not as the subjective understanding, but as the Concept in its own absolute character which constitutes a stage of nature as well as of spirit...the Concept that is self-conscious and thinks pertains solely to Spirit.” (*SL* 586/*GW* 12: 20). Moreover, the I of pure apperception is that in virtue of which we can understand the relation between conscious subject and object. Insofar as the *Science of Logic* is not framed within the “opposition of consciousness,” then, it would be inappropriate for the Concept, the truth of Being and Essence, to be directly or immediately also the truth of conscious experience.

There is far from any scholarly consensus, however, on how to interpret the relationship between the Concept and the ‘I’ of pure self-consciousness. Stephen Houlgate (*The Opening of Hegel's Logic*, p. 116) claims that the Subjective logic should be regarded as being ontology—meaning, that it describes the logical structure of being, and not, we can infer, the logic of the relation between transcendental subjectivity and that which is determined as object—just as the Objective logic should. John Burbidge, for somewhat different reasons, also rejects the reading of the Concept as ultimately referring to self-consciousness (Burbidge, “Conceiving,” in *A Companion to Hegel*, ed. Stephen Houlgate and Michael Baur. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, pp. 160-161.). Robert Pippin, however, ties Hegel’s discussion of the Concept much more closely to the pure ‘I’ of Kantian apperception: “most of Hegel’s remarks about the Notion are remarks about his having demonstrated (1) the “free existence” of the Notion—the Hegelian descendant of what we have been tracing throughout this study as Kant’s original spontaneity claim, the claim for the priority and empirical unrevisability of a “subjectively determined” conceptual scheme—and (2) the nature of the internally related elements of any such scheme, the way in which understanding any such Notion requires understanding its function in an idealized determination of what is required in order for a subject to judge self-consciously about objects” (Pippin, *Hegel’s Idealism*, p. 248)

269 *SL* 583/*GW* 12: 17.
those conscious moments are all *mine*, or are all, to put this in Kantian language, representations to which I can in principle attach the ‘I think’. This opposition is thus a constitutive element of my consciousness of myself as pure ‘I,’ for it is in virtue of this manifest opposition that the I is singled out as I, as me. In ‘excluding all that is other,’ the I is singled out, distinguished from the field of determinate moments. And yet, of course, this singling out of the I as opposed to all that is other is not some external judgment, but is rather just what the I itself explicitly is; it is the form of the I’s self-related negativity, since that which is excluded by the I is, of course, a moment of it as well. Just as much as the I is singled out, it is “a unity with itself only through its negative attitude, which appears as a process of abstraction, and that consequently contains all determinedness dissolved in it.”\(^{270}\) Even though the I distinguishes itself from all that of which I am conscious, the determinacy excluded from the I is of course an incorporated otherness, insofar as it is the determinacy of the conscious moments. My self-consciousness must exist in and through a plurality of moments of consciousness, each of which is different not only *in time*, or, that is, because one passes in to the next, but because each has its own specific determinacy—each is a consciousness of something. The I must be, then, related to itself through all of these diverse moments if it is to be self-consciousness. It must, in other words, have the moment of equality-with-self that is not undermined by the diversity of the moments. Thus, in distinguishing itself from the determinacy of these diverse moments, the I is exhibiting a negative self-relation.

The I is therefore ‘absolutely determined’ in the sense that it is determined in an absolute or unconditioned rather than a conditioned or relative manner. The I is ‘determined’ insofar as it is determinately opposed to something—this is just what it is to be determined, according to Hegel.

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\(^{270}\) *SL 583/GW* 12: 17.
as we saw in Chapter 2, when considering his account of determinate being—and the I is
determinately opposed to something necessarily, by its very nature, because it is determinately
opposed to an aspect of itself. We therefore need make no appeal to some other thing in order to
capture the determinacy of the I, and so it can be called ‘absolutely’ determined; we can articulate
its determinancy making reference only to the I itself. Furthermore, this is why Hegel calls it
‘individual personality’: the I is pointed out in a determinate way by its own nature. It is
established, according to its own logical structure of individuality, as the reference point of the
determinancy it incorporates. Since the infinite does not contain the logical resources for this
moment of individuality, it cannot have the indexicality of the Concept—but it is in virtue of this
indexicality that the Concept exhibits the structure of selfhood. It is precisely this structure,
however—the opposed pair of self and world comprehended as the self’s own totality—that will be
essential to grasping the nature of the living.

From the foregoing, then, we can draw a couple of interesting conclusions. First, Hegel has,
in the structure of the Concept, detailed what is, on his understanding, the nature of subjectivity as
such.\footnote{See Hyppolite, Logic and Existence, p. 175: “Hegel calls this logic of concept...subjective logic, but what is at issue is the subject or self which is immanent to every object and not a subjectivity distinct from being.”} Subjectivity, in other words, is not only itself a phenomenon, but is a logical shape or
structure in virtue of which anything might qualify as a phenomenon. We can think of this
structure in broad terms as that which is the showing up of itself as a \textit{this}, one identity pointed out,
as it were, against others. As a subject, then, I do not gaze impartially over the world; I am always
for myself as \textit{this I}. This subjectivity, as rendered purely logically, though manifest in self-
consciousness, should not be confused with it. It is simply that in virtue of which something is not a
mere aggregate, an accidental proximity between self-subsistent things. As from the beginning,
then, we must resist the temptation to read ‘for itself’ as meaning before myself in consciousness, and instead read it as ‘determined in relation to itself’; it was in virtue of this reading that we could understand the infinite as ‘for itself.’ As such, however, the infinite was not yet subject; for subjectivity only properly emerges with the Concept, through the logic of the individual.

Hegel’s meaning in the Introduction to the Logic, when speaking of the difference between the ‘Subjective’ and ‘Objective’ logics, can thereby be made clear. Hegel writes that the subjective logic considers the Concept “existing for itself” (as it is, to name concrete forms, in thinking man, and even in the sentient animal and in organic individuality generally, although, of course, in these it is not conscious, still less known...”

The sense of ‘subjectivity’ operative here, and in the Logic generally, is thus not necessarily linked to awareness, or consciousness, though this is one possible concrete form of it. What unites the diverse forms of conscious human subjectivity, sentient animals, and organic individuals generally (which we can read as, for example, plant life) is that they are all for themselves individuals; each of these is nothing other than ‘the showing up of itself as this individual’.

The second interesting conclusion is that this logical structure of subjectivity has emerged out of the progression of the Logic from Being and through to Essence; the Concept is the “result” of being and essence, and is thereby “their foundation and truth.” In other words, what distinguishes subjectivity (again, not self-consciousness as such) from mere things is a certain logical

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272 SL 61/GW 21: 45.

273 SL 577/GW 12: 11.
structure, not some added spiritual essence. The same logic by which I can recognize all of the diverse things in front of me demands that I also acknowledge self-determining systems or individuals, and I can know that the latter are possible because I can in principle recognize mere property-bearing things, the logic of which rests on (or is an abstraction out of) the logic of self-determining systems. That is, the logic of the Concept could not in principle be unavailable to me because it is simply the result of the logic of essence, which is uncontroversially available, insofar as I can uncontroversially recognize that something has caused something else, or that something appears in a certain way to me.

4.5 The Concept as Subject-Object: The Idea

In this analysis of the Concept, I examined each of the moments of the Concept—universality, particularity, and individuality—in isolation, remarking on the ways in which we can distinguish each from the other (in addition to discussing two cases in which we can see the totality of these moments—the I of self-consciousness and the ‘Now’ of Hegel’s analysis of Sense-Certainty), despite the fact that Hegel warns us that the moments should not, strictly speaking, be considered in abstraction from each other, but must rather be grasped as each implying the totality

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274 John Burbidge nevertheless understands the Concept in terms of the activity of the understanding: “If we wish, we can leave behind the language of (subjective) conceiving altogether, and start to talk about the ultimate dynamic inherent in the universe—something we might deign to call the “Concept.” Unfortunately, such talk ultimately betrays Hegel’s project. For it underplays the important role that understanding...has in crystallizing and promoting development. Without it, there is nothing for dialectic to react against...” (Burbidge, op. cit., p. 172).
of the Concept (and thereby the determinacy of the other moments). The reason that these three moments are so mutually dependent is that they are the moments of self-determination, as Hegel understands it. That is, for something to determine itself requires that it introduce into itself an internal difference that is simultaneously negated as not comprising a real difference—the Concept must particularize itself and negate the independence of those particulars in its universal self-equality—and it must itself just be the self-equality through those particular, different moments—it must be an individual.

And yet, Hegel tells us that this account of the Concept,

is as yet only its Concept; or, this Concept is itself only the Concept. Because it is equally being-in-and-for-self and also a positedness, or the absolute substance that manifests the necessity of distinct substances as an identity; this identity must itself posit what it is. The moments of the movement of the relationship of substantiality through which the Concept has come to be and the reality thereby exhibited are still only in transition into the Concept; this reality does not yet possess the determination of being the Concept’s own, self-evolved determination; it fell in the sphere of necessity; but the Concept’s own determination can only be the result of its free determining, a determinate being in which the Concept is identical with itself, its moments also being Concepts and posited by the Concept itself.

What is at stake here is the relationship between the identity of the Concept and its determinacy, much the same issue that was the focus of Chapter 3. Here, however, the issue is somewhat different. In the case of the logic of reflection, the two moments that were opposed to each other, though jointly contributing to the identity of essence, were the determinacy of show and the self-

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276 SL 596/GW 12: 29.
equality of essence as the truth of that determinacy. In the present case, however, the identity of
the Concept itself has three complete, though distinct, articulations—the three moments of the
Concept—insofar as each moment is itself the “totality” of the Concept. We have seen how each of
these moments logically implies the others, in section 4.2, but we need to consider in what sense
they are identified. That is, with the logic of essence, the identity of the determinate moments of
show, or posited being, was itself posited as distinct from that show. In the case of the Concept, this
is not true; there is no moment of the Concept’s self-identity over and above the moments of
universality, particularity and individuality. And yet we must be able to think them as identified, as
moments of one logical structure. The moments of the Concept as posited are for that reason
distinct; or, as Hegel puts it, “positedness constitutes the difference of the Concept within itself”. 277
We need to conceive of the identity of a self-determining reality in these three ways, and this is just
to say that in the Concept these three moments are posited as distinct—they are rendered explicitly
as different moments in the concept of the Concept. Furthermore, since these posited moments
are in themselves the self-related negativity which the Concept conceived generally is, they are
implicitly identical278 with the Concept conceived generally. What we need, in order to conceive of
the Concept as properly self-determining, is to see how the Concept’s identity, expressed variously
through these three moments, is itself identical with the positedness of those moments. What we
need, then, is a “determinate being,” or positedness, “in which the Concept is identical with itself,
its moments also being Concepts and posited by the Concept itself.” Just as, then, the logic of
reflection demonstrated that the relationship between essence and show could only be captured
insofar as both the difference between them and their identity were posited (taken as, in that

277 SL 596/GW 12: 29.

278 Or, as Brady Bowman put it, “homomorphic” (Bowman, The Metaphysics of Absolute Negativity, p. 38).
context, to be explained rather than immediate determinations, the logical equivalent of ‘brute facts’), so too for the Concept: the identity between the Concept and its three moments (which are posited, that is to say, explicitly differentiated) must itself be posited. The “Doctrine of the Concept” is Hegel’s answer to the question, “What would the posited identity of the Concept and its moments qua diverse look like?” This question, therefore, I believe, offers us a valuable interpretive key for unlocking the meaning behind the threefold division of the logic of the Concept into ‘Subjectivity,’ ‘Objectivity’ and ‘The Idea’.

