

Speculative Philosophy and the Grounding of Metaphysics

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ABSTRACT

Speculative Philosophy and the Grounding of Metaphysics Martin King

German idealism is in part characterized by its attempt to provide a justification for our knowledge of the world in response to David Hume's problem of induction. In looking at three major philosophers of this time period - Kant, Fichte, and Hegel - a pattern emerges among their respective treatments of metaphysical propositions and their methods of grounding metaphysics. Kant's method was to demonstrate the possibility of synthetic *a priori* propositions so as to divide objects epistemologically according to the possibility of their being known or not. This left human psychology uncomfortably split and so Fichte attempted a revision of Kant's system beginning with the assumption of unity in an immediately certain analytic proposition in order to rectify this. However, this limited the scope of his philosophy to a narrow subjectivism based on an ungrounded presupposition of the subject. Hegel's speculative proposition allowed his dialectics to be absolute and objective. It granted his philosophy the power not only to ground metaphysics, but to explain the entire history of human consciousness. As such, it is the culmination of Kant's response to Hume's attack working out its contradictions.

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Introduction

Hegel's philosophy is broad and deep, encompassing the whole of human history and justifying its course in the necessary progression towards a logical end. But his system was not built from nothing. It came about in the wake of Kant's transcendental philosophy, in midst of the rational reconstruction of nations following the American and French revolutions. Kant's critical philosophy came as an answer to a very troubling problem brought to light by Hume in 1770. The problem is now referred to as *the problem of induction*.

In his *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Hume notes that "when we look about us towards external objects, and consider the operation of causes, we are never able, in a single instance, to discover any power or necessary connexion; any quality, which binds the effect to the cause, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other" (Hume, p. 515). Through no power of perception or understanding can a man ever discover the idea of necessary causation; no instance of one impression following another can suggest necessary connection. It is only experience that ever suggests the inseparability of two successive events, and it is in fact only ever the *conjunction* of two events which is comprehended. All events are "entirely loose and separate... [they] seem conjoined, but never connected... the necessary conclusion *seems* to be that we have no idea of connexion or power at all when employed either in philosophical reasonings or common life" (Hume, p. 520). The idea of necessary connection is rather inferred from the repeated or even constant conjunction of similar instances. Two successive instances may have attained a connection in our minds, but this does not correspond to one in reality.

Hume's epistemology left our knowledge of the exterior world unjustified and without proof of necessity. It is only by probability of the more frequent conjunction of one event after another that we are justified in claiming to know of causation. This was a deeply troubling conclusion. The grounds upon which metaphysics, and even all of science, had been known to be true, had been torn away. Kant had been a professor at Königsberg when Hume's *Inquiry* was published and it had a profound impact on him. Philosophically, he was shaken and dedicated the next 10 years of his study to finding a proper solution to this problem (Kuehn 2001, pp. 230-7). In 1781, he released the fruits of his labour in the form of *The Critique of Pure Reason*.

In this work Kant proposes a new critical science set to discover the limits of human knowledge. His system of philosophy is achieved through what is known as the transcendental method. He divides the world of objects into phenomena, which we can know and interact with, and noumena, which are the things-in-themselves, of which we can have no knowledge or experience. In separating objects into these two aspects he is able to salvage a portion of the world as knowable by us. Hume did not see the possibility of the synthetic *a priori* knowledge which Kant discovered, and so he failed to be able to make the distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal, and thus could not find any way in which we can form justified knowledge of causality. Kant maintains that we can know nothing of noumenal objects, things as they are in themselves, but his analysis provides a knowable component to the objects, and concerning these we can know causation. Kant agrees that causation is, as Hume discovered, only in the mind of one who contemplates the world, as a framework for possible experience, and not in the world itself. But it is also the mind itself which informs the intuitions, which perceives the world the way it does. That part of the world is ours to know for it is dependent on our knowing it. Appearances are only appearances for the faculty of the understanding, and it is therefore possible for one

bearing this faculty to have access to knowledge of these objects as appearances. His distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal aspects required him to analyze propositions into subject and predicate, into their essential and accidental components. Kant's discovery of the synthetical *a priori* judgments, the propositions with which all of metaphysics is concerned, allowed him to find a basis on which metaphysics might be possible.

Kant, in analyzing the world into noumena and phenomena, had saved metaphysics and regrounded the natural sciences as epistemologically sound. This new philosophy was nothing short of groundbreaking and even though it was very well received, some were unsatisfied with what it sacrificed. In achieving his goal of finding a potential ground for metaphysics, Kant had created a double psychology, one empirical and one rational. His method required the division of subject and predicate in his form of judgment in order to speak of synthetic *a priori* judgments at all.

The division of the world into phenomena and noumena, implied the psychological duality of Reason and the Understanding, yet the numerical identity of the self must be maintained. Kant himself did not see this as problematic, but some post-Kantian did. Some of his critics claimed to be defending the true version of Kant's transcendental idealist system and charitably accounting for any inconsistencies that they found, while others saw Kant's method as a starting point whose true value Kant himself had not seen. Among the former are J. G. Fichte, Karl Reinhold, and Friedrich Jacobi, whose criticisms formed the base of the philosophies of the latter group, including famously Friedrich Schelling and G.W.F. Hegel among others (Ameriks 2000, pp. 4-7).

Kant's system transcendently deduced freedom and the unity of consciousness, which he called the unity of apperception, but Fichte saw this not as something to be deduced but, rather as the proper starting point of idealism. Fichte's idealism resolved the

psychological tensions he found in Kant by beginning his investigation with knowledge of the unity of consciousness and total freedom. He turned Kant's philosophy on its head, so to speak, beginning from a single original proposition, the so-called, "*Grundsatz*." Fichte began from a unity of consciousness (the I) and proceeded to logically deduce the other (the Not-I), the world, and a system of ethics through his investigations. Kant had denied man knowledge of his noumenal self, but Fichte made this the first certainty of reflective consciousness. His *Science of Knowledge* expanded Kant's critique of natural thinking into a critique of rational thought in general; it was to be a completion of Kant's system, one consistent with need for a unified simple self. Fichte did not see his philosophy as incompatible with Kant's, but merely a necessary revision to prioritize unity and freedom within a Kantian framework (Fichte 2003, pp. 3-4).

Hegel did not find Fichte's corrective to Kant satisfying. Fichte's system of deduction from *a priori* principles was ill-suited to Hegel's goal of absolute objectivity. Though Fichte did deduce the other, the Not-I, its knowledge remained dependent on the self (or the I) and his system could not escape subjectivity. Hegel's own method was not transcendental, but dialectical. Influenced by the organic conception of nature put forth by his friend Schelling, his synthetical dialectics were self-moving. Both the subject and predicate of the speculative sentence [*der speculative Satz*] were each other, in their very essences. The unity of self and other became complete in the movement of his speculation. It was the power of the dialectic movement that allowed him to provide a ground for metaphysics and maintain the unity of human consciousness. His model of recognitive consciousness maintained a Fichtean influence in its identity of self and other, but moved beyond it to achieve knowledge of the Absolute. The dialectics allowed a new logic to take the place of deduction, and opened up the whole of history to his absolute onto-teleology of the free rational spirit.

I will look at Kant's transcendental method as an answer to Hume, and its drawbacks as seen by the post-Kantians -Reinhold, Jacobi, and Fichte- then examine the way in which Fichte synthesizes his *Grundsätzen* through his work on the I and the Not-I, and finally show how Hegel's dialectics operate in order to demonstrate the progression in methods of grounding metaphysics in the German idealists. I intend to show, in a very Hegelian manner, that the problems of Kant's dual psychology stem from his method of analyzing judgments, which in turn led Fichte to begin his system with a unified proposition with knowledge of a unified self. Both Kant's discovery of the antinomic nature of reason, as well as the limited scope of Fichte's idealism in turn led Hegel find an objective way to ground metaphysics. I will look at a very specific thread which passes through these particular philosophers and creates a dialectic continuity among them.

By looking at their respective treatments of the proposition in terms of the relation of subject and predicate an interesting new understanding of the idealists emerges. Kant's propositions of metaphysics will be shown to be synthetic propositions *a priori*, whereas Fichte's will be seen to be analytic. Hegel's proposition will be shown to be neither of these; it is rather speculative, and self-moving. In this focused light they can be seen as progressing dialectically to their culmination in Hegel. Hegel's *speculativ Satz* is a new kind of proposition which allows for a comprehensive way of grounding metaphysics while maintaining the unity of consciousness. This particular thread can be drawn out in a way in which an examination of their entire works would not allow. Through this dialectic process I will have shown that the movement of Hegel's speculative philosophy is the result of Kant's answer to Hume's scepticism working out its own contradictions. It is due to the possibility of the movement of the speculative *Satz*, where the subject and the predicate each become the other, that Hegel's response is able to function as a response to Hume and satisfy Fichte's critique of Kant, without limiting itself to the subjective.

Chapter I

Kant and the Form of Judgment

This chapter on Kant will demonstrate that his split faculty psychology stems from his use of the subject-object form of judgment. This will take place in via two sub-arguments supporting the main argument of the chapter. After reconstructing Hume's grounds for scepticism and the problem of induction in Section A, I will show in Section B that Kant's method of grounding metaphysics and saving the sciences from Hume's scepticism requires the subject-predicate form of judgment. This will be accomplished by demonstrating that without dividing judgments into a subject-predicate form, there is no way to distinguish between synthetic and analytic judgments and he would be therefore unable to claim that there are synthetic *a priori* cognitions. Then, in Section C, I will argue that his grounding of metaphysics leads to the split faculty psychology, which his project is accused of generating. A discussion of space and time as given in the Transcendental Aesthetic will show his answer to the Humean problem of scepticism. I will then discuss Allen Wood's identity interpretation of the relation between noumena and phenomena, in order to show the split faculties as the most charitable interpretation. It will then be evident that Kant's system of transcendental idealism, properly understood, relies on a duality of subject and predicate in the form of judgment and results in split faculties. This dualism is unsettling and unsatisfactory to Kant's contemporaries, such as Reinhold and Fichte, and prompts an attempt for a revision of the Kantian system, which will be addressed in Chapter II.

Section A - Hume and the Threat of Induction

Hume's scepticism was powerful indeed. Kant says of it that "...since the origin of metaphysics so far as we know its history, nothing has ever happened which could have been more decisive to its fate than the attack made upon it by David Hume" (*Prol* p. 2).

Through his example of cause and effect "He demonstrated irrefutably that it was entirely impossible for reason to think *a priori* and by means of concepts such a combination as involves necessity" (*ibid*, p. 3). Reason for Hume was erring in its belief in its ability to know *a priori* that one event involves the necessity of another.

In his *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Hume divides objects of inquiry into matters of fact and relations of ideas. In the latter, he places geometry, arithmetic and everything that is necessary and certain. But matters of fact are propositions about the world whose opposites are not impossible, he says that the proposition "*that the sun will not rise tomorrow* is no less intelligible a proposition and implies no more contradiction than the affirmation that *it will rise*" (Hume, p. 500). Just as in such a case, all reasoning concerning matters of fact require the idea of causation. It is the only relation that would allow us to move from one event to another, that is, from a cause to its effect with notion of necessity. He notes that "when we look about us towards external objects, and consider the operation of causes, we are never able, in a single instance, to discover any power or necessary connexion; any quality, which binds the effect to the cause, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other" (Hume, pp. 514-15). Through no power of perception or understanding can a man ever discover causation; no instance of one impression following another can suggest necessary connection. It is only experience that ever suggests at the inseparability of two successive events, and it is in fact only ever the *conjunction* of two events which is comprehended (Hume p. 520). All events are "copied from some preceding impression or sentiment... there is nothing that produces any impression, nor

consequently can suggest any idea of power or necessary connection” (Hume p. 521). The idea of necessary connection is inferred from the repeated or even constant conjunction of similar instances. Two successive instances have only ever attained connection in our minds, but never in reality. This pointed to an error in reasoning from particulars to universals. No one is ever justified in forming laws based on matters of fact, that is, of using inductive reasoning as a power of connection.

Hume extended his scepticism to all matters of human reasoning where induction was involved. All cases of theology, morality and science were subject to his attack. We can see the dramatic conclusion of his inquiry in his section on sceptical Philosophy,

If we take in our hands any volume – of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance – let us ask: *Does it contain abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?* No. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?* No. Commit it then to the flames, for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.

- Hume, p. 557.

Hume’s strict epistemology left the natural sciences uncertain and destroyed the possibility of metaphysics. It is only by probability of the more frequent conjunction of one event after another that we are justified in claiming to know it. This was a deeply troubling conclusion. Though everything remains as it was, the *a priori* certainty which reason had granted its knowledge of causation was shown to be impossible. The grounds upon which metaphysics, and even all of science, had been known to be true, had been undermined. Hume’s conclusion, though primarily revolving around the topic of cause and effect, “is as much as to say that there is not and cannot be, any such thing as metaphysics at all” (*Prolegomena* p. 3).

Kant had been a professor at Königsberg when Hume’s *Inquiry* was published and it had a profound impact on him. This period became known as his “Silent Years,” in which he developed his ideas. He dedicated the next 10 years of his study to finding a proper solution to this problem by adjusting the concepts he first introduced in his inaugural dissertation at Königsberg (Kuehn 2000, p. 198-201). In 1781, he released the fruits of his labour in the

form of *The Critique of Pure Reason* wherein he demonstrated the regulative use of pure reason as well as its potential content.

Section B – The Form of Judgment

Kant prepares for his critical philosophy with an analysis of propositions. His entire project depends on his ability to demonstrate how a certain special kind of judgment is possible, “metaphysics stands or falls with the solution of this problem; its very existence depends upon it” (*Prolegomena* p. 18). Kant needed to find out by what right we are entitled to apply the concepts formed in our intellect to the objects with which they are concerned. And it is important for the purposes of this essay that he analyses judgments at all. He distinguishes all propositions into the categories of pure judgments and empirical judgments which he labels *a priori* and *a posteriori*¹ respectively. *A posteriori* judgments are those which are empirical and thus never concern necessary knowledge but are rather always contingent on the actual state of affairs. *A priori* cognitions Kant limits to statements that are always and everywhere true; they are necessary and universal.

Metaphysics is wholly different than the natural sciences and must be concerned with *pure* cognitions alone for it is not concerned with either empirical facts or the objects of reason, but merely with itself; it is a critical science of *a priori* cognition. The content of *a priori* cognitions can be distinguished into the categories of analytic and synthetic, based on whether the proposition is explicative or ampliative, respectively. The predicate of an explicative judgment adds nothing new to the subject that was not already contained therein. An ampliative judgment amplifies the subject by introducing something new. To demonstrate the concept of analytic, he uses the example of the statement ‘All bodies are

¹ Kant uses the term “empirical” when speaking of *a posteriori*. I will use them interchangeably, depending on the desired emphasis and context.

extended'. In this statement the predicate 'extended' is contained in the subject 'all bodies', such that one cannot think the subject without at the same time thinking the predicate. Thus in this statement both the subject and the predicate are essential parts of the judgment; one cannot be thought without the other also being thought (B1-13).

There is nothing in the predicate that is not already contained in the meaning of the concept of the subject. The concept of the subject is merely analyzed into a predicate. The very concept of the predicate is thought to belong to the concept of the subject prior to the judgment's assertion, though it was not necessarily expressed. The common principle of all analytic judgments is the principle of non-contradiction. The predicate of an analytic judgment cannot be negated without contradiction, for example, "Some bodies are not extended" cannot possibly be true. And conversely, the opposite of their negative assertion is always true. This can be seen when we consider that the statement 'All bodies are extended' and its negative counterpart, 'No bodies are not extended', are always equally true. All analytic judgments are *a priori* even when the content is empirical. All that is required in knowing the truth of analytic judgments is familiarity with their concepts and logical analysis thereof according to the principle of non-contradiction (ibid).

A synthetic proposition on the other hand has a predicate that is wholly other than, and not involved in the thinking of, the subject; such as the empirical example 'All bodies are heavy'. In this statement we can see that the subject 'all bodies' is the essential component amplified by the inessential predicate 'are heavy'. The predicate is inessential to the truth of the particular statement, it is "ampliative" in the sense mentioned above. The concept of heaviness is not contained in the concept of bodies, whereas the concept of extension is. It may not be clear in Kant's example why extension should be a necessary part of bodies and not heaviness and so it may help to use another example. Consider the statements 'All bachelors are unmarried men,' and "Steve is a bachelor". Given that Steve is

in fact a bachelor, both are true statements, but one is necessarily so, the other only contingently. That all bachelors are unmarried men is true by virtue of the definition of the terms alone, that is, by analysis of the concepts alone without recourse to some empirical intuition and without synthetic construction. The fact that Steve is a bachelor is contingent on the fact he is an unmarried man, and may in the future be a false statement if he ever takes his vows. Analytic judgments are true by virtue of their opposites yielding a contradiction. They are known to be true by the principle of non-contradiction alone.

Synthetic judgments require a different principle than the principle of non-contradiction. There are both empirical synthetic judgments as well as *a priori* certain ones which spring from the Understanding and Reason. They both cannot be derived merely from the analysis of concepts and the principle of non-contradiction, though they are of course subject to that principle. Propositions are commonly divided into these distinct types and can be represented in the following table:

Fig. 1

	Analytic	Synthetic
<i>A priori</i>	A	B
<i>A posteriori</i>	C	D

Traditionally, only propositions of type A and D exist. Everything that was analytic was *a priori* and vice versa, and everything that was synthetic was *a posteriori* and vice versa. In type A were the truths of mathematics, logic and the like, and in D were propositions about contingent truths known only from experience, such as that Kant was born in 1724, or that my computer is black. Judgments of experience are always synthetic whereas analytic

judgments are known to be true prior to experience. It is important to understand the distinction that Kant is making here: analytic statements require that the predicate as well as the subject of a judgment be essential to the truth of the statement, whereas synthetic statements have a single essential subject and an inessential predicate to amplify the concept by description. The subject and predicate in analytic statements are essentially linked in a way that they are not in synthetic statements, such that one can find the predicate term through the mere analysis of the subject term.

In addition to the traditional proposition types A and D, Kant demonstrates the possibility of type B (Judgments of type C are regarded as impossible by definition). This type was never thought to be possible, but Kant sees it as indispensable to the grounding of metaphysics. And thus his project hinges on his demonstrating the possibility of this new type of judgment. Kant claims that all pure mathematical truths, as well as all metaphysical judgments, are synthetic, belonging to type B rather than to type A. We will now briefly look at why Kant places mathematical judgments into this type.

Kant concedes that the judgments of mathematics are always *a priori* as they follow from necessity. He uses the example of the simple addition statement " $5 + 7 = 12$ ". This statement is clearly *a priori* since it requires no empirical verification and it is necessarily and universally true. We do not gain this knowledge from repetitive calculations of the addition of five and seven, and abstracting it to a universal claim. These repetitive calculations and the result that it equals twelve, are altogether irrelevant to the truth of the statement. His claim only becomes interesting when considering additionally the synthetic nature of such judgments. Even though it may seem that the judgments of mathematics can be derived from the principle of non-contradiction alone, that is, that they might seem to be analytic, and although mathematical judgments can be understood according to that

principle, it is only so by presupposing another synthetic proposition from which it follows. They can in fact never be derived from the principle alone (B15-18).