In ‘Subjectivity,’ Hegel takes the identity of the Concept to be immediate; as with the rest of the Logic, Hegel’s argument proceeds by taking something to initially be itself immediately, or to be independently or fundamentally the case, and then determines how his subject is itself derivative of, or to be explained by, some other term or set of terms. On this initial understanding, the Concept is in itself (or, for Hegel, implicitly) what it is. In other words, our starting point in the Doctrine of the Concept is to take the Concept not as something that needs to be articulated, but something that is simply already itself. Or, finally: in this initial appraisal, the Concept is taken to just be this relation between its various moments. What is it about this rendering of the Concept that makes it ‘subjective’? First, consider the similarity between the present characterization of the Concept and what Hegel called ‘external reflection,’ which we saw in Chapter 3. In ‘external reflection,’ what gave rise to the externality of reflection over against the posited being it reflected upon was the fact that the difference between the two—between posited being and reflection—was itself presupposed. The difference between reflection and posited being was not taken to be a product or a result, but was taken to be immediate; by extension, reflection itself was taken to be immediately what it was over against posited being. Here, too, there is such an external relation, for if the Concept is immediately the unity or self-identity of its moments, then the difference between
itself (Concept qua identity) and its moments (Concept qua difference) is presupposed.\footnote{Hence, as Hegel writes, “It is first simply an immediate and in this guise its moments have the form of immediate, fixed determinations” (SL 597/GW 12: 30).}

This position has an interesting consequence. For while external reflection was so called because it was conceived of as external to and independent of the posited being upon which it reflected, the Concept as immediate unity, “because it is only something inner...is equally only outer.”\footnote{SL 596/GW 12: 29.} Recall here that the Concept is essentially a form of self-relation in which its self-identity consists in its relation to diverse particulars. Insofar as its self-identity is immediate, this means that it is not explicitly mediated by these diverse particulars. Recall, too, that the Concept is necessarily subjective in the sense, developed above, that it is for itself or inwardly an individual. If the self-identity of the Concept is registered inwardly, or in relation to itself, and that self-identity is taken to be immediately true and thus immediately different from the diverse particularity of which it is the identity, that identity of the Concept “is an external form in which the Notion” is “only something posited or subjective.”\footnote{SL 597/GW 12: 30.} Accordingly, Hegel tells us, “The Concept in the guise of immediacy constitutes the point of view for which the Concept is a subjective thinking, a reflection external to the subject matter.”\footnote{SL 597/GW 12: 30.} In this last statement, it is important to note the subtle shift in the use of the term ‘subjective’ (and thereby the distinction between the sense in which the logic of the Concept is ‘Subjective’ and the sense in which the first stage of that logic exhibits the ‘subjective Concept’): insofar as we treat the identity of the Concept (the unity of itself in the face of diverse moments) as an external reflection on its diverse moments, it is merely subjective in the sense that
that identity is exhibited merely in the inward unity; it is not reflected in the diverse moments themselves. We know this must be the case since the moments of the Concept are, in this formulation, ‘fixed determinations,’ \textit{“each of which appears independently as an isolated, qualitative something which is only externally related to its other”}\footnote{SL 597/GW 12: 30.} and hence they do not reflect that they are moments of the Concept. Consequently, since the identity of the Concept was taken to be immediate, it must paradoxically be articulated in, for example, subjective thinking, precisely because it is only implied by the fixed determinations which are its moments.

The Concept considered as ‘objective’ starts, then, from the premise that it is explicitly demonstrated in objective being, or in the determinate, particular moments, rather than in a subjective reflection over them. The identity of the Concept is now explicitly something to be articulated, or is something mediated by the determinate moments in which it is expressed. The opposition between the unity of the Concept and its diverse moments is thereby undone, as the Concept is explicitly identified with those diverse moments. For this reason, “the Concept thus has a free determinate being of its own.”\footnote{SL 597/GW 12: 30.} Why should this identity with its diverse moments\footnote{Note that Hegel refers to the diverse moments as the Concept’s \textit{object}, since the Concept is the unity of that diversity, and thus is the truth of that which is diversely manifest. Or, we might say that the diverse particular moments are what the Concept is \textit{about} or, perhaps more accurately, \textit{of}.} constitute the \textit{freedom} of the objective Concept? Recall that freedom is, for Hegel (especially in the context of the logic of the Concept) another term for self-determination. So to see how the objective Concept is free, we need to see how it is characterized as self-determining in a way that the subjective Concept was not.
The determination of the subjective Concept could not be characterized as self-determination because the determinate particulars were taken to be immediately opposed to (or, at least, distinct from) the inward unity of the Concept. In that sense, the self-equality of the Concept was external to the determinate particularity of the Concept, and so, for that reason, the subjective Concept was not explicitly self-determining—this externality was the reason Hegel deems it insufficient. The objective Concept, by contrast, makes an explicit and immediate claim of identity between its determinate particular moments and its identity—the Concept just is its determinate moments in their particular determinacy. Thus, the self of the Concept is not external to (or posited as independent of) the determinate moments, and it can be therefore characterized as self-determining.

The problem for Hegel with this attempt to negotiate the conflicting demands of self-identity and self-determination is that the identity of the Concept’s unity and its determinate particularity is itself claimed immediately, as opposed to being what Hegel calls a “negative freedom”. This means for Hegel that, again, the Concept is “again only the inner” of its determinate moments. Despite the fact that the unity of the Concept is no longer considered external to its determinate moments, to that of which it is the Concept, the Concept remains merely implicit. In the case of the subjective Concept, it was implicit because the self of the Concept was only implicitly tied to the particular moments that made it up, but only because those particulars were taken to be the particulars they were independently of that unified self. In the case of the objective Concept, it remains implicit for the inverse reason: there is no distinct self that the particulars are explicitly identified with. The unity of the Concept in objectivity is rather immanent to those determinate particulars.

Hegel’s explanation of the division of the Doctrine of the Concept into ‘Subjectivity,’
‘Objectivity’ and ‘the Idea’ is rather cursory, but in it he makes an important point about the kind of self-determining self-relation that life will be seen to be, and it is a point analogous to his explanation of the difference between external and determining reflection. In order for the Concept to be properly self-determining, and thus free, the self that is the negative unity of the Concept must be explicitly distinct from the determinate particulars of which it is the self, and it must be explicitly articulated in terms of (and in virtue of) those particulars. In this respect, it must combine the freedom of the objective Concept—that the unity is not external to the determinate particulars, but is articulated in and through them—with the distinction posited between that unity and its particular moments that we found in the subjective Concept. It is only when the subjective unity of the Concept can be posited as distinct from the objective determinate particulars that the Concept can be self-determining for itself, or, properly speaking, an individual. This form of the Concept, that has the posited distinction between its subjective unity and objective determinacy, and whose objective determinacy is posited as identical with that unity, is what Hegel refers to as the Idea. The determinations of ‘subject’ and ‘objectivity’ are already implied by the structure of the Concept, since it is for itself a self (hence subject) that determines itself as various particular, determinate moments (hence objectivity), the unity of which is again the self thus determined (and, therefore, the subject has this objectivity as its object). In the Idea, these moments are made explicit. It is only by having these moments opposed to one another (or distinguished from each other in the terms of the Idea) that their identity can be explicitly accomplished rather than subjectively assumed by us.

[296] The formulation of Hegel’s that is often cited as a definition of the Idea, that it is ‘the unity of the Concept and reality’ is, as Hegel rightly points out, rather misleading, since, strictly speaking, ‘reality’ refers to—as I have discussed—merely determinate being, and the Concept already possesses determinate being as a moment. For this reason, as Hegel writes, “the Idea has not merely the more general meaning of the true being, of the unity of Concept and reality, but the more specific one of the unity of subjective Concept and objectivity” (SL 758/GW 12: 176).
Finally, it is worth recognizing the connection Hegel draws between the Idea and the infinite as discussed in the Doctrine of Being. Finite things, Hegel tells us, “are finite because they do not possess the complete reality of their Concept within themselves, but require other things to complete it—or, conversely, because they are presupposed as objects, hence possess the Concept as an external determination.”

Having now determined what it is for something (the Idea) to contain the reality of its Concept within itself, we are in a position, according to Hegel, to appreciate a more correct definition of finitude, or at least a definition of finitude in light of the more sophisticated developments of the Logic. But why should we say that finite things are finite because they don’t contain the ‘reality of their Concept’ within themselves? To see this point, it is helpful to consider the contrasting class, to see why the Idea can properly be described as ‘infinite’.

Because the Idea is the explicit identity of the Concept’s opposed moments of subjective unity and objective determinacy, where that objective determinacy itself reflects the subjective unity from which it is distinguished, it fits the general scheme of the true infinite: it relates to itself in relating to the other moment from which it is distinguished. In this way, the Idea is an articulated totality of opposed moments much like the true infinite was the articulated totality of the opposed moments of finitude and finite (or bad) infinite. For finite things, on the other hand, that to which they were opposed was in relation to them genuinely other than them; finite things are, by the logical structure of finitude, external to each other. This is why, so long as we adopt the terms of the logic of finitude, the infinite can only be conceived of as a beyond that is itself limited externally by the finite.