Keeping the same example, Kant claims that there is nothing in the concept of the sum of the two digits 5 and 7 that contain the concept of 12. We may be able to conceive of some sum which is equal to $5 + 7$, but that this number is only and exactly 12 does not follow from logical analysis of our concepts alone. He argues that we must have recourse to some intuition which through synthesis can produce the answer 12, but this cannot arise *merely through the analysis of our concepts of 5 and 7 alone*. This idea is much clearer when considering larger numbers and more complex calculations with which we are not so familiar. For example, it is necessarily and universally true that $19 \times 62 = 1178$, but this answer is not immediately contained in 19×62 . If it were, it would be immediately apparent and inseparable in thought, as analytic propositions require. However, it is true that some principles supposed in geometry are analytic, such as " $A = A$ ", but they are only admitted in mathematics because they can be presented in some form of what Kant calls graphical intuition, which means that they can be represented spatially. The truths of mathematics involve the *construction of*, and not the analysis of, concepts. Such truths proceed beyond the original concepts to the intuitions to which they correspond. Hume, by contrast, thought that mathematics contained analytic *a priori* truths. This relegated metaphysics to a tenuous realm of uncertainty away from mathematics. Kant says of Hume that "according to his inferences everything that we call metaphysics would come down to a mere delusion of an alleged insight of reason into that what has in fact been borrowed from experience and from habit has taken on the appearance of necessity," (B20). But Kant equates the cognizability of metaphysical truths with that of mathematics, something we can know with certainty (*Prolegomena* p. 12).

Kant's project is largely to demonstrate how synthetic *a priori* knowledge is possible; it is an epistemological project to justify how we can know what we do in fact know. His method of solving the problem of the limits of our knowledge requires not only an answer to how synthetic *a priori* judgments are possible, but the very analysis of judgments into these types. Without having been able to consider metaphysical or mathematical judgments as analytic or synthetic, he would never have been able to ground metaphysics and make a response to Hume. His method is a double-edged sword; it both allows him the ability to account for knowledge, but also leaves him vulnerable to the criticisms of Reinhold and Fichte, among others.

Kant begins his *Critique* with an analysis of judgments in the introduction and moves onto the forms of intuitions at the beginning of the book proper, since all knowledge of the external world is only possible by the synthesis of intuitions in the imagination. Natural science too depends on his demonstration of *a priori* synthetic judgments for it contains such judgments as principles, what he calls the "pure natural sciences". It is only due to his analysis of objects into phenomena and noumena that he can claim knowledge of the world of appearances at all. Just as *a posteriori* judgments are either true or not based on empirical intuitions, synthetic *a priori* judgments rely on pure intuitions, that is, on the formal representations of space and time. Having established the proper realm of metaphysics as the same as that of mathematics, as synthetic *a priori*, and demonstrating the necessity of his division of subject and predicate in propositions, we will now look at his division of subject and object by first looking at his concepts of space and time and see how it is that his project is an answer to Hume's problem of induction. We will then show that the very method that saved metaphysics and natural science also implies a problematic dual psychology.

Section C – Kant’s Dual Psychology

In this section it will be demonstrated that Kant’s method of grounding metaphysics by analysing objects into their knowable and unknowable aspects, viz. into phenomena and noumena, results in a problematic split faculty psychology. I will first reconstruct Kant’s treatment of objects in the Transcendental Aesthetic, then show that even the most favourable interpretation of this move will leave his system necessarily and unsatisfactorily rent in twain.

Kant begins by arguing that if one were to remove all content from an intuition, one would be left with two forms which could never be abstracted away, viz. space and time. Firstly, space is not an externally derived *a posteriori* concept, but rather a foundation which supplies a basis for external experiences and therefore must already exist prior to any sensation. There can only be one space, for when we speak of different spaces we only speak of the limitations of a space which we choose to define; there is still only one space even if we speak of many defined or limited spaces. Kant’s claim is that space is a necessary *a priori* form of representation; a pure form of intuition. One can imagine space devoid of objects, but no one can imagine an object devoid of space. This follows directly from the analytic nature of the statement seen earlier that all bodies are extended. Geometry is the science of space; it is synthetic and also *a priori*, because all of its principles are apodeictically certain. The only way geometry can be synthetic and yet prior to experience is if it is given the *form of external sensibility*. Thus space is not in the intuited objects themselves; it is a part of our faculties which we apply to intuitions in order to form *concepts*. Space is the form of appearances and is necessary for all empirical intuitions. Kant’s expositions show not only the empirical *reality* of space, but also the *ideality* of space. Space is a *transcendental* ideality, insofar as if we remove the condition on which the possibility of all experience depends, it ceases to be. It does not belong to things in

themselves, but is rather dependent upon our cognitive faculties. The intuition of space is the only representation from which the synthetic propositions *a priori* concerning objects external to us can be derived. Any object which is received by the senses cannot be taken to be a thing-in-itself. All we can perceive is the mere representation of a thing, and never the actual thing in itself (B35-45).

Secondly, time is necessarily an *a priori* concept, and not empirical, or it would not be possible for us to judge objects and events as existing in succession or simultaneously. We cannot remove time from any intuition whatsoever. Any intuition, whether it is internal or external is affected by the pure intuition of time, either immediately or mediately. External intuitions are always mediately intuited according to time, for they must also be intuited with respect to the self. Internal intuitions require no such mediation, and are thus called immediate. There are apodeictically certain principles of time which are *a priori*, and inform, but are not informed by, experience. Time allows for contradictory determinations of an object by allowing them to occur at differing times (but these different times are merely different parts of the same time, just as space is merely divided by perception). The doctrine of motion, which is only possible through time, explains so much of our synthetic *a priori* knowledge. All of our intuitions take place in the subjective condition of time, and this makes it prior to intuitions and allows their conceptualization; time is not a discursive concept and cannot be furnished by mere intuitions. Time is the form of the intuitions of our selves, but Kant is careful to note that it does *not* provide us with intuitions of our souls. It merely relates experiences to our own state. Time is a condition of human intuition and is in-itself nothing. Things are not, in-themselves, in time. Only as appearances, as sensations, can they be said to be in time. Nothing can be said to be presentable to the senses without it being in time. The transcendental ideality of time cannot be illustrated by empirical

examples, yet only when regarded as a mere appearance can an object be said to have objective reality (B45-53).

Time, like space, has empirical but not transcendental reality. It is a subjective reality which inheres not in any object. Time is a mode of representation of the self-as-object, rather than being an object itself. According to Kant, idealists do not believe in any demonstrable proof for the existence of external objects-in-themselves, but their internal perception of time is immediate in consciousness. They do not, however, realize that both are appearances. Both the external appearance of an object and the internal pure intuition of the object, through which its experience is made possible, are not the same things; "the things we intuit are not in themselves what we intuit them to be, nor are their relations so constituted in themselves as they appear to us" (B59). Space and time are *a priori* sources of knowledge, since they make synthetic propositions *a priori* possible and can present objects not in themselves, but only as mere appearances. Only by postulating both space and time as *a priori* intuitions is it possible to find a basis for mathematical knowledge. This allows that experience be brought into accord with mathematics. The Transcendental Aesthetic has only two aspects, space and time. Not even motion, which is the change of an object through both space and time, can be a pure intuition. Motion requires experience and the perception of some existing object as it moves through space in time (B53-59).

Space and time cannot be properties of things as they are in-themselves, only as they are for-us, that is, as appearances. Kant concludes that neither space nor time is in the objects themselves. Rather they are in us as the forms of our intuition; they are the conditions of our empirical intuitions. They are prior to, and necessary for, all experience and, as such, are the *a priori* basis for all empirical cognition. The principle of the possibility of intuition is that it must be subject to the formal conditions of space and time; there can be no representations without the forms of intuition (B33-35). We have now described Kant's

views on the perception of objects through the intuitions of space and time. We will now examine the role of the objects-in-themselves and their place in his project.

Objects-in-themselves fit into Kant's scheme as those which inform appearances. Without the thing-in-itself behind appearances, Kant's philosophy would be no more than Berkeleyan idealism. There would be only solipsism and appearances which float with no grounding; we would have no assurance of knowledge of the world, mathematics, and most importantly metaphysics. In the Kantian system there is no absolute space and time which could ground objects. It is only by virtue of the forms of our intuition that appearances in space and time exist. Without subjects, appearances, as well as space and time, would disappear. However, the objects themselves would remain. Things-in-themselves are the objects as they really are without our intuitions. They are not perceptible and are not objects of our knowledge. What the thing-in-itself is will never become clear no matter how much we intuit an appearance. All we could ever perceive is an object as appearance, but things-in-themselves must really exist in order for any experience to be possible. For how can there be appearances without something appearing? There simply must be something which appears. Kant never deduces the thing-in-itself, but assumes that it is necessary *a priori*. "The world of sense contains merely appearances, which are not things in themselves; but the understanding must assume these latter ones, viz., noumena, because it knows the objects of experience to be mere appearances" (*Prolegomena* p. 94). Thus the objects we intuit are neither mere *ungrounded* appearances nor objectively knowable things-in-themselves. They are real and not illusory, but only *insofar as they are appearances*. The *a priori* nature of the forms of space and time allow that knowledge of mathematics, i.e. arithmetic and geometry, can have the apodeictic certainty which we know they have, rather than being based solely on experience. We will now turn to perceptions of inner

sense to look at the connection of intuitions and the self as it is an interesting case as concerns phenomena and noumena and their relation to one another.

We have shown that for Kant space is the form of *external intuition* and time is the form of *internal intuition*. With no absolute space to ground spatial relations, as is found in Newton, everything perceived in space must be presented in relation to other external objects. While these objects are also necessarily intuited in the form of time, there are also internal perceptions which are only presented in time. These internal perceptions are only related to our own internal state and not to any other objects. The internal intuition, or inner sense of the subject is its presentation of itself as the *I think*. This apprehension of the self Kant calls *self-consciousness*. It is the logical principle according to which all intuition is possible. The self appears to itself in time, but to itself *not* as it is in-itself, rather as it is *in appearance* (this does not merely refer to visual appearance, but rather phenomenal appearance, or representation). It is intuited according to the manner in which it is internally affected, that is, as appearance. All relations of time are only relations with respect to the state of the subject, thus if every intuition is intuited in time, then the relation to the self accompanies each and every intuition. The self is present in all intuition (B33-68).

Now that we have sketched the system of objects as found in Kant, we will look at two common interpretations on the epistemological and ontological status of these objects and their appearances. We will briefly look at these as they are presented in Allen Wood's books on Kant, in order to demonstrate that, even if the less problematic interpretation is true, we are left with an uncomfortable dualism. The problem that ensues is that the by-product of the dual-psychology is at odds with the necessary unity and identity of consciousness. Wood labels one as the identity interpretation and one as the causal interpretation. We will begin with the latter and go over some problems Wood sees with this interpretation.

Possible Interpretations: Causal and Identity Interpretations:

The main claim in the causal interpretation is that there are things in themselves which actually *cause* the appearances we perceive and that these are distinct yet dependent entities, that is, that if objects in themselves are the grounds of their appearances, as Kant says, then they cannot be identical. The appearances are not capable of existing without the things-in-themselves that cause them. Appearances on this view are said to be distinct entities because nothing whatsoever can be known about things-in-themselves, and so nothing could suggest that they are the same. "But appearances are only representations of things that exist without cognition of what they might be in themselves" (B164). Here we can see that Kant can make no connection whatsoever between the thing-in-itself and its representation. The relation between them remains completely unknown. Kant does not explicitly claim that appearances are only the causal effects of things-in-themselves, but he does suggest that they are distinct and are 'effected in us' or which are the 'grounds' for appearances. Translation from German makes this point rather difficult, as he often refers to things-in-themselves as *Ursache* which can be translated as "cause," or "principle," or "root".

But we should consider that bodies are not objects in themselves that are present to us, but rather a mere appearance of who knows what unknown object; that motion is not the effect of this unknown cause, but merely the appearance of its influence on our senses; that consequently neither of these is something outside us, but both are merely representations in us...

- Kant, A387

Despite some textual support that would seem to suggest that things as appearances are "caused" or "grounded" by things in themselves, there is also support for the opposite claim throughout Kant's work and there are some dangerous implications of this being the case.

I will look at four criticisms of this view which Wood brings up and see which can be overcome. The first objection is that if things as appearances are distinct entities and we can know nothing of things in themselves, then it seems as though Kant is more of a material

idealist than he would like to admit. The second is that if things as appearances become the total body of things we can know, then things-in-themselves become superfluous metaphysical entities. To these two objections it can be replied that things as appearances may be distinct from things-in-themselves, but they do not have any existence of their own apart from them. Appearances are dependent upon their objects for their existence, so a Berkeleyan idealism could not apply here. Objects as they are in themselves are not superfluous, but completely necessary, despite our being able to say nothing about them. Kant's own rejection of Berkeleyan idealism does not conflict with this view, but rather corroborates it. As it was already mentioned, if space and time are mere forms of representation in us, than the material idealism of Berkeley is without grounds. We can be empirical realists with Kant's version of idealism. Further, it can be said that although we can have no knowledge of things-in-themselves, we can know *that there are* things-in-themselves, which are the conditions of possibility of things as appearances. Since, there must be something appearing in order for there to be appearances (Wood 2005, pp. 63-64).

A further objection, which is famously credited to Jacobi, is that on this causal view the concept of causation [*Causalität*] is being applied to the thing itself. "Without [the presupposition that things-in-themselves affect the senses] I could not enter into the system, but *with* it I could not stay within it" (Jacobi, p. 336). The proper use of Causation is restricted to the realm of possible experience, but to ascribe 'cause' to the objects in themselves and 'effect' to appearances goes far beyond the scope of its legitimate application. When Kant speaks of causality he restricts its use to the realm of possible experience. He uses the terms "*Ursache*" and "*Wirkung*" (cause and effect) in his table of categories which are only applicable to appearances. The necessity of the existence of appearances as they are now is only dependent on the previous state of the appearances given in perception, according to the law of causality. That is, causality is not intended for

any use other than to determine the necessary relations *between appearances*. "Hence we cognize only the necessity of **effects** in nature, the causes of which are given to us, and the mark of necessity in existence does not reach beyond the field of possible existence," (A227/B280). Causation necessarily only applies to appearances, which are mere representations in us, because as Hume showed, causation cannot be found in the world. Kant added to this saying that causation is something that we bring to appearances in order to understand them; it cannot belong to things-in-themselves (A243). This objection cannot be overlooked. Kant has explicitly stated that a concept such as cause cannot be applied beyond possible experience.

The final objection raised by Wood is that Kant distinguishes the self into the empirical self, which is given to us in inner sense (phenomenon), and the intelligible self (noumenon), as we saw above. For the causal interpretation, these two selves would have to be different entities existing in different worlds, one noumenal and one phenomenal. But if this were the case, how could they be said to be the same self in any sense? The self is essentially simple. The identity interpretation has no problem here since it assumes that both are merely ways of cognizing (and not cognizing) the very same entity. This criticism is not easily refuted, for even if one could deny the identity of an object with its appearance, it is much harder to deny the identity of the self. Thus according to Wood, the causality interpretation fails to account for the unity of consciousness which human experience requires (Wood 2005, p. 74).

The main claim for the identity interpretation is that the bodies we perceive must be identical to those things-in-themselves. If a perceived body were not the same entity as its corresponding noumenon, then in what way is it that object's appearance? Regarding this Kant says the following:

Now one can indeed admit that something that may be outside us in the transcendental sense is the cause of our outer intuitions, but this is not the object by

the representation of matter and corporeal things; for these are merely appearances, i.e., mere modes of representation, which are always found in us, and their reality, just as much as that of my own thoughts, rests on immediate consciousness.

- A372

This quote seems to suggest that objects outside of us are not meant to be conceived as being the cause of the representations in us. Although it certainly seems to suggest by the word "may" that we could not know one way or another.

Kant admits that his first *Critique* is primarily epistemological in method and aim. He aims to find the boundaries and limits of human knowledge in order to restrict the use of pure speculative reason, in order to ground metaphysics such that it may be considered a science. Wood's investigation cites passages from Kant which support both interpretations. He concludes that the identity interpretation is more consistent with Kant's project in general. The ramifications of the causality interpretation brought to light by Wood make it an unlikely view for Kant to have held, even if he used the German terms *Grund* and *Ursache* to describe the relation and did not himself explicitly distinguish between these two views which Wood examines. It would be uncharitable to hold Kant to the view that objects-in-themselves are strictly the causes of their appearances. To suggest that Kant's distinction of phenomena and noumena is an ontological claim about the different types of entities in the world is more than can be gleaned from the text. It would be most uncharitable to suppose a doubly large ontology in Kant when an epistemic interpretation of different viewpoints on the same objects would suffice.

Now that I have made a case for the identity interpretation being the most correct one, in spite of this, we can still demonstrate that this interpretation leads to the dual psychology. It is not a matter of interpretation, for even on the most favourable one, Kant's method results in a problematic dualism. If Kant favoured the causal connection his entire ontology would be twice as large as on the identity interpretation, and rather than merely

having two faculties, we would have two entire selves. While Kant does distinguish the self as it is in appearance from the self as it is in-itself, it is not fair to suppose the non-identity of these two aspects. They are necessarily one simple self but are merely cognized in different manners, that is, by different faculties. Thus even if Kant's own view is the more charitable one, the dualism arises. No interpretation of his view on objects and appearances will avoid this dualism from conflicting with the necessary unity of consciousness.

We will now turn to a short investigation into the self in Kant and in order to fully understand Kant's self we need to look at the unifying acts of consciousness; it is here that we truly begin to see the synthetic nature of Kant's method. Kant held that there was a threefold synthesis of perceptions. The intuitions provide the self with a manifold of representations which must be synthesized and distinguished by relation, since they are given in a single moment in time. This is the basic synthesis which occurs in the apprehension of *intuition*. The next of these is in the *imagination*. The imagination is a rule which governs the change in perceptions and makes possible the *reproduction* of representations. There is a transcendental synthesis in the imagination in order that relations between representations may occur through time or across space. The last stage of synthesis is in the *recognition* of intuitions in a *concept*. Concepts serve as rules which allow the formation of representations of objects as unities in the manifold. This is necessary as a basis for all possible experience; concepts are necessary in order for us to think that our intuitions correspond to actual objects (B140-160).

The self is essentially simple, and so in order for it to be presented with objects, there must be unity to the manifold. The manifold is given to us as sensible intuition and its forms exist *a priori* in the faculty of intuition. In order to be intelligible the manifold must be connected and related to other objects and to the self. This connection of the manifold involves its *synthesis* and its *unity*. The unity of the manifold cannot arise out of connection

since it is not within the domain of the connective concepts of the understanding, and so must precede all connection. It is an *a priori* unity. This unity is neither a category nor a result of connection, and so we must look higher yet. Kant finds that the unity is to be found by means of the general proposition '*I think*' (B137-140). The '*I think*' is what Kant refers to as the pure apperception. It is this unifying act of the pure apperception accompanying all cognition and intuition which Kant calls the *transcendental unity of apperception*. "The first pure cognition of the understanding, therefore, on which the rest of its use is grounded, and is at the same time also entirely independent from all conditions of sensible intuition, is the principle of the original synthetic unity of apperception" (B137). This unity is necessary in order that all thoughts, cognitions and intuitions can be thought of as belonging to the same self, which they certainly are. It is the highest principle of the exercise of the understanding. It is only due to the fact that I understand the multitude of representations that I can call them *my* representations. One is always immediately aware that all the representations of the manifold are happening to a single conscious subject, viz. me. This unity of consciousness is required for the relation of representations to objects, as well as for the possibility of the understanding itself. Without this primary unity no cognition is possible (B131-140).