For something to be one and the same thing in virtue of (rather than in spite of) its

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287 SL 757/GW 12: 175.
differences, to be essentially that which appears as itself in its differences, is for it to be the kind of reality picked out by the Concept. But for it to really adequately meet those standards, there must be a posited distinction between its being one and the same thing and its differences, just as, for determining reflection, essence must posit itself in the form of posited being, or must distinguish itself from itself, if it is to be distinguished from posited being (and thus be essence at all). Just as, to reach further back in the logic, the infinite must itself be posited as different from and beyond the finite (and thereby different from itself) for the infinite to truly be infinite at all. For otherwise, should the Concept fail to meet this requirement, it would only be for us that the Concept is one and the same thing in virtue of its differences; that identity claim would not be something explicit in the logic of the Concept, but would be a merely external reflection by us—it would be merely subjective. As was remarked at the beginning of this chapter, this leaves us in a rather difficult spot, as it is not easy to recognize examples of this logic in the world, simply for the fact that there aren’t many. Hegel offers us two such examples—life and cognition—but beyond these, manifestations of the logic of the Idea are few and far between. Of course, the situation is more complicated than that, though, since Hegel’s Logic is not meant to offer a catalogue of the kinds of logical structures we see exhibited in the world, but is rather meant to provide a development of the logic of being as such. In other words, Hegel’s Logic is meant to provide a systematic answer to the question “What is?” Since our aim, however, was to answer the more modest question “What is life,” we shall turn to that subject next.
Chapter 5

The Logic of Life

5.1 What Is ‘Logical’ Life?

Hegel, in introducing the first section of his exposition of the Idea, which he titles ‘Life,’ admits that “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 domain of logic as it is commonly conceived.” Hegel anticipates here that his introduction of ‘life’ as a category in his logic—one following on the heels of some much more familiar (at least, familiar to a Kantian) categories such as ‘cause,’ ‘appearance’ or ‘ground’—does not obviously conform to the trajectory described thus far in the Logic. In response to these concerns, Hegel tells us that his argument concerns, rather than the biological concept of life, or any concept of life to be drawn from experience, “logical life,” or life “considered now more closely in its Idea.” But, we should ask, in what sense can such a concept of life depart from the biological? What might it refer to if not the structure of actual living things? What, in other words, is the phrase ‘logical life’ meant to capture?

This question is significant not just for determining what, exactly, is the subject of Hegel’s

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288 SL 761/GW 12: 179.
289 SL 762/GW 12: 180.
290 SL 763/GW 12: 181.
analysis (i.e., it is not merely a question of textual interpretation), nor for determining how the development of the Idea at the end of the Logic is continuous with the earlier arguments. Rather, this question bears heavily on how Hegel conceived (and, by extension, how we ought to conceive) of the relation between the a priori and the a posteriori, the abstract and the concrete, the necessary and the contingent. I have suggested, in Chapter 1, why this is the case, by pointing out how Kant’s concept of natural ends is a sort of mongrel concept, an uncomfortable hybrid of the a priori categories and the empirical concepts we form on the basis of experience. The concept of natural ends, recall, is possible only given certain empirical conditions, but at the same time it is not merely an empirical concept, for it has its ground in a transcendental principle. This Kantian context is helpful for interpreting what Hegel means by the ‘logical’ concept of life because it draws out, at minimum, that there is an important similarity in judging something to be, on the one hand, causally determined, and on the other, to be self-determining. Life as self-determining is the determination and organization of a whole in terms of determinate—at the level of empirical determination—members, or, for Kant, parts. From a Kantian perspective, then, a distinct logic of life is required, precisely because we have not adequately described life insofar as we describe it as an object in the sense specified in transcendental logic; for Kant, quite clearly, life is not an ‘object’ in this technical sense. There is therefore something about the nature of life’s organization, what makes an organism the individual it is, for which concepts like ‘substance’ and ‘cause’ remain inadequate.

We should therefore be careful not to confuse the illustration of this concept—in natural, living creatures—with the subject matter of Hegel’s argument (just as I argued, in the last chapter, that we should not confuse the Concept for the manner in which it exists concretely—namely, self-consciousness). An analogy here may be helpful. I can ask whether my turning on of my toaster at
the same time as I had three fans running in addition to having my turntable, speakers, and oven all on caused the circuit breaker to trip, and my question will be an empirical question about particular relations among the things in my apartment. But I can also ask what it would be for the toaster to have caused the tripping of the breaker—that is, what kind of relation obtains between these things, and this question would be, in Hegel’s sense, logical. Similarly, then, I can ask questions about particular living things, and I can even ask about the nature of life as it appears on this planet more generally, and in this latter case my answer might involve some mention of carbon, of oxygen, of the various ways the organism has of processing energy originally derived from the Sun, which I might take to apply in every case of life we know of. In neither case, however, am I asking the same question as if I ask what it is for something to be living as such—and this last one is the logical question. Hegel’s claims should not be understood, therefore, to dictate the nature of actual living organisms a priori, but rather to describe a logical structure that, according to him, is exhibited by living things.\(^{291}\)

If this is the correct interpretation of Hegel’s phrase ‘logical life,’ though, then we must recognize that, according to Hegel, ‘life’ captures a logical structure that determines reality, rather

\(^{291}\) Jon K. Burmeister, in “Hegel’s Living Logic,” in Research in Phenomenology, 43 (2013), pp. 243-264, argues that we should think of the ‘life’ of the Science of Logic as describing a particular aspect of logic itself, namely, that it is both a) self-determining and b) composed of categories that are not indifferent to each other, but that rather exist as part of an organized whole (249). Karen Ng (“Life, Self-Consciousness, Negativity: Understanding Hegel’s Speculative Identity Thesis,” in Thomas Khurana (ed.), The Freedom of Life: Hegelian Perspectives, Berlin: August Verlag, 2013, pp. 33-68) argues, along similar lines, that “a logical concept of life attempts to grasp the life and activity of the existence of thought” (Ng, 34). In “Life and Mind in Hegel’s Logic and Subjective Spirit,” in Hegel Bulletin, 37: 2 (2016), pp. 1-22, Ng adopts what I take to be a slightly different view, claiming that with the concept of life, as developed in the Science of Logic, Hegel “attempts to identify the formal characteristics of sentient living activity, determining the mode of life-form activity that is relevant for cognition in general...” (8). That is, while the category of life in the Science of Logic may not be explicitly devoted to the development of thought itself, it nevertheless offers a concept of ‘activity’ “that we need to understand if we are to grasp the form of activity characteristic of cognition” (7). Insofar as these accounts all take the category of ‘life,’ as developed in the Logic, to be useful to us in characterizing the activity of thought, without being explicitly the characterization of thought’s activity, I take them to be compatible with the reading I offer here.
than a concept that simply picks out some real objects (which latter claim itself would commit Hegel to a stronger position than Kant takes). Why must we accept this conclusion? If, for Hegel, ‘life’ denotes a specific logical structure that is distinct from the more familiar (typically understood as a priori) logical relations of cause and effect, substance and predicate, essence and appearance, then insofar as a thing is living, it cannot be explained by appeal to these other categories. (Of course, if Hegel is right, these categories stand in some definite logical relation to each other, but this is a distinct point.) If ‘life’ did not describe a structure of reality, but rather served merely to pick out a class of real objects (as does the word ‘table’), then we would need some other concept to describe the logical nature of objects of this kind more generally. It is not as if we encounter a class of objects, the logic of which can be captured by the category ‘substance’, and then also encounter a class of objects named by the term ‘table.’ By placing ‘life’ in the trajectory of the Logic, following concepts like ‘cause’ and ‘substance,’ Hegel is making the claim that ‘life’ is a more sophisticated description of the same reality (just as appealing to ‘essence’ and ‘reflection’ describes that reality in a more sophisticated manner than if we appeal to ‘quality’).

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Before moving on to consider Hegel’s claims about ‘life’, a few remarks are in order

292 Thomas E. Wartenberg adopts this view, arguing that we should understand the logic of the Absolute Idea, and Hegel’s metaphysical position generally, in terms of the logic of an organic, self-determining whole (Wartenberg, Thomas E. “Hegel’s idealism: The logic of conceptuality,” in The Cambridge Companion to Hegel, ed. Frederick C. Beiser. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. 102-129. See especially pp. 107-109. Wartenberg describes such organic wholes, however, in terms of a relation between a whole and its parts, which, as Hegel explains (and I discuss below) is an inadequate formulation for the logic of life.
regarding where we’ve come from and where we’re going. In Chapter 1 I explored Kant’s
treatment of the logic of organisms—what he calls ‘natural ends’—in the context of his approach, in
the Critique of Pure Reason, in handling the issue of purposiveness in nature. I claimed that there
was an important problem facing Kant’s account of the judgment that something is a natural end:
on the one hand, the judgment needed to be occasioned by some real empirical facts about the
thing (that I am to judge as a natural end), but, on the other hand, the judgment cannot make any
objective claim about that thing, since it is based only in a maxim for our theoretical purposes, and
does not determine the object itself. Moreover, in making such a subjective judgment, I am
(according to Kant) required to treat the thing (that I judge to be a natural end) as organized
according to a concept held by some alien intelligence (i.e. Not my own), which seems to
undermine the very notion that this thing is a natural end at all. The problem, I argued, stemmed
from the fact that to judge something to be a natural end requires a judgment about a kind of
causality, which required that we treat the whole of the organism as preceding its constituent parts;
this, however, is impossible for Kant, since all combination must be a spontaneous, synthetic act of
the perceiving subject, and so the (combined) whole cannot possibly objectively—that is, in
experience—precede the parts. This has, then, two consequences: first, we must judge the
possibility of the parts to follow on a representation of the whole, posited by some (divine)
intelligence, thereby undermining the sense in which natural ends are self-determining; second, we
can accordingly only judge things as if they are natural ends, or as if they are determined according
to some representation in some supersensible ground. What we are left with, then, is the
representation of something that is neither objectively purposive nor naturally so.

In the following three chapters, I aimed to develop an account of three conceptual tools
that would be helpful in understanding Hegel’s account of life, and the ways in which it is
responsive to the difficulties I argued were present in Kant’s argument. The first such tool was Hegel’s notion of the true infinite. The crucial element of this concept is that it offers a way to think about a kind of relation-to-other, or an opposition, as a relation-to-self, or an expression of self-identity. The second tool was the concept of determining reflection; its major contribution to the project at hand was the idea that the difference between what something is and the way it shows up is a difference determined by that thing itself, or that something can show this difference (between, in the language of Hegel’s logic, essence and show) only insofar as it determines itself in terms of this difference. The final tool was Hegel’s notion of the Concept, which gave us the important idea is the idea of the individual, the universal self-equality determined by its particular differences. Moreover, I argued that we could understand each successive concept (the infinite, determining reflection, the Concept) only on the basis of the previously developed concept. For this reason, tracking the development of these increasingly sophisticated accounts of, what are, fundamentally, various kinds of self-reference, gave us a way to understand the broad argumentative arc of the Science of Logic as a whole—an arc that comes to an end with the Idea, the first form of which is ‘life’.