Kant denies that we have immediate knowledge of the self as it is in-itself. For Kant, the self we receive in internal intuition is merely an appearance of ourselves to ourselves. The self is known only by means of the relations of time, that is, by virtue of internal intuition. But this intuition is the same as that which intuits objects external to me, and thus I am only given to myself as an object of appearances, and not as I am in-myself, as I would be if the intuition were intellectual. "I, as intelligence and **thinking** subject cognize my self as an object that is **thought**," (B156). In order to argue this, Kant relates internal intuition to external intuition. He argues that any internal intuition can only be represented in the

form of time. We cannot represent time in any other shape than in a line, that is, as a geometrical figure, and still maintain its unity. Our determinations of periods of time are derived from the changes perceived in external objects in relation to ourselves. The self is known only by means of the relations of time, that is, by virtue of internal intuition alone. But this intuition is the same as that which intuits objects external to me, and thus I am only given to myself as an object of appearances, and *not* as I am in-myself, as I would be if the intuition were intellectual. The *thinking* subject knows itself only as an object *thought* (B151-159). The self necessarily has two aspects; one intelligible and one empirical. These must however be one, as the self must be simple in order to account for the unity of consciousness.

As Jacobi and Fichte pointed out, the self must be unitary, and insofar as its cognitive abilities are divided its faculties must be manifold. In order for any cognition to be possible, there must be a split in the faculties; each reigning over its respective domain. "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind" (A51). Concepts are needed in order for cognition, but are incapable of an immediate relation to objects, and as I showed in the portion on the threefold synthesis, concepts cannot be formed without representations of sense, without intuitions. Reason is opposed to the understanding which must remain silent on issues of metaphysics. The schematizing of cognition into concepts has a limited application, as the *Critique of Pure Reason* is meant to show; it is only over objects as they appear that the understanding has legitimate application. The fact that Reason plays a merely regulative role in cognition itself demonstrates the dual nature of psychology. Rather than a split ontology, we have a split psychology. His division of intuition and concept, of two cognitive faculties (reason and the understanding) that work together, was at once his solution to the problem posed by Hume and grounds for a revision of the project itself.

It can be seen that Kant's need for the division of propositions into *a priori* and *a posteriori*, analytic and synthetic, requires the division of the predicate and the subject of the proposition itself. In his synthetic *a priori* judgments the predicate is the inessential component merely attached to the essential subject of the sentence. His treatment of the natural sciences, whose truth relies on *a priori* synthetic judgments, creates a split-faculty psychology; one faculty capable of knowledge of the world as appearances, and one which regulates the concepts formed therefrom. This duality is not representative of human cognition which is necessarily unified and whole. Kant's system finds itself in a contradiction of requiring the unity of consciousness on the one hand and dividing it on the other. This is why Fichte begins his system from unity and identity and then proceeds to deductively demonstrate what is largely a Kantian system. It is, as far as Fichte is concerned, the proper non-contradictory conclusion to Kant's system and it is to this which we will now turn.

Chapter II

Fichte and the *Grundsatz*

In the preceding chapter we concluded that Kant's grounding of metaphysics left his account of human psychology split according to Fichte. Fichte thinks the dualism of the Kantian scheme is inadequate to account for the unity of human experience and so he looks to find a grounding principle [*Grundsatz*] in order to unify these psychological and grammatical tensions. Such a principle would be an immediate essential fact of human consciousness from which all principles concerning human consciousness can be deduced. The task of his idealism is to deduce a world of objects from the assumption that we are free practical beings. It proceeds from the unity of consciousness to the totality of experience (Fichte 2003, p. 27). In Section A of this chapter I will look at criticisms of Kant's dualities as found in Fichte, Reinhold and Jacobi before moving on to Section B where I look at Fichte's particular revision of the Kantian system. Here I show that Fichte's ability to go beyond the Kantian system and account for the freedom and unity of consciousness relies on his analytical *Grundsatz* and its equating of subject and predicate in its fundamental proposition. Then in Section C, I will argue that it is his very method of accounting for this freedom and unity of consciousness that also limits his entire idealism to the subjective. In establishing both points I will have demonstrated that Fichte's method of revising the Kantian system to account for unity requires the equating of subject and predicate and leads only to a subjective idealism. It solves the problems of Kant's dualisms, but leaves him

vulnerable to charges of mere subjectivism considered from the view point of Hegel, which will be found in Chapter 3.

Section A – Fichte’s Problems with Kantian Dualisms

Fichte wanted to create a systematic version of what he saw to be essentially a Kantian project. He wanted to complete the system which he thought Kant had started with his critique of ordinary thinking. In finding the I as absolute and immediately known, Fichte could allow for the freedom which he thought Kant’s project did not emphasize. Fichte’s account of freedom is similar to Kant’s but it differs in an important way. Both agree that freedom comes from acting according to one’s own legislation. Kant however, denied that anything other than reason could function as a law giver. Reason discovers the categorical imperative and in acting in accordance with this self-proposed law one is considered free. If one does not do as the categorical imperative commands, one is not free. For Kant, the passions may happen to agree with reason, but they never inform it, and acting merely from the passions is never considered freedom. The post-Kantians in general took this to task, arguing that according to Kant’s account of freedom one is never really free but merely a slave to one’s reason. Fichte’s absolute I is self-legislating on different grounds. It is only limited by reflection upon itself, that is, it is by the Not-I that the I comes to know its own freedom. It is through the checks provided by the Not-I that informs the self of the very limits of its free action, the limits of itself. The Not-I limits the freedom of the I, determining the boundaries of its freedom. The I strives for infinite freedom and upon finding the Not-I, finds the limits of its freedom and the limits of itself.

Unlike the beginning of Kant’s project with the analysis of objects into phenomena and noumena, Fichte begins with a single fundamental fact. This fundamental fact for Fichte is the knowledge of the I [*das Ich*]. Fichte finds that the I posits itself absolutely and it is this

which he calls the fundamental *principle of identity*. This principle is not derived, but is simply known a priori; it neither can be, nor needs to be argued for. The immediacy and certainty of this proposition is something for which he is criticized and will constitute a small portion of the next chapter on Hegel. The I posits itself merely as thinking, it does not posit a thinking thing other than itself. The objective I is only an object to itself as subject. I am never separate from the object of my awareness, since that object is always and only myself. Fichte denies the existence of a subject as separable from its thoughts. Whereas in Kant the self is some subject other than its thinking activity. Here we can see that Fichte's I avoids the dual subject-object structure that he was unsatisfied with in Kant, since the object thought merely is the subject thinking; the thinking I and the I that is thought are nothing over and above the activity of mere thinking. The structure of reflection is not of thinking finding thought, but thinking finding thinking, i.e., itself. The immediate grounding principle of consciousness is this: the I as object is nothing other than the I as subject.

Fichte's project is much the same in its goal as Kant's, but has the problems of Kant's philosophy as its object of inquiry, rather than those of Hume. Fichte wants to be able to ground objects as knowable without dividing human consciousness or grounding it in the unknowable, viz. in things-in-themselves. The ground of a thing necessarily lies outside of what it grounds. This is equally true for the ground of experience in general, and so for this ground one must look outside of experience entirely. Of course, a finite being has knowledge of nothing beyond experience, but he can, through the power of his thought, abstract and separate what is conjoined therein. External objects and the subjective intelligence are conjoined but can be abstracted apart in reflection. When the latter is taken to be the ground, the intelligence becomes the I-in-itself [ich-an-sich], it is what Fichte calls *idealism*; when it is the former taken as ground, it becomes the thing-in-itself [Ding-an-sich] and is what Fichte calls *dogmatism*. Fichte notes that while neither one of these systems can refute

the other, and even though the dogmatist would not necessarily deny our freedom, dogmatic principles do not favour the independence of the self. The self for the dogmatist is merely an accident of the world, dependent on objects for the very possibility of its existence. The dogmatist's self is scattered and sustained by objects. But the idealist on the other hand believes in his own independence and freedom and makes this the possibility of his experience in general. To be an idealist one must already regard himself as free (Fichte 2003, pp. 12-16). The incompatibility boils down to either the independence of the self, or that of objects.

In Fichte's idealism, the intellect observes itself and consists in the immediate unity of being and perceiving; its being is the activity of perceiving. Objects exist for an intellect, but the intellect exists *for itself*. The intellect is always active, but has no proper being. It is not even an active something, but rather merely an *act*. Out of this act the external existing world must be derived in order to avoid a mere doubting solipsism. The intellect is an act [*Tathandlung*], but it is so in a certain manner according to the laws of its action. But as it is an act whose very existence is grounded entirely in its own action, these laws come not from external beings, but from the limits of its own being. The intellect governs itself in the course of its operation (Fichte 2003, pp. 21-28).

An essential part of Kant's transcendental idealism was that his *Critique* denied that anything whatsoever could be known about noumena. This included both the thing-in-itself which supports the appearances and what Fichte had come to call the I-in-itself. These he considered to be only accessible via the intellectual intuition, with which man is not equipped. At the point at which Kant denied us epistemological access, Fichte created a basis for his entire system of knowledge. He believed he was largely following Kant's system, but he made revisions in saying that the self which is presented to itself in intuition, the self as appearance, is also the very same subject to which it itself is being presented.

Fichte suggests that what Kant called the unity of apperception, should rightly have been called "intellectual intuition." It is self-consciousness for Kant; it accompanies all thoughts and joins every intuition. It is the I-ness [*die Ichheit*] that is the indispensable condition of consciousness that makes it such that these are *my* representations. And so for Fichte, this means that we are in fact presented with intellectual intuition.

Kant did not ever transcendently deduce the noumena; he only assumed them *a priori*. It was only because appearances need to be appearances of something, that he assumed them at all. In doing so, he presupposed the very ground of the self and the possibility of its experiences. He was playing the game of idealism and that of dogmatism. This is how his system is thought of as being both a transcendental idealism and an empirical realism. Kant ended up with an unsatisfying compromise between the Newtonian world of empirical objects subject to laws on the one hand, and the Leibnizian world of independent things determined by their own internal principles, on the other. He had a foot in both camps and could not properly make a stand in either (see *Leibniz*). Although Kant does not ground the possibility of all experience on things-in-themselves, and so he is not an example of a dogmatist against which Fichte is arguing. But neither does he make a compelling case as an idealist, for he does not demonstrate the necessity and immediacy of the I-in-itself as the ground of all possible experience. Fichte's realization of this led him to start his system of knowledge where he did. It satisfied his need for an account of human freedom as well as his need to collapse the split faculty psychology which he saw to have plagued Kant's system.

By beginning his system from an immediately true and ungrounded [*unbedingten*] proposition in which the subject term and predicate term refer to the very same activity of the self, he can avoid the dualisms that even the most charitable epistemological interpretation of Kant cannot avoid. We will now move on to Section B where it will be

demonstrated that Fichte's unity came about due to his equating of the subject and predicate in the proposition.

Section B – Unity in the *Grundsatz*

Fichte is able to account for freedom and unity by virtue of his equating the subject and predicate terms in the very same activity of self-positing. The form of the statements of metaphysics for Fichte is analytic, rather than synthetic as Kant's was, and as such his absolutely unconditioned principle can neither be proved nor defined. It is the basis of all consciousness. That A is A (or $A = A$) is analytically true and admitted by everyone as certain, and it is this he makes his first *principle of identity*. It is this immediate identity of the two terms that renders the *Grundsatz* an analytic proposition. It is important to note however, that this does not assert that there actually is an A, or that A is the case. No existence is postulated by the logical copula " $=$ ". What is actually being said is $A > A$ (if A then A) with no say as to whether A is the case or not. Its truth concerns only the form of the proposition and not its content.

The if-then connection of necessity, of identity, that functions as the logical copula Fichte designates as "X". X is posited in the self, as it is the self that judges the connection of necessity in the preceding proposition A is A. And insofar as X is in the self, so must A be. The self thus asserts that A exists for the judging self in virtue of its being posited in the self as such. This means that in the self there is something permanently uniform, forever one and the same. X, as absolutely posited, can be expressed as $I = I$ (or I am I). However, $I = I$ is different than $A > A$, since the conditional $A > A$ requires that the first A be the case in order for the second to be as well, and the proposition I am I is unconditionally valid, since it is equal to X: Valid in content as well as form; absolutely rather than conditionally posited. Hence it is really posited and can be expressed as I am (Fichte 2003, pp. 93-97).

The self's own positing of itself is its own activity. It posits itself and exists by virtue of this, and conversely posits itself because it exists. It is both the agent and product of its action; the 'I am' is an act. That which is absolutely posited takes the place of propositional subject; that which exists is in the predicate position. It exists only because of its own self-positing. However, these two selves, the subject and the predicate, are absolutely equivalent, and so it conversely also posits itself because it exists (Fichte 2003, pp. 97-99). The self exists only insofar as it posits itself and thus exists only for itself, but necessarily so. Everything that exists does so only insofar as it is posited in the self. All reality is derived from the self and transferred to all possible things. Thinking is a determination, not an essence, of existence (Fichte 2003, pp. 99-102).

So far Fichte has only produced a self by virtue of which everything that is not the self can be posited. It is the absolute primordial unity of subject and predicate, as expressed in the identity statement $I = I$. We will now move to his second principle where the content of the form will be filled out, so that we may understand how he proceeds to the rest of experience. Fichte notes that the I in positing itself also implicitly posits all that it is not. In finding what something is, one necessarily finds what it is not. Since with A) $I = I$, it follows that B) What is not I = Not-I, or $A \neq \sim A$. This is the second principle of human consciousness, the first being absolute principle of identity $I = I$; it is what he calls the principle of *opposition*. It is also perfectly certain, demands no proof and no such proof is possible. This logically amounts to $\sim A = \sim A$, if the opposite of A is posited, then the opposite of A is posited; $\sim A = \sim A$. It is asserted by means of the same necessary connection = X in the self. It is not derived from $A = A$ but from the unity of consciousness itself. This is an important point for which Hegel will criticise him. This principle relies on the first one in order to be asserted but is not derived from it. He shows that in the act of establishing that:

1. $A = A$, and
2. $\sim A \neq A$, that is, they are opposed,

3. $\sim A = \sim A$ is the same as 2.
 4. A (absolutely posited) and A (as object of reflection) are opposed in the primordial act of consciousness,
 5. Then both A and $\sim A$ are opposed to A, (from 2. and 4.)
 6. Therefore, $A = \sim A$
- Fichte 2003, pp. 102-3

This seems to be a very curious conclusion, but what this actually shows is that if any A is posited, then $\sim A$ is also posited as well. We have achieved "if A then A" as well as "if A then Not-A". A in form shows that it is an opposition, and in matter shows that it is not some specific thing. Its form is determined by the act of opposition, its matter is governed by A; $\sim A$ is what A is not. That which is opposed to the self = the not-self. And so just as $\sim A \neq A$ is unconditionally admitted so too is the not-self opposed absolutely to the self. "Whatsoever attaches itself to the self, its opposite attaches to the not-self" (Fichte 2003, pp. 104-5). All of this is to say that in order to present anything to myself, it must be distinct from myself. And insofar as it is distinct it is opposed to the self. This opposition must lie initially in my self in advance of any possible experience. We bring ourselves into existence by freely positing ourselves as existing.

By reflecting on the existence of the I, by being self-aware, the Not-I is discovered as a limitation on the I. The I only becomes aware of its activity in and by opposition to itself. As soon as one reflects upon the I, it is limited. The I is infinite, it is indefinite, but through the checks of the Not-I, it becomes definite and finite. The Not-I limits and defines the otherwise undefined I. But since the Not-I is the limit of the I and given that the I is absolute, then the Not-I is the negation of the I. The Not-I is only posited through the positing of the I, and cannot come to be in any other manner; it is dependent on the I. However, in its very act of reflection the I also necessarily posits the Not-I as its own limit, as its definition, and so it itself cannot be without the Not-I, i.e., without its own negation. However, it is contradictory that the I should posit both itself and its own negation in itself.

The I finds itself in reflection. But what it finds is not some object-self which is presented to the subject-self in the same way that the intuitions of the world or the self are presented in Kant's temporal intuition. It is found as *thinking*, as a subject. It is only in its relation finding and found that it is objective and opposed. The known I is identical to the knowing I. And so when the I posits itself as thinking it brings itself into existence. This may seem like the Cartesian cogito, but unlike Descartes, Fichte does not posit a thinking *thing*, but rather merely the act of thinking itself. As we shall see this is important for the presupposed unity of subject and object.

We have reached the contradictory conclusion that both cannot be posited simultaneously. Of course both cannot be negated or there would be nothing, and neither one can exist without the other. Fichte's solution is that the I and the Not-I both in part limit each other. It is important also that they limit each other equally, for otherwise one would exist and the other would not. The I is a striving, the Not-I is a counterstriving and there is an equilibrium which allows them both to negate the other, by limiting the other *in part*. There is a balance found in the struggle for dominance. This is the third and final of Fichte's principles, the principle of *grounding*. No more and nothing different make up the fundamental principles of human consciousness. Thus in Fichte we see that there is a balance and an equilibrium in the fundamental propositions and consequently in reality (Fichte 2003, pp. 105-8).

In addition to the fact that insofar as the not-self is posited, the self must be posited, it is also true that insofar as the not-self is posited, the self is *not* posited. The self is not posited in the self to the extent that the not-self is posited therein. And so the not-self can be posited only to the extent that there is a self to which it is opposed. But it nullifies itself only to the extent that the posited I is annulled by it. It has no validity and nullifies itself, thus does not nullify itself. This synthesis of the absolute I and its positing is Fichte's primary

synthetic act and he must discover some connection X whereby these conclusions can be correct (Fichte 2003, pp. 108-10).

The opposites exist in the self and so too must X exist in consciousness. The act of counterpositing, of *oppositing*, is impossible without X. Hence there is an act = Y, whose product = X wherein the self and the not-self are to be unified, to be posited together without elimination. His conclusion is that this can be done only by each mutually limiting the other. Where Y = the limiting of each other by each other and X is the limit, the negation only in part. However, this limiting in part presupposes a divisibility to both the self and the not-self. In the self, a divisible not-self is opposed to a divisible self. Everything, he says, must be derivable from here. This concept of divisibility balancing the self and the not-self, is the *principle of grounding*. The act of seeking opposition in likes is antithetical or negative; the opposite is synthetical or positive. All rules governing judgments are derived from the synthesis found in this 3rd principle. Antithesis always requires a prior synthesis. And conversely there can be no synthesis without antithesis (Fichte 2003, pp. 110-20).

Thus, the question posed by Kant "How are synthetic judgments a priori possible?" is now satisfactorily answered. All syntheses are grounded in the third principle, which is absolutely valid. All syntheses are contained in this principle. This Science of Knowledge must proceed by finding opposites and uniting them, and to continue finding opposites until opposites are arrived at which can no longer be combined. This will lead Fichte to the practical part of the Science wherein he develops his ethics. No synthesis without antithesis and vice versa, and further neither without thesis, an original positing, with an A not opposed or equated with anything other. This is the 'I am' where the place of predicate is left empty.