Hegel’s discussion of life treats it in three stages: first, we consider the living individual, the most immediate existence of life; next, we consider the ‘life process,’ which considers the relationship between the organism and its environment; finally, we turn to the genus,293 which considers the living individual’s relation to itself in the form of another living individual, and which serves to transition us to the next shape of the Idea, what Hegel calls ‘cognition.’ The focus of the following chapter will be largely restricted to the first stage, that of the living individual. In thus

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limiting the scope of the inquiry, it is necessarily the case that a full account of what it means for life to be self-determining will not be possible here. Why, then, focus on life *qua* individual? It is the living individual—the organism—that was the focus of Kant’s arguments regarding natural teleology, and it was precisely with the organization of the living individual, as something *internally purposive*, with which (I claimed) Kant struggled. In developing an account of Hegel’s *Science of Logic* as developing a progressively sophisticated conception of self-determination in three crucial stages, I have tried to articulate what is necessary for a minimal conception of a real, self-organizing product of nature. Since the *Idea* is itself the most sophisticated logical account of self-determination, any discussion of life is necessarily an abridged discussion of Hegel’s account of self-determination. But it is the living individual, that which is “for itself the subjective totality” and which confronts an objective world, that marks the immediate, real existence of self-determination.²⁹ It is the concept of such an *individual* that eludes Kant in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, since it is the first stage at which there is something objectively manifest as self-determining.

In 5.2, I will examine Hegel’s account of the living individual, arguing that the possibility of conceiving of an organism as self-determining rests on a) recognizing how the body of the organism consists of *members*, not parts, and therefore that there can be no priority attached to either parts or whole, and b) recognizing how the body of the organism is the objective expression of the organism’s subjectivity, and therefore that it must be understood as negatively related to both its body and its world. These points, together, will allow us to determine life as real, to see how something can be objectively a naturally purposive organism. In 5.3, I will review how it is that this account of life is able to meet the demands posited by Kant’s account without falling prey to the

²⁹ *SL 76*/*GW 12: 182.*
difficulties his account faces: first, how conceiving of life as Idea allows us to capture its self-determining character without positing a whole that is cause of, and hence prior to, its parts (and therefore without needing to appeal to the particular form of intuitive understanding discussed by Kant in §77 of the *Critique of Judgment*); second, how life can therefore be objectively real, or determinately manifest, rather than merely reflectively judged to be the case. Finally, in 5.4, I will return to Hegel’s account of life, arguing that Hegel’s logic of life is fundamentally at odds with the tenets of transcendental idealism, and that it requires, on the contrary, a possible ontology of subjectivity, in order to make sense of the ‘idealism of life.’

5.2 The Idea of Life

In coming to understand Hegel’s characterization of the logic of life, there are two points we want to focus on: first, the way in which life is objectively manifest as an individual,295 which is to say, as an organism, or, more precisely, as an *organized body*, and second, the way in which this organism is *necessarily* engaged with an objective world to which it opposes itself—that is, the way in which the organism is a *subject*. In seeing how these two points mutually imply each other, we will get to the core of Hegel’s insight about life, and will be able to see in sharp relief the significant differences between Kant’s account of natural ends and Hegel’s account of the living individual. We should recall, first, the two requirements that Kant set out in his discussion of natural ends:

R1: Parts must be, with respect to both form and existence, possible only through

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295 Indeed, Hegel tells us that life is “essentially an individual” (*SL* 764/ *GW* 12: 181).
their relation to the whole.

**R2:** Parts and whole are reciprocally cause and effect of each other with respect to form, in virtue of which the parts are combined as that whole.

Part of the difficulty here is that Kant’s account of the way in which concepts like cause can have objective significance—can describe real features of objects and their interaction—is not available in the case of the relationship between parts and whole, because the whole cannot be represented as preceding the parts, which it would need to be if it could be objectively determined to be, even in part, their cause.\(^{296}\) This means that nothing can be objectively determined as naturally purposive—it cannot actually exhibit this self-determination in the combination of its determinate moments.

If Hegel’s account is meant to take us beyond this Kantian obstacle, it must be able to make sense of how an organism can be objectively determined as living, as ‘naturally purposive.’ Of course, what ‘objectivity’ means for Hegel, here, is different from what it means for Kant. There is, however, an important sense in which their meanings overlap: for Hegel, since life, *qua* Idea, must exhibit its organization in its objectivity, it must be the case that, in the objectivity of the living—in the *body*—the ideal moments of the Concept must be exhibited. Thus we must still answer to the demands of R1 and R2, or, as we will see to be the case, account for the organization that they attempt to capture by some other means. In either case, Hegel must be able to make sense of how the organization of the organism, and its determination into a determinate plurality of organs, can be self-produced. Notice, too, that it will not be sufficient to simply say that, unfettered

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\(^{296}\) It is, incidentally, no help to try to render the mutual dependence in terms of Kant’s category of reciprocity, since the Third Analogy tells us that the concept of reciprocity governs substances that are intuited in space as existing simultaneously (B256-57), and the parts and whole of an organism cannot both, at once, be intuited in space as substances, since the parts collectively occupy the same region of space as the whole.
by commitments to Kant’s particular sense of the discursivity of human cognition, Hegel can simply claim that the organism *qua* parts and whole are reciprocally cause and effect of each other, since he would still need to make sense of what, precisely, that would mean—how, for instance, something can possibly be determined as both cause (and hence as preceding in time) and effect (and hence following in time) something else, or how the organism *qua* whole cause the existence (and form) of its parts, out of which alone it is constituted.

Moreover, Hegel’s account must specify what it means for this organization to be self-produced given that the organization is an *ideal* combination of determinate moments. That is, if the ideal organization of the organic body *as* an organized individual is taken to be wholly distinct from the determinate moments of that body, if ideal and real are taken to be wholly heterogeneous elements in the living thing, then the ideal unity of the organism will be *external* to the organism *qua* body, just as the ideal unity of the subjective Concept is *eo ipso* external to the determinate moments of which it is the unity, and therefore whether this ideal unity is attributed to the organism or to some other intelligence will make no difference. To be truly self-determining, the ideal unity and organization of the determinate members must be the unity *of those members*, and must therefore be reflected in them. All of this is just to say, of course, that life must have the structure of the Idea, that logical shape expressed by the unity of the opposed objectivity and its subjective Concept.\(^{27}\) Thus, Hegel tells us that “The Concept of life, or universal life, is the immediate Idea, the Concept whose objectivity corresponds to it.”\(^{28}\) In other words, we need to see how life is the kind of thing that an individual (in Hegel’s technical sense) is, that is only through this constitutive opposition, which must nevertheless be rendered in its own terms. To

\(^{27}\) *SL* 758/\*GW* 12: 176.

\(^{28}\) *SL* 764/\*GW* 12: 182.
make sense of this then we need to be able to talk about the ideal unity of a thing and its other, whose otherness is determined by the thing, and therefore is the appearance of itself in opposition. Accordingly, we need to consider, in turn, Hegel’s account of the self-determination of the body of the organism, the organism’s objective presence, and also the self-determination of the organism as subject or self.

Organism as Object

Let us begin, then, with the organism qua body. It is in the living body, or what Hegel calls the “corporeality of the soul,” which is “that whereby the soul unites itself with external objectivity. The living being possesses corporeality in the first instances as reality that is immediately identical with the Concept...”299 We should therefore expect to see, in the living body, the organization of the Concept, meaning, here, not that there is some concept or universal term determining which organs a living body possesses (though we may also be able to talk in this way),300 but rather that the specific logical moments of the Concept should be exhibited.

299 SL 766/GW 12: 183.

300 Kreines, 2015, interprets Hegel’s claim that the Concept is the “substance” of the living individual in terms of the immanence, in the individual, of the concept of its kind or species[Gattung]. See, for instance, p. 98, where Kreines claims that the demands of natural purposiveness “can be met by the concept (Begriff) specifically in the sense of a kind or species (Gattung) of reproducing individuals...”; see, too, where Kreines claims that living individuals are “instances of one and the same general kind or concept...” (Kreines, 2015, p. 98). While Hegel does discuss life in terms of its Gattung, this part of the analysis concerns, specifically, the universality of life, that in which the individual organism is negated; it concerns life insofar as “the single individuals sublate in one another their indifferent immediate existence and in this negative unity expire...” (SL 774). We should therefore avoid identifying this sense of life’s universality with the Concept of life (as far as the Concept is not itself exclusively to be conceived of as universal). The point here is not that any individual cat is not, on Hegel’s view, an instance of the species ‘cat,’ but rather that in order to grasp what it means to call life self-determining, we need to grasp, first, how the logic of the Concept structures life as a self, or as an individual in and for itself.
The defining characteristic of the organism, Hegel tells us, is that “in respect of its externality the organism is a manifold, not of parts but of members.” There are two crucial features that distinguish members from mere parts, and which demonstrate why an organism can only be composed of members, not of parts. First, members are and exist only as members of the organism. Thus, Hegel writes, “in so far as they are external and can be apprehended in this externality, they are separable; but when separated, they revert to the mechanical and chemical relationships of common objectivity.” The meaning of this claim should be rather uncontroversial: while the members of the organism can in principle be separated from it, since they have determinate, external existence (as opposed to merely ideal existence), to separate them in this manner is to reduce them from the member they were to a merely chemical or mechanical object. This point is made somewhat more sharply in the Encyclopedia Logic, where Hegel writes, “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.” Quite literally, when a hand is cut off from the living body, it stops being a hand both in the functional sense and in the physical sense, as it is overtaken by chemical reactions and starts to degrade. For something to be a hand just is for it to be part of a living body. Now, this point, on its own, is useful for distinguishing members from parts: a rock that is part of a pile, when removed from the pile, will still be the same rock that it previously was, though it is no longer a part of the pile. What an organ is, and the form it takes, is determined by its role in contributing to the existence of the organism of which it is a member. An organ removed from a living thing might still be able to function in its natural role in the future, but

301 SL 766/GW 12: 184.
insofar as it is not actively adopting its role in the existence of the organism, it is not properly speaking that organ, but only something that had been an organ, and insofar as it is not being actively reproduced by the organism of which it is a member, it is not in itself an individual organ, but merely a heap of 'organic material.'