This original unity of 'I am' gives the system of syntheses its strength. It is from this original synthesis we have just described that all synthetic judgments gain their validity.

Rather than use Kant's method of finding a valid synthetic *a priori* judgment, such as $5 + 7 = 12$, he demonstrates the original synthesis. Kant's method is subsumed under Fichte's deduction of the original and absolutely valid, primary synthesis. The metaphysical proposition in Fichte may still use the subject-predicate form, but the subject term just is the predicate term. The terms are indispensable to his propositions, but they differ importantly from the propositions Kant used in establishing the possibility of his *a priori* synthetic judgments. Whereas Kant's metaphysical proposition is synthetic, Fichte's is analytic. Fichte proceeds in a synthetic manner, but according to Hegel he never succeeds in actually demonstrating the unity of subject and object. We will look at Fichte's further syntheses to demonstrate his attempt to bring the two together, before moving on to Hegel's criticisms of this kind of system in Chapter 3.

Thus far Fichte has established 3 logical principles, the principle of *identity*, the principle of *opposition* and the principle of *grounding*. In the course of the three principles we see the first act of synthesis in consciousness. Fichte has here established the validity of his method of reflection and established a content for all syntheses. From this we can establish all that belongs to the *Wissenschaftslehre*. All syntheses arise from the unification of opposites, and thus we must find a primary and necessary act of opposition in the self. And no act of antithesis is possible without an act of synthesis, which is at the same time the very same act, viz. the self. And with the postulation of both, we establish the third in which they are united. These further synthetic acts are discovered by reflection, and products of the original synthetic unity. In the section "The Foundation of Theoretical Knowledge" Fichte proceeded to further analyse the synthetic proposition into two more contradictory propositions. These new thetic and antithetic propositions in turn demanded of the intellect a synthesis themselves, such that they can both be true. He did this in two distinct manners, which again required synthesis. His project proceeds in this manner of synthesis until no

further synthesis is possible. This is achieved where the synthesis of the activity of matter and the form of matter are synthesized with the synthesis of the form of mere reciprocity and the matter of mere reciprocity. By taking a brief look at these syntheses we can expose the shortcomings of his system which will be expounded in Section C.

Section C – Fichte’s Subjective Idealism

Fichte divides philosophy into two possibilities: Spinozism as the most logical outcome of dogmatism, and his own revised Kantian idealism. The principle distinction between the two is that dogmatism claims the ground of experience to be in the object, whereas critical idealism finds it in the subject. Spinozism is dogmatic because it ultimately places the ground of existence in another being, viz. Nature, of which we are all only attributes (Fichte 2003, pp. 118-9). We are, for Fichte, directly acquainted with the absolute subject, but have no experience of the thing-in-itself. And so while he says that neither system can refute the other, he makes a clear case for the fact that dogmatism is unfounded and betrays the nature of the I as free, since it makes the self dependent on objects, rather than as independent or dependent solely on itself. Fichte argues that Kant’s system, while not dogmatism, still affirms the existence of things-in-themselves and does not allow for the freedom he thinks is required in a full account of human experience. The primary presupposition of Fichte’s system is the pure freedom of the I. For both, freedom comes about through self-legislation, but in Kant it is only in acting according to laws discovered by Reason, viz., the *categorical imperative*, that one is free. For Fichte the self is free is by acting according to the laws of its own action. It is in the freedom of subjectivism, the freedom of having everything depend upon a self, that he finds an adequate conception of the freedom of consciousness. Ironically just as Kant’s answer was a two-edged sword, so is his own: it is because he grounds all experience in the subject that his philosophy remains

merely subjective. All experience, as dependent on the self for its existence, becomes merely for the subject. According to Fichte, we have no justification for claiming to know that our experience has something outside the self as a ground. We will now take a further look at Fichte's deduction of the objects of experience in order to demonstrate how his is in fact a subjective idealism.

Fichte's system proceeds from the unity of consciousness, from an absolutely posited self. Fichte's I exists because it posits itself, and posits itself because it exists. It is pure spontaneous activity. If I exist then I posit myself, and if I posit myself then I exist. The self begins as infinite, as absolute. And it is only in the principle of opposition that it becomes limited. It becomes limited in part to the extent that its opposite, its annulment is posited. This third principle of grounding is then analysed by Fichte into two further propositions: 1. *The self posits the not-self as limited by the self*; and 2. *The self posits itself as limited by the not-self*. These two propositions are in complete contradiction with one another. One principle affirms what the other denies. It is reality and negation which must be reconciled by limitation. The self determines the absolute totality of reality, and by means of that, itself. Insofar as the not-self is opposed to the self, it must posit the absolute totality of negation. The self is thus in part determined, and in part determines itself. The self posits reality in the not-self equal to the amount negated in itself. Insofar as it posits reality in the not-self, it posits negation within itself. This he called mutual determination or "interdetermination" [*Wechselbestimmung*] (Fichte 2003, pp. 120-7).

He must then synthesize these propositions further. The self is the totality of activity, and the not-self is the totality of passivity. Whatever is reality in the self is negation in the not-self, and vice-versa. If the original amount of activity is to be maintained, then an amount of activity in the self must be accompanied by an equal amount of passivity in the not-self (since it just is the same as activity in the self), where this amount = X (Fichte 2003,

pp. 123-30). There is now such an X that is both reality and negation, activity and passivity: since on the one hand, X is activity, insofar as it is related to the not-self; and on the other hand, X is passivity, insofar as it is related to the totality of activity. It is not the whole of activity but a quantum, determinate action. The 'I think' is an expression of action, but also of negation, limitation, passivity insofar as thinking is a specific determination of being. It is an activity in relation to the thought, but a passivity in relation to being in general. "Every possible predicate of the self denotes a limitation thereof. The subject, I, is the absolutely active or existent thing. The predicate (e.g., I present, I strive, etc.) confines this activity within a delimited sphere" (Fichte 2003, p. 134). The propositions: the self does not posit something in itself -and - the self posits something in the not-self - say exactly the same thing. They designate the very same act, and so neither one is needed to ground the other.

The self is merely an ideal ground of determination in itself, since the self, in not positing, still posits in the not-self, it is only not positing in part. The ideal ground must become a real one if a passivity is to be posited in the self and brought to consciousness via presentation. The answer as to how this is possible, is only possible through synthesis, and each can only be answered through the other and vice versa.

The ideal and real ground are one and the same. Things outside us are related to one another through the concept of efficacy.

In things-in-themselves there must be something independent of our presentation, whereby they intrude upon one another without intervention on our part; but that we relate them together must have its ground in ourselves, for instance in sensation. So we then posit our self outside us, who are *doing the positing*, as a *self-in-itself*, as a thing existing without our cooperation; and now, without any cooperation from us, some other thing is supposed to act upon it.

- Fichte 2003, p. 162

But there is no such self outside of myself. For it, self-positing and existence are identical, and real and ideal ground are also the same. Conversely non-self-positing and non-existence are also identical, neither is the ground for the other.

“Obviously, therefore, to say that something is not *posited* in the self (*realiter*) means that the self *posits* it not in itself (*idealiter*) and vice versa,” (Fichte 2003, p. 163). The self must always posit, either in itself or in the not-self. Activity of the self and not-self are identical; Passivity of the self and not-self are identical; Activity of the self and passivity of the not-self are identical. With this, the complete synthetic union is accomplished, not one of the components is the needed as a ground for the other, for they are identical. Hence the original question, what is the ground of passivity in the self, is meaningless. There is no such simple thing, for it is immediately activity in the self. So what then is the ground of the interplay just described? Such a ground, he says, is beyond the scope of the Science of Knowledge (Fichte 2003, pp. 162-4).

“In the concept of efficacy, the form of mere reciprocity, and the matter thereof, each determine one another” (Fichte2003, p. 165). The occurrence of reciprocity is immediate and simultaneous. The existence of X and the non-existence of -X are always inversely conjoined. That the matter determines the form means that the annihilation is determined by the opposition. They must be opposed if they are to annihilate each other. But as they are mutually determined by each other, they similarly mutually annihilate one another. “Real and ideal opposition is the same” (Fichte 2003, p. 167).

“In the relation of efficacy, the activity, considered as a synthetic unity, that is, as a mediate positing, and the reciprocity, similarly conceived, are mutually determinant of each other and themselves form a synthetic unity” (Fichte 2003, p. 167). The mere reciprocity consists in the identity of the essential opposition and the real annihilation. It is due to the mediacy of the positing that the opposition and annulment are the same. With immediate positing, they would each be posited as independent of each other. This mediacy of positing is the law of consciousness, the ground of the essential opposition of the self and the not-self; it is grounded in and through the self.

This leads to a new form of idealism, where the activity in general has its law immediately in itself. "This form necessarily eliminates the first, since it genuinely explains from a higher ground what to the first was inexplicable" (Fichte 2003, p. 169). The first idealism is called qualitative, as something which abolishes something intrinsically posited; the second quantitative, as the second limits itself as a restricted quantity.

If the opposing components are posited it can be so mediately. Opposition is here established as the ground of the mediacy of positing. This reasoning leads to a quantitative realism. In qualitative realism,

A not-self, having reality in itself independently of the self, gives rise to an impression on the self, whereby the latter's activity is to some extent respressed; the merely quantitative realist confesses his ignorance about this and acknowledges that the positing of reality in the not-self first takes place for the self according to the grounding law; but he insists on the *real presence of a limitation of the self*, without any contribution on the part of the self as such, either through absolute activity, as the qualitative idealist maintains, or in virtue of a law inherent in its nature, as is held by the quantitative idealist.