We can easily identify, here, both the universality and particularity of the organism \textit{qua} Concept. The particularity of the body consists in its determination into a plurality of qualitatively distinct members, in virtue of which the organism is what it is. This means that the universality of the organism’s body—that in every member, every organ, it is one and the same organism—depends on the particular differences between the organs, for it is only as the organized, coordinated activity of these members that the organism as a whole can function and exist as itself. Thus while the organism’s body \textit{qua} universality cannot simply be identified with any particular member of its body, nor can it be thought to hold in spite of the particular differences among its members. It is, rather, the identity of those members as members of one organism.\textsuperscript{304}

The final moment of the body’s Conceptual determination is that the externality of the body’s members (that they are objective, real things, like the hand, situated alongside one another rather than, for instance, immanent to one another) “is opposed to the negative unity of the living

\textsuperscript{304} This is especially important, and is also what we should expect, based on Hegel’s understanding of the ‘universal’ of the Concept, namely, that it is not something that obtains prior to or independently of the particular determinations, but rather is only as the universal self-equality of those particular moments. In a recent paper, Cinzia Ferrini characterizes the category of life in the \textit{Science of Logic} as follows: “...life begins from an essential though abstract principle, distinguishes or particularizes its components, and then reintegrates these real divisions within the original essential principle to form a concrete living individual” (“The Transition to Organics: Hegel’s Idea of Life,” in \textit{A Companion to Hegel}, ed. Stephen Houlgate and Michael Baur, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, p. 204). Such a characterization of life as \textit{beginning with} “an essential though abstract principle” is, however, at odds with the logic of the Concept. There is no abstract, essential principle in advance of concrete determination; to suppose that life rests on such an abstract principle (or abstract universal, which, as I argued in Chapter 4, must be distinguished from the universality of the Concept), is to treat it, rather, according to the logic of essence.
individuality." That is, the hand of a living organism is opposed to the organism as a unity in a way that the stone in a pile is not opposed to the unity of the pile. We can say that the stone is not opposed to the pile of which it is a part because the pile is literally nothing apart from the particular stones that happen to make it up. In the case of the organism, on the other hand, the organism as a ‘negative unity’ precisely is something apart from the members *qua* external that make it up, insofar as it is the organized unity of them. The members of the organism are therefore not indifferent to the organism *qua* unity. And this is a negative *unity* because, although it is not immediately identical with the objective, externally present members, it is equally not some other thing alongside them, but is rather the *ideal* unity of their organization. The unity of the members does not consist in something being externally present, since their external presence alone cannot account for their membership (as was pointed out in the preceding paragraph).

For these reasons, considering the organism as consisting of members rather than parts radically alters our conception of it. Hegel puts this point rather clearly: “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, whether it be regarded merely as such product or also as determined by an external end, then the Concept is regarded as external to it and it is treated as a *dead* thing.” The difference, then, between considering the organism as consisting of parts or consisting of members is whether the Concept is regarded as external to it or internal to it—and this is just the difference between life and death. But what does it mean, here, to talk of the Concept as being either immanent or external to the body of the organism?

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303 SL 766/GW 12: 184.
To understand this, we need to appeal to the distinction between the subjective Concept and the Idea raised in §4.4. For what distinguished the Idea from the subjective Concept was that in the latter case, the Concept was in some sense ‘external to’ the particular determinate moments of which it was the putative unity. The Concept, recall, is the self-determining self-identity characterized by the particular determinate moments of which it is the unity. To consider the Concept to be external to the totality of the organism’s body—hence to consider it as dead—is to consider the unity in terms of which the moments are differentiated to be merely subjective, something we would reflectively conclude, but not something objectively true of the body. We can reflect on the corpse of an animal and recognize it to be, in some sense, the body of an organism, but it is no longer objectively that. This point bears emphasis. One way of conceiving of the difference between a living individual and its corpse after death is that the corpse can only be recognized by us as the living individual; despite the radical difference in the thing itself, we can still (subjectively) recognize in the corpse what was once the living thing. But what this means is that the difference between life and death is precisely the difference between self-determination and external determination. The living individual does not have its individuality merely in our subjective judgment—it is not that individual merely for us—because if that were the case, it would be dead. To recognize something as a living individual is to recognize it as being immanently determined by the Concept, to which the objectivity or externality of its body is nevertheless opposed.

Why should we consider this relationship between individual unity of the organism and its realization in a determinate plurality of members as a one of opposition, and what does this entail for the organization of the organism? Hegel expands on this claim, writing,

Their externality is opposed to the negative unity of the living individuality;
the latter is therefore the urge [Trieb] to posit the abstract moment of the Concept’s determinateness as a real difference; since this difference is immediate, it is the urge of each single, specific moment to produce itself, and equally to raise its particularity to universality, sublate the other moments external to it and produce itself at their expense, but no less to sublate itself and make itself a means for the others.

In order to make sense of this passage, we must recall that, according to Hegel, life is “the immediate Idea”; we should thus expect to find that the difference between the opposed moments of the Idea is taken to be immediate, rather than posited. This is exactly what we find here: in the body of the organism, the determinate plurality of its various members—the organism qua particularity—is immediately opposed to the negative identity of the organism, the organism’s body qua individuality. Thus, on the one hand, we have the determinacy of the Concept—the organism’s particularity—exhibited as real difference, insofar as the members of the organism are qualitatively different from each other, existing alongside one another. On the other hand, we have the negative unity of the organism, the individuality of the organism in virtue of which it is the organism it is, which is not simply one further element alongside the members but is itself expressed in their totality. And yet, the organism is not truly, first, the determinate reality of its particular members and then second, the identity of those members as comprising an individual, but is rather the identity of these moments.

Hegel addressed this particular issue in his Lectures on Aesthetics:

307 SL 766-767/GW 12: 184. This constitutes the “process of living individuality,” which, since it is “restricted to that individuality itself and still falls entirely within it” (SL 767), ought to be distinguished from what Hegel calls the “life-process,” the process of the organism’s assimilation of elements of its environment.

308 SL 761/GW 12: 179.
When we said (i) that the soul is the totality of the Concept, as the inherently subjective ideal unity, and (ii) that the articulated body is this same totality, but as the exposition and sensuously perceived separatedness of all the particular members, and that both (i) and (ii) were posited in the living thing as in unity, there is here, to be sure, a contradiction. For the ideal unity is not only not the perceived separatedness in which every particular member has an independent existence and a separate peculiarity of its own; on the contrary, it is the direct opposite of such external reality. [...] The positing and resolving of the contradiction between the ideal unity and the real separatedness of the members constitutes the constant process of life...

The process of life comprises a double activity: on the one hand, that of bringing steadily into existence perceptibly the real differences of all the members and specific characteristics of the organism, but, on the other hand, that of asserting in them their universal ideality (which is their animation) if they try to persist in independent severance from one another and isolate themselves in fixed differences from one another... But only these two activities in one—the constant transfer of the specific characteristics of the organism into realities, and the putting of these real existents ideally into their subjective unity—constitute the complete process of life..."  

In the “process of the living individuality” we should see, then, how the identity of the opposition between the organism’s bodily particularity and ideal unity is posited. The accounts Hegel offers in the *Science of Logic* and the *Lectures on Aesthetics* largely agree: the moment of determinate difference in the Concept—the moment of particularity—is posited “as a real difference,” or this difference is brought “steadily into existence perceptibly as the real differences of all the members

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[^309]: LA 120.
[^310]: SL 766/GW 12: 184.
and specific characteristics of the organism. In order for this difference to count as real, the members of the organism must be genuinely distinct, yet in their difference they must constitute the ideal unity of the organism; this latter requirement is met by the determination of the moments as means for each other: this is the determination of each moment to “sublate the other moments external to it and produce itself at their expense, but no less to sublate itself and make itself a means for the others.” The way in which the determinate particularity of the members of the organism is not simply or exclusively at odds with the negative, ideal unity of the organism, is in the determinacy of those moments being for the ideal unity, being the means, that through which it is expressed as real. The coordinated dependency of the members on each other—their being at once means and end for one another—is that in virtue of which the ideal unity obtains, and is the objective correlate of that ideal unity. Thus the opposition of the ideal unity and the objective, determinate plurality of moments,

“which objectivity thereby becomes a means and instrument, is at the same time the negative unity of the Concept in its own self; the end realizes itself in this its externality by being the subjective power over that externality and the process in which the externality displays its self-dissolution and its return into this the negative unity of the end.”

The determinate moments of the organism, the members, which we know must comprise the totality of the organism considered under the moment of particularity—since what we are considering here is governed by the logic of the Concept—are posited as identical with the ideal

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311 LA 120.
312 SL 766-767/GW 12: 184.
313 SL 767/GW 12: 184.
unity of the organism, its individuality, insofar as they are jointly the means for its realization, and also the end itself, the realized identity of the organism in their organization. Thus, as Hegel writes, “this activity of the members is just the One [activity] of the subject into which its productions return—so that in all this only the subject is produced; i.e., it simply reproduces itself.”

Organism as Subject

Now, in the consideration of the moments of the organism qua body, we have considered how the objectivity of the organism, its corporeality, or its body, was constituted by the moments of the Concept, and how these moments organized the body as the ideal unity of a plurality of members. What remains to be examined, then, is the way in which the subjective unity of the organism is itself structured by the moments of the Concept, since, as the immediate existence of the Idea, life must exhibit the isomorphism of subjectivity and objectivity. More than that, though, we need to see how the subjective, ideal unity of the organism is not of something we can recognize as a totality, but of a self-determining individuality. In other words: in the preceding section I discussed the ideal unity of the organism’s corporeality, but we need to consider now in virtue of what that corporeality is the body of an individual, a self-determining self. As Hegel writes, “The

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314 EL 292/GW 20: 220.

315 See, also, Sebastian Rand, “What’s Wrong with Rex? Hegel on Animal Defect and Individuality,” in European Journal of Philosophy, 23: 1 (2013), pp. 68-86, for a similar account of the significance of the organism’s subjectivity (conceived in terms of its relation to an environment) for determining its individuality: “Thus for Hegel, the individuality properly characterizing the animal is one that it achieves through a variety of self-productive physiological processes in which it relates itself to its environment” (Rand, p. 76).
concept of life is the soul, and this concept has the body for its reality.\textsuperscript{316} Insofar as the living being is self-determining, then, we need to see how its subjective unity, its ‘soul,’ determines itself as the Concept of the body, which means that we need to see how the subjective unity, posited as distinct from the body, exhibits the unity of the body in terms of the moments of the Concept.

First, consider the organism \textit{qua} universality. If the universality of the Concept is that absolute negativity in which the Concept remains equal to itself in and through its particular moments, this “absolute difference with its negativity dissolved in simplicity and self-similarity, is brought to view in sensibility.”\textsuperscript{317} Sensibility, which Hegel characterizes as “inwardness, not as abstract simplicity but as an infinitely determinable receptivity, which in its determinateness does not become something manifold and external, but is simply reflected into itself”\textsuperscript{318} mirrors the description he gave of the self-conscious I’s universality,\textsuperscript{319} insofar as in sensibility the organism is simply present to itself as itself. In sensibility, then, there is no contact with a presupposed externality (and is thus distinct from sensation in a more colloquial sense), but rather “returns from its external and manifold determination into this simplicity of self-feeling.”\textsuperscript{320}

Hegel calls the particularity of the organism its ‘irritability’. Irritability is, on this account, similar to sensibility in that it is a determination of the feeling of an individual organism, but it captures the relevant sense of particularity because it sets the organism and its surrounding

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\item \textsuperscript{316} \textit{EL} 292/\textit{GW} 20: 220.
\item \textsuperscript{317} \textit{SL} 768/\textit{GW} 12: 185.
\item \textsuperscript{318} \textit{SL} 768/\textit{GW} 12: 185.
\item \textsuperscript{319} \textit{SL} 583/\textit{GW} 12: 17.
\item \textsuperscript{320} \textit{SL} 768/\textit{GW} 12: 185.
\end{itemize}
objective world in opposition in a way that is absent from mere sensibility. Thus, if sensibility
captures the inwardness of the organism in which it remains self-equal through all possible
determinations (because they are merely determinations of its own sensibility), irritability is the
organism’s “self-limitation, whereby it relates itself to the external as to a presupposed objectivity
and is in reciprocal activity with it.” In this sense, irritability is the organism’s own self-
particularization, insofar as it is a determination of itself that sets itself to one side, as opposed to its
surroundings. Rather than mere feeling, then, irritability is the organism’s responsiveness to its
environment, which environment is presupposed in this self-particularization (that is, to be irritable
just is to be in relation to an external world that is already there).

The individuality of the organism—its appearing for itself in its unity through the particular
moments—is already implied by these two aspects. For in the determination of particularity, the
organism “is its own externality to itself.” This is because, as irritable, or as affected by its
surroundings, the organism’s body is present to itself in contrast with the objective surroundings
with which it is engaged in reciprocal activity, but nevertheless as an objective presence, as external
to itself (that is, itself qua negative unity). In this self-encounter characteristic of individuality, “the

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321 SL 768/GW 12: 186.

322 See, for a contrast of sensibility and irritability, John Russon, “Emotional Subjects: Mood and Articulation in
“Irritability is my ability to be affected by something else—to be irritated, to have my tranquil self-possession
interrupted or disturbed. This self-possession that might be disturbed is sensibility: the dwelling within its own
inwardness of the organism, the feeling of the organism for itself as a whole. No matter where you touch my body—no
matter at which different part—you touch me, the same me” (43).

323 SL 768/GW 12: 186.

324 This account of the organism’s body’s presence to itself as living object is evocative of Merleau-Ponty’s description
of the ‘double sensation’ involved when a person’s right hand touches their left: “...in this package of bones and
muscles that is my right hand for my left hand, I glimpse momentarily the shell or the incarnation of this other right
hand, agile and living, that I send out toward objects in order to explore them. The body catches itself from the
outside...” (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, trans. Don Landes, p. 95)
unity of the Concept posits itself in its external objectivity as negative unity; this is reproduction. In this way, the unity of the organism—that it is an organism rather than a mere aggregate of organic material—is reproduced for itself in its self-determination. The operative sense of ‘reproduction,’ here, then, is the sense in which a living body is aware of itself as distinct from the world by which it is irritated. It is thus the self-related negativity of the individual: “the relationship to the external is reproduction and individual identity with self.” As such, the organism is its own product, produced by the self-determining process which is itself the product. For the Concept to be immanent rather than external to the living individual just is for the individual’s objectivity—the physical organism—to itself reflect the Concept out of it, for it to be exhibited in objectivity, and to have that objectivity posited against the negative unity of the subject. But to see the objectivity itself reflect the moments of the Concept while posited against the subjective unity is to see it as at once that in virtue of which the organism is sensible, irritable, and reproductive of itself. This process of reproduction is described by Hegel when he says “The Concept therefore produces itself by its urge in such a manner that the product, the Concept being its essence, is itself the producing agent; that is to say the product is product only as the externality that equally posits itself as negative, or is product only in being the process of production.” The externality of the living individual posits itself as negative insofar as, in irritability, it is manifest to itself (qua negative unity) as this bodily externality which is the particularity of the Concept (that which is to be negated in the Concept’s self-equality). In this way, as reproducing itself, the living individual has itself for an end, and is thus

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323 *SL 769/GW* 12: 186.
326 *SL 769/GW* 12: 186.
327 *SL 767/GW* 12: 185.
itself purposive.  

But why should we consider the living individual in this way? To characterize the lived body of the individual (or, what is really the same, the organism) in this way is just to treat it as Idea, as the Concept whose objective particular determinacy reflects the subjective unity against which it is distinguished (but in which it has its truth). The point to draw from this is that we must, according to Hegel, characterize the organism in this way if we are to acknowledge the organism as objectively self-determining and as bearing inner purposiveness. The consequence of the distinction between subjective Concept, objective Concept and Idea is that if we are to regard the Concept as genuinely the self-determining truth of the determinate particulars, it must be conceived as Idea—much like it was argued, in Chapter 3, that if we are to regard the essence as distinct from its appearance, we must conceive of it as the self-determining identity of the pair of essence and show. So by Hegel’s reasoning, if we do not accept the interiority of the organism—that in virtue of which it is a subject—as reflected in its objective particular determinacy, then we cannot regard it as either genuinely self-determining or as having inner purposiveness.

5.3 The Idea of Life and the Judgment of Natural Ends

Having seen in some detail what it means for Hegel to characterize life as a self-determining individual, we are now poised to ask: how, exactly, does this account move beyond Kant’s concept

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328 Consider Hegel’s remark that “Since the Concept is immanent in it, the *purposiveness* of the living being is to be grasped as *inner*...” (*SL 766/GW* 12: 184).
of a ‘natural end,’ and in what sense do we have the grounds to recognize life *qua* self-determining as really or objectively self-determining? There are two points I wish to raise here: first, that *pace* Kant, if life is to be self-determining it can be thought of neither as parts combined, subjectively, into a whole, nor as a whole that grounds the possibility of the parts, but rather as an individual determined by members; second, that the concept of life cannot be regarded as either an *a priori* or an *a posteriori* concept in the Kantian sense, but rather that the concept of life undermines the rigidity of that distinction.

1. As I argued in Chapter 1, Kant is forced to treat the concept of a natural end as a mere heuristic because the concept seems to require that we treat the whole of the natural end as preceding the parts, a requirement that cannot be met within the bounds of transcendental idealism, insofar as all combination, and *a fortiori* all empirical wholes, must be the product of the spontaneous synthetic activity of the conscious subject. The reason that Kant thought that we must treat the whole as preceding the parts, recall, was that otherwise we could not make sense of what Kant took to be the reciprocal causation of whole and parts in virtue of which the combination of the parts into the whole could be necessary rather than contingent. For how could a whole ground the possibility of the parts if the whole were merely the result of *our* combining of the parts according to the dictates of our own understanding? In §77 of the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant opines that an intuitive understanding, one that did not move from a cognition of the parts to a cognition of the whole, but could start with a direct cognition of the whole and then determine the parts, would be able to represent such a ‘natural whole’ that was ground for the possibility of its parts.

On its face, this might seem to be a purely epistemological issue, one regarding how we, as human cognitive subjects, are able to represent something like self-determination. But there is
here, I argue, a deeper issue, regarding what it is for something to be self-determining at all. For we should ask: even if we could imagine such an intuitive understanding, what would it mean for a real, natural whole to ground the possibility of its parts? What would it be to intuit such a whole as logically prior to the parts out by which it was constituted? What sense of ‘whole’ could be at work prior to the determination of the parts, and what would make it the whole that it is, such that it could ground the particular parts it is meant to, if, as Kant suggests, there would be “no contingency in the combination of the parts”?\(^329\)

According to Hegel, in describing the organization of the living being—the identity of the organism as a whole and its determinate moments, that in virtue of which this plurality of organs constitute *one thing* and not a mere heap—it is imperative that we not start out by treating *either* the organism *qua* whole, the ‘ideal unity’ of the members, or the organism *qua* members, as coming first, as the ground of the other. The interdependence and posited identity between the moments of the Concept (in virtue of which, recall, they were able to characterize the Concept as self-determining) is essential to grasping the nature of the organism, such that we cannot suppose that a living being is first a whole that generates its parts, or that there is a one-way dependence of the parts on the whole (just as we cannot suppose the inverse dependence as on its own sufficient). We are therefore not simply, in this case, “after the model of the intuitive (archetypal) understanding,” representing “the possibility of the parts...as depending upon the whole.”\(^330\) Indeed, such a ‘model’ would necessarily misconstrue the relationship between the organism’s self-identity and its determinacy.

\(^329\) *CPJ* 5: 407.

\(^330\) *CPJ* 5: 408.
From the previous analysis of Hegel’s development of the logic of self-determination (as we saw in Chapters 2-4), we can say: to be self-determining just means to be, by the nature of the thing itself, expressed as the opposition of itself and an incorporated other. The opposition between the organism’s ideal unity as *one thing* and its determination as a plurality of members is essential to the organism’s identity, and so we cannot represent one of those opposed moments as logically prior to another. To do so, to represent either the determination of the whole into a plurality of parts, or the combination of those parts as then comprising some represented whole, would be to determine the identity of the living being externally. Notice, however, that to conceive of the relationship between the living individual and its particular determinations (organs) as one of reciprocal determination is to conceive of both as presupposed. Reciprocity thus falls short of the conception of life required. That the relation of reciprocity rests on the presupposition of the related moments is a point on which Kant and Hegel agree. Consider Kant’s characterization of the principle of reciprocity: “All substances, insofar as they can be perceived in space as simultaneous, are in thoroughgoing interaction.”\(^{331}\) Hegel’s characterization of reciprocity agrees on the important point: while consideration of reciprocity does lead us to the concept of the Concept, reciprocity itself, as the final shape of the Absolute Relation of the Doctrine of Essence, “displays itself as a reciprocal causality of presupposed, self-conditioning substances...”\(^{332}\) Conceived of as a relation between substances, reciprocity cannot be a relation responsible for the differentiation of the relata, and on those grounds is insufficient for the characterization of self-determination.\(^{333}\)

\(^{331}\) *CPR* B256.

\(^{332}\) *SL* 569/ *GW* 11: 407.

\(^{333}\) Hegel expands upon this point in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*: “Looked at more closely, the use of the relationship of reciprocal action is unsatisfactory because, instead of being able to count as an equivalent of the Concept, this relationship itself still requires to be comprehended. And comprehension comes when its two sides are not left as
We must therefore reject R1 and R2 as requirements for an adequate conception of life, for their terms—the reciprocal causal relations obtaining between whole and parts—are incompatible with a sufficiently rich notion of self-determination. (It is also worth observing that, with such a sufficient account of self-determination, Hegel is not forced to attribute the determination and organization of the living being to an external, divine intelligence, a move that undermines the very naturalness of life that was meant to distinguish it from artifice.)

2. Next, we should consider the somewhat muddied *a priori* status of the concept of life. Recall that there is an apparent conflict in Kant’s notion of a natural end, since it must be occasioned by some empirical facts (hence, objective facts about the organism), and yet the judgment that something is a natural end cannot itself be objectively valid—that is, it cannot tell us anything objectively true about the organism (in this sense, even calling the object an organism is at best an awkward shorthand). On this issue, there are two points to be made about Hegel’s position. First, the fact that life shows up at all in the *Logic* (or that there is a meaningful sense for the phrase ‘logical life’) itself demonstrates that Hegel takes life to be an objective determination of reality; this is a point I addressed in the introduction to this chapter. Second, life is explicitly characterized as an objective determination, in virtue of being the first form of the Idea. As was discussed in §4.4, the Idea itself makes a distinction between subjective unity and objective determinacy, and has as one of its requirements that the subjective unity be reflected in the objective determinacy. This

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334 For a persuasive account of the rejection, in Hegel’s mature work, of such a notion of an intuiting of the Absolute, see Kenneth Westphal, “Kant, Hegel, and the Fate of ‘the’ Intuitive Intellect,” in *The Reception of Kant’s Critical Philosophy: Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel*, ed. Sally Sedgwick. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 283-305.
means that, in terms of that which is objectively present in the organism, it must bear the determination of being in truth unified in the negative subject. Although the negative unity of the living individual is ideal, in that it is not, *qua* negative unity, immediately objectively present, it does nevertheless determine that which is *as being determined by this ideal unity.*

This dependence on the empirical matter of the organism (matter here understood as opposed to form, not mind) was the reason that the judgment could not be a judgment of determining judgment, but must, according to Kant, be an instance rather of reflecting judgment. The difficulty lay in the fact that the categories determine the form of objects independently from whatever material content those objects might have (that is, whatever objects they might happen to be). But purposiveness, while not strictly an empirical concept, could not determine objects in this way, since its application depends on empirical conditions (every object is a cause, but not every object can cause itself). While Hegel must agree with this last claim—not every object is living, just as not every object contains in itself the determinations of the Concept—he cannot be thought to agree entirely with the claim that the *a priori* categories (what would be, in this translation, the concepts of the *Logic*) determine the forms of objective existence independently of the given material of those objects. To see why this is the case, consider, first, the threefold distinction of the Concept. The totality of the Concept is determined as what it is in virtue of a negation of its own self-determination, which self-determination is the source of its particularity. This particularity is not simply determined by the Concept as self-identical; rather, it reflects that identity through its particular determinacy. Thus, in an actual organism, such as a cat, that it is a cat—a totality both produced by and producing the particular organs of which it consists—both determines and is determined by those particular, determinate organs, which are obviously not determined *a priori.*

Now, it might be objected that, in a similar fashion, a table is determined by the parts of
which it consists, and thus in a sense the organization of the table is dependent on its empirical features. We can therefore conclude that there is nothing special about life in this respect—it is just like other empirical, manufactured objects, such as the table, in that the kind of thing it is depends on its material determinations. But the relevant difference in this case is that the table is an artificial end, and so the fact that it is organized in this way is easily explained by the fact that it was actively organized by an intelligence that had, prior to its generation, a representation of it in their mind. This was the reason that Kant claimed that purposive objects must be created as if according to a prior representation. In the case of artifacts, this is not at all surprising. In the case of purported natural ends, though, the whole difficulty was to explain how a prior representation could figure into the genesis of the organism. In Hegel’s case, however, this difficulty is easily addressed by the fact that the Concept is immanent to the living organism. Now, to be clear, we should be careful not to treat the Concept as equivalent to Kantian ‘representation’. We can, however, see how this requirement is met by considering the universality of the Concept. Because the universality of the Concept articulates the Concept’s self-equality in virtue of, rather than in spite of, the Concept’s particular differences (this was what allowed for the distinction between universality proper and the abstract universal), we should expect that the identity of life is itself articulated in terms of its particular differences—and this is just what Hegel claims, writing, for instance, that “in life externality is at the same time present as the simple determinateness of its Concept; thus the soul is an omnipresent outpouring of itself into this multiplicity and...remains absolutely the simple oneness of the concrete Concept with itself.” The external determinateness of life reflects or is the expression of the ‘simple oneness’ or universality of the Concept.

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333 *SL 763/GW 12: 181.*
Accordingly, in his lectures on aesthetics, Hegel says that “this ideality is not at all only our reflection on life; it is objectively present in the living subject himself, whose existence, therefore, we may style an ‘objective idealism’. The soul, as this ideality, makes itself appear, since it steadily degrades into an appearance the purely external reality of the body and therefore appears itself objectively in body.” As he clarifies in that text, we shouldn’t let the term ‘appearance’ lead us into treating this as a strictly epistemological claim; “The reality which the Idea gains as natural life is on this account a reality that appears. Appearance, that is to say, means simply that there is some reality which, instead of having its being immediately in itself, is posited negatively in its outer existence at the same time.” The negative unity of life (what Hegel throughout calls ‘soul’) appears insofar as it determines itself as an outer existence that is posited as negating itself (in that it is in itself determined as merely posited). The fact that the soul is the negative unity of the externally existing body of the organism is made apparent by the fact that that body is determined as itself reflecting some non-external truth. But in this respect, life is not alone, for any object that exhibits the logic of essence (and hence of posited being) ‘appears’ in this logical sense—indeed, this notion of appearance allows us to distinguish a ‘thing’ from mere quality, since while quality is always just immediately identical with what is determinately present, the thing, as was discussed in Chapter 3, is never itself determinately present (in the same way, again, as Locke’s substance, that which is a ‘we know not what’, is not itself present alongside its qualities). The difference between tables and cats lies not in the fact that one ‘appears’ in this sense, but rather in the logic of that which is ‘appearing’. We can safely say, then, that for Hegel life must be an objective determination, not merely a subjective supposition about some objectively existing thing.

336 LA 123.
337 LA 121.
5.4 The Idealism of Life

This last discussion serves to bring an important point to the fore: if, at a logical/ontological level, we wish to describe something as self-determining, not just in the sense that it determines its own particular characteristics, but that it determines itself as a self, the distinction made between that self and its world—between the inside and the outside of the thing—must be grounded, logically, in the thing itself. It cannot, in other words, be a distinction noticed and described from outside, subjectively (and, it would seem, arbitrarily) ascribed to the thing in question. To put this in more Hegelian terms, we can say that life, if it is to be this self-determining self, must be that self in and for itself. If we could only subjectively assume something—a dog, for instance—to be self-determining in this fashion, we would be performatively undermining our aim. Or, to put it more sharply, we would have failed to properly grasp the concept of what it is to be self-determining (since it is precisely not the kind of thing that can only be assumed from the ‘outside’). But as we have seen, this notion places a few important requirements on our ontology. First, we need an ontological account of subjectivity, since this kind of self-determining selfhood is possible only for an individual, something that is an organized totality that is for itself a subjective unity. We cannot grasp life if we fail to account for the distinction it makes between itself and its environment, which means that life is not simply an organized totality. But, second, if we need to locate subjectivity itself within our ontological picture, we cannot ascribe ideal relations to the workings (and judgments) of an independent, observing subject. Life must for itself determine the distinction between inside (subject) and outside (object), and it is for this reason that Hegel recognizes it as the first manifestation of the Idea, that ontological structure that is the differentiating of itself into the
subjective and objective.

The reason this description of life as a ‘self-determining self’ is relevant to Kant’s account of natural ends is because, though he does not develop the idea that life is a form of selfhood or subjectivity, he nevertheless characterizes it as a self-determining totality, both in that it is cause of itself and in that it organizes itself according to a concept or representation. What I have attempted to show is that there is an argument, in Hegel’s *Science of Logic*, that such self-determination is possible only under the conditions described above. This is because an organism, *qua* self-determining totality, must be an individual, in the full Hegelian technical sense. To be such an individual, however, it is not sufficient to simply appear *as if* it is one (though this is indeed a constituent moment); the individual is an individual on its own terms, or in fact. Kant’s account of natural ends, however, relegates them to the domain of appearance, in both the transcendental and empirical sense (since life only *seems* to be a natural end, or since we judge life *as if* it is a natural end). To properly account for the kind of thing that is life, then, we need an ontology that non-reductively incorporates the notion of subject; what such an ontology would look like, however, is not immediately obvious from the realization that it is necessary.

It is important to see, however, why Kant did not simply make a mistake in attributing our judgment of natural ends to reflecting judgment, making it a merely subjective determination of the organism. Or, put differently, the issue is not that Kant simply left out an account of life *qua* subject. Life, *qua* subject, is an *ideal unity* of diverse particulars. This ideal unity is, moreover, as we have seen, a unity that reflects the differences between the particular moments. It is, truly, the expression of their own proper unity. If life is to be self-determining in the relevant sense, it must therefore be responsible itself for this ideal unity, since the unity is both determining of and determined by the diverse particulars. Now, Kant does have an account of how ideal relations can
determine objects, but there are two features of that account that prevent it from adequately handling the case of life. Particulars can be brought together in an ideal unity for Kant by an act of synthesis; but acts of synthesis are always accomplished by a subject in relation to given particulars. Kant’s only way to account for the ideal unity of life is for it to be an act performed by a subject in judging the object (the organism). But for this reason, it can only judge life—even if it could do so objectively, via determining judgment—in relation to itself. What life requires, however, is that it is recognized to be a self on its own account, to be recognized as in itself determined and organized as a self, to be an individual. But if we understand the ideal unity of diverse particulars to be the result of an outside subject’s synthesizing act—an act of external reflection—we cannot grasp life as self-determining. Life in this case could only appear to be the case. There is a second, related problem, however, that keeps Kant from accounting for even the appropriate appearance of life (insofar as life appears only as if).

As I suggested in Chapter 1, Kant is unable to account for the specific kind of ideal unity required here. Life’s self-determination is a novel kind of logical relation, a self-relation that is constitutive of the moments of the self that are related to each other, and which moments, in turn, constitute the identity of the self captured by that self-relation—a relation which is not captured in Kant’s table of categories. This self-caused self-organization and self-determination is not an ideal determination that can be classified as empirical, since it describes not a particular class of object but a novel ontological domain. The organs in a living individual are not mere parts, nor are they

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\[338\] This relation cannot be reduced to, or explained in terms of, Kant’s notion of reciprocity, since the concept of reciprocity leads us to the principle that “All substances, insofar as they can be perceived in space as simultaneous, are in thoroughgoing interaction” (CPR B256). The organism and its constituent organs are not distinct substances that can be “perceived in space as simultaneous,” since that would require that “in empirical intuition the perception of one can follow the perception of the other reciprocally” (CPR B256-7). This last requirement therefore cannot possibly be met since the organism qua whole must be, for Kant, the synthetic combination of the parts, and hence they cannot both be found simultaneously as distinct substances in empirical intuition.
properties, nor are they simply effects. Thus, although Kant does not think that the purposive causation of a natural end violates the kind of causation described in the Transcendental Analytic, the ontology of life is not adequately captured by notions of substance or cause (nor by part or whole). And yet, at the same time, the ideal unity needs to express the diverse particulars of the living individual in a way that, for example, an object’s substantiality need not (indeed does not, for Kant) reflect its particular determinacy. An object is a substance quite independently of its empirical determinacy; but the same cannot be said for the category ‘life’. Indeed, this is why Kant tells us that the concept of a natural end cannot be ‘abstracted from experience.’

Thus not only can Kant not account for an ideal unity that is immanent to (and has its origin in) the living individual itself, he cannot account for the reciprocal determination that holds between that unity and the particulars of which it is the unified expression. It is only if we can provide a non-reductive ontology of subjectivity that we can meet these two requirements; this simply for the reason that in order to be a self-determining individual, life must itself generate the distinction between subjective interiority and objective exteriority, such that the distinct moments each reflect the structure of the self-relating negativity of the individual, such that there is an organized body that is that through which a subject engages a field of objectivity from which it is distinguished as self in a world. Or, put differently: life must be Idea.

We can, of course, acknowledge the various ways in which the living individual is the merely immediate shape of the Idea, and the corresponding ways in which cognition and the Absolute Idea render the living individual’s presuppositions explicit moments in the self-articulation of the Idea. To take an easy example: while the living individual is posited as the identity of its (for itself distinct) objectivity—the body—and its subjectivity—the living individual’s self, tensed against a presupposed world—this identity is taken to be immediate. The most famous
consequence of this is that of the dualism of mind or soul and body. That is, we can acknowledge that these two aspects of the living individual are, in it, identified, though *in virtue of what* they are identified—that is, a proper account of the identity—remains unidentified. Let us return to a passage examined above:

When we said (i) that the soul is the totality of the Concept, as the inherently subjective ideal unity, and (ii) that the articulated body is this same totality, but as the exposition and sensuously perceived separatedness of all the particular members, and that both (i) and (ii) were posited in the living thing as in *unity*, there is here, to be sure, a contradiction. For the ideal unity is not only *not* the perceived separatedness in which every particular member has an independent existence and a separate peculiarity of its own; on the contrary, it is the direct opposite of such external reality. [...] The positing and resolving of the contradiction between the ideal unity and the real separatedness of the members constitutes the constant process of life.

There are two claims that I wish to draw attention to here. First, the ideal unity of the living individual, the ‘soul,’ is posited as the “direct opposite” of the determinate, external reality of the body, meaning that the soul is *in principle* opposed to the body, as its ideal unity. I do not have the space to develop here how this is to be resolved in the remaining sections of the Idea—such a problem warrants its own study—but we can acknowledge that we have already seen, in the *Science of Logic*, an instance where an ideal unity of real particulars was presupposed as distinct (in the qualitative infinite), and we have seen how, in that case, this opposition was incorporated into the posited reality of the self-determining totality (in determining reflection). Second, as Hegel says, the “positing and resolving of the contradiction...constitutes the *constant* process of life.” That is, in terms of the logic of life, there can be no resolution of this contradiction; for life, it remains a

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constant process, a perpetually deferred goal, an infinite beyond. The proper terms of this resolution come in the development of the Idea through cognition and into the final form, the Absolute Idea.

Thus while the current study does not develop the conception of the Idea, or the self-determining subject of the *Science of Logic*, to its end, it has enabled us to recognize the precise limitations of Kant’s transcendental logic when faced with the concept of a self-determining living individual, and, further, what a detailed conception of such self-determining individuality would need to be, at least to grasp the reality of life.
Conclusion

On the one hand, a study of Kant’s and Hegel’s respective treatments of life is simply a study of these thinkers and their relation on a specific topic. Thus, Kant held that we take objects as if they are natural ends, while Hegel argues for life as a distinct (and sophisticated) determination of reality itself. We can thus draw comparisons, and evaluate the respective strengths of their arguments, and so on. On the other hand, as I have argued, the concept of life itself occupies a peculiar space in the idealisms of Kant and Hegel, and for the reason that it must be understood, minimally, as a part of reality that autonomously determines itself (I.e., rather than being so determined by us). By thus examining the differences between Kant and Hegel’s account of life, and by examining why each thinker is compelled to offer the account they do, we can gain an insight into the significance of the shift from transcendental to speculative or absolute idealism. While Kant’s and Hegel’s accounts of life have their own insights and merits, and are worthy of study in any case, they also therefore provide a key to understanding a deeper metaphysical issue, namely, why we might need an ontology of subjectivity, and what it would need to look like.

In the foregoing, my aim has been to show why the concept of life occupies such a significant place for both Kant and Hegel, and why Kant’s account of natural ends and their relation to teleological judgment requires completion in Hegel’s logic of the living individual. Since, in order to understand the latter, we need to see how a non-reductive ontology (or logic) of subjectivity could be possible, I traced its development through three particular stages of the Science of Logic: the true infinite, determining reflection, and the Concept—for these were the
tools necessary to see the Idea, *qua* origin of the subjective/objective distinction, and therefore as reducible to neither, as the necessary solution to a particular set of problems, rather than as simply a bizarre or paradoxical assertion. We can thus take the argument of the whole to be as follows: life cannot be merely taken *as if* it is self-determining, but must rather be understood to be in fact a self-determining individual self, what Hegel calls Idea—and that this latter understanding requires a logical account of subjectivity.

At stake, too, is the notion of ideality. Life, as a self-determining individual, has as one aspect or moment the ideal relation between a) the member organs and the living organism and b) the living self and its surroundings, and so any ontological account of life will necessarily imply a specific form of idealism—what Hegel calls the ‘idealism of life.’ Accordingly, I have traced the increasingly sophisticated relationship between the ideal and the real implicit in Hegel’s *Logic* from its initial appearance in the discussion of the infinity of Being through to the unveiling of the Idea. This relationship is vitally important for two reasons. First, ideality is usually (and explicitly, in the case of Kant) understood in relation to subjectivity, such that (transcendentally) ideal relations are those attributable to some subject or mind. But this tracing back of ideality to a judging subject suggests an ontological picture whereby the ideal is that which is contributed by some subject (the ontology of which remains a conspicuous lacuna) and the real is that which is already there, found by the subject, or, at best, that which is found and subsequently synthesized by the subject. But this picture would necessarily misconstrue or fail to account for the relationship between real particulars and ideal relations in a living individual, since the ideal relations are necessarily immanent to the individual and at once determined by and determining of the real particulars of which it consists. Second, if life is necessarily at once objectively present organism and subjective relation to its surroundings, its ideal relation to the world around it (in, for example, sensation)
needs to be understood as a real feature of the organism. We therefore have two distinct (though related) reasons to need an account of ideality—an idealism—that treats it as the immanent structure of reality, rather than some extrinsic additive to or fundamentally distinct perspective on reality. But this is precisely the notion of ideality offered, at first explicitly in Hegel’s discussion of the infinite, and then implicitly, in the Science of Logic.

All of this is at stake because in the living individual we are presented with a reality that is of a fundamentally different kind than what Kant would otherwise call an empirical object—namely, an object synthesized by the understanding according to its pure concepts—and consequently, there can be no transcendental logic of life, since transcendental logic concerns only “the origin of our cognitions of objects insofar as that cannot be ascribed to the objects.” It is for this reason that life occupies one of the very last positions in the Science of Logic; it is not, on the final analysis, a thing with a certain essence that bears some properties, and any account of life that treats it as such will necessarily abstract away from that which makes life the peculiar kind of reality it is. For this reason, the argument given in the preceding pages can also, finally, be taken as an indirect argument for Hegel’s absolute idealism, since it is able to respond to the stringent requirements that life places on any ontology.

CPR B80.
References and Abbreviations

All references to Kant will be given according to the volume and page number in the Academy edition of Kant’s gesammelte Schriften (Akademie Ausgabe. Berlin: Georg Reimer, later Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1900—), except for references to the Critique of Pure Reason, which will, as is customary, be given in terms of the pagination of the B Edition (unless the passage in question is only found in the A Edition, in which case the pagination of the A Edition will be given). All references to Hegel will be given according to the English translations listed below. Where reference is made to the Science of Logic and the Encyclopedia Logic, reference to the German text will be given, citing the page and volume number of the Gesammelte Werke: Hrsg. im Auftrag der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft. Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1968—, abbreviated as GW.

The following translations of Kant’s and Hegel’s texts have been used throughout:

Works by Kant


Works by Hegel


Bibliography


*Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism*, translated and