- Fichte 2003, p. 170

The qualitative idealist maintains the reality of a *determinant*; the quantitative merely a *determination* in general. This quantitative realist knows of a determination whose ground lies outside of the self, but he is not able to inquire into its ground *as such*. He relates it to something in the not-self as real ground. This is nothing other than the critical idealism of Kant where he demonstrated the ideality of objects in presupposing the ideality of space and time. Fichte, on the other hand, does the reverse and bases the ideality of space and time on that of objects (Fichte 2003, p. 171).

This qualitative realism posits a finite, contingent self, rather than a self as finite and absolute. Thus quantitative realism eliminates the other as superfluous and ungrounded. But it cannot explain how a real determination, a determination as such, can become an ideal one, one for the positing self, either. The mediacy of positing is determined and grounded through essential opposition and the ground of the positing in general is avoided

by the elimination of the transition of passing from the limited to the unlimited. This in turn immediately annihilated by the contradicting fact that it posits absolutely what is finite. We will now synthesize these two contradictory syntheses, or modes of explanation, and arrive at *critical quantitative idealism* as a middle ground (Fichte 2003, pp. 170-1).

Mediacy on the one hand and essential opposition on the other, each determine the other. *Being* and *being posited*, ideal and real, opposing and being opposed must be one and the same. For clarity, we refer to the not-self as object, and the self as subject, simply because of their interplay but neither is such without the other. The subject is that which is not an object, and vice versa. Through the law of synthesis it is seen that the immediate factor provides a ground for the self and the not-self alike. This law is a determination and must have a ground found in the factors limiting this determination, either positing or passivity of the self. If positing were the ground of determination, as for the quantitative idealist, the law is subjective and ideal. On the other hand, if it is passivity, as for the quantitative realist, it is objective and real. It is the outcome that both of these views are wrong, and that the ground lies in the object and subject at once. How this is so, is beyond the powers of inquiry (Fichte 2003, pp. 172-4).

We will now move from the concept of efficacy to that of substantiality and form a synthesis of the activity of the form with that of the matter (α), then with the form of mere reciprocity and the matter of mere reciprocity (β), and to further synthesize the results of these two syntheses (γ) (Fichte 2003, p. 174).

α) The activity of the form and that of the matter are to be united. The activity of the form is a non-positing through a positing. It is positing as not posited; negation through affirmation. It is thus excluded from a determinate sphere, negated by a determinate positing. It is merely that which is not in the determinate sphere of the posited. However, insofar as A is posited, it is posited absolutely, and there could be no positing of B

whatsoever. Hence, the sphere must be posited as indeterminate, as totality with respect to A, and non-totality, in relation to B. B is then posited as the sphere of non-A, only negatively. It is a complete part, a totality, of a determinate whole and only part, a non-totality, of an indeterminate whole, encompassing both the determinate and indeterminate. This positing of a higher encompassing sphere is the very activity whereby the formal activity becomes possible and is thus the activity of the matter (Fichte 2003, pp. 174-6).

That the activity of the form determines that of the matter would mean that the self posits an object, simply because it excludes. No exclusion from self, no not-self. This follows from the quantitative idealist perspective. That the activity of the matter would determine that of the form would mean that the self posits itself only under certain conditions, namely when it does not posit the not-self, it becomes contingent. This is what Fichte calls "qualitative realism" and is the view he attributes to Kant. In this view the self accommodates itself to the constitution of things in themselves, rather than the other way around. Fichte distances himself from this strictly Kantian realism by saying that neither this nor the quantitative idealist view is the correct one, for each is modified by the other. In fact, a not-self exists, because the self opposes something to itself, and it opposes something to itself because the not-self exists. Neither is ground for the other, both are the same act. This is identical to the principle that the ideal and real ground are one and the same (Fichte 2003, pp. 176-7).

β) "The form and the matter of the reciprocity must determine one another" (Fichte 2003, p. 177). The form of the interplay consists in the components mutually excluding and being excluded by each other from the absolute totality. For the matter of the interplay, it remains indeterminate what the totality may be. The determinability of the totality as such is presupposed in order to make the totalities distinguishable. This determinability is the matter of the interplay, that to which it progresses and the thing that fixes it.

"That the form determines the matter would mean that it would be the mutual exclusion that determines the totality" (Fichte 2003, p. 179). This only tells us that there is no possible ground of determination, except through relation. That the matter determines the form would mean that the determinability of the totality determines the mutual exclusion. In fact, neither is true, both are to determine the other mutually. The absolute and relative grounds for determination of the totality must be one and the same. The relation must be absolute, and the absolute must be no more than a relation.

And so Fichte poses the question: Which of the two modes of determination ought to be accepted? Neither, of the two, because we cannot determine which one and not the other, but contrarily, one must be chosen and there must be a rule. These two propositions are unified by our present principle, for there is a rule, but not one which sets up either of the two, but rather both as mutually determined. The totality is not A, nor even A + B, but A determined by A + B. The determinability of the determinable is a determinate quantum which has limits and beyond which no further determination is possible, and within which all determinability lies (Fichte 2003, pp. 179-181).

The self posits itself and in doing so fills up its sphere of determinability with its absolute totality. The self posits an object as distinct from this totality, but this positing must remain within the sphere of the self and we obtain sphere A + B as the totality of acts of the self. The sphere of A and that of A + B are within each other and only in combination fill out a single limited sphere. The determinability of the self consists in its determinability by subject and object. Determinate determinability is the totality we were looking for and this is called *substance*. No substance is possible which has not proceeded from the absolutely posited, the self-positing. "The self *posits itself*, either as *positing itself* by exclusion of the not-self, or as *positing the not-self* by exclusion of itself" (Fichte 2003, pp.

181-2). Self positing is in the first case unconditioned positing, the second as conditioned by the not-self.

Just as $A + B$ is determined by A , so too is B , for it falls within the scope of the determinable. Further A itself is now determinable and insofar as B is determined, so can $A + B$ also be thereby, and an absolute relation is established. Therefore, if $A + B$ is posited, and A is within the sphere of the determinable, then $A + B$ is determined in return by B (Fichte 2003, pp. 191-4).

Once the absolute ideal opposites (prior to synthesis) are to be unified in thought, the power of the imagination grants them reality and they therefore become intuitable, for there is no other reality than through the intuition. All reality is brought forth solely by the imagination, and though Kant calls this a deception, Fichte shows that it cannot be, since to doubt it would be to doubt our own existence. "The act is not a deception, but gives us truth, and the only possible truth" (Fichte 2003, p. 202). It is due to the equating of the subject and predicate in the thesis ' A is A ' that he is able to proceed from unity and freedom.

Fichte proceeded deductively from unity and ended up reconciling all opposites found in analysing synthetic propositions. He showed that all objects, everything that is not-self, is only so in relation to the self. He demonstrated that ideality and reality are one and the same merely analysed as distinct before the powers of reason. Kant saw this power of the imagination as a threat to a sustainable theory of human cognition, but in it Fichte sees its very possibility. It is only in the imagination that the unification of opposites can take place (Fichte 2003, p. 201).

The I , as the absolute and infinite I , strives outward in its freedom. As it is only limited by the Not- I , it is infinite until it makes contact with the Not- I . It is only by the checks provided by the Not- I that it is limited in its otherwise limitless freedom. But of course this is a necessary limit, as it is necessarily posited by the I (Fichte 2003, p. 195). Fichte's system

begins in unity, and even though he claims to have reached a point where the I and the Not-I mutually and equally interdetermine each other, the entire system requires an original self. The original positing is required for anything at all to be counter-posed; it is only if A is the case that there can be -A. The entire world is only for the subject.

This exposition of Fichte's revised Kantian system has shown that it is the very revisions which he makes that end up limiting his philosophy. In order to account for the unity of human experience, he needed to start out from a primary unity, and yet still account for the possibility of knowledge of the external world, of everything that is not I. While he demonstrated the necessity of the Not-I in the mere positing of an I, and the co-dependence and mutual negation of both, he nonetheless made all dependent upon the self's spontaneous self-positing. His argument shows that there is no reason to maintain a dogmatic attitude and ground the subject in things as they are in themselves. But now we have shown that neither can we merely leave it here in this idealism. The idealist movement toward a satisfactory justification to our knowledge continues to evolve.

We have now seen Kant's critical method of dividing phenomena and noumena, subject and object, intuition and concept, was a double-edged sword. Though Kant's method solved the problem of induction, it left him exposed to the ensuing dualities. Similarly, did Fichte's opposing start from the fact of consciousness and its synthetic deduction of the external world leave him with a system of all existence wholly dependent on a spontaneous, self-positing act. Fichte's system finds itself in a contradiction. The objective world it claims to deduce is none other than subjective world for a self-positing consciousness. The contradiction begs a resolution and so we move now to its final stage in Hegel. We will look at the problems of Fichte's system, in particular his beginning with an absolute proposition, in light of Hegel's criticisms in his *Difference* essay. In the next chapter we will look at Hegel's dialectics and show it as the ultimate form of idealism, justifying our knowledge, our

freedom, our unity and the movement of thought through history and how this is accomplished by his beginning with the speculative sentence [*der speculative Satz*].

Chapter III

Hegel and *der Spekulativ Satz*

In this final chapter I will show how Hegel's idealism is able to ground metaphysics and avoid the drawbacks of Kant's and Fichte's philosophies. In the first section I will outline the move from the post-Kantians to Hegel himself, mostly using his work *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's Philosophy*. Here I will go over the shortcomings of the critical method and Fichte's attempt at speculation. I will show that there is still much to be accounted for in Fichte's system, and in section B I will reconstruct how Hegel's system differs in its beginning with the speculative proposition [*speculativ Satz*]. The goal of this second section will be to establish the importance of the *speculativ Satz* and the concept [*der Begriff*] in Hegel's dialectics. I will look at some instances of the dialectic in the *Phenomenology* and in the *Logic* to demonstrate its linguistic nature. I will take a detailed look at how the dialectics operate by looking at his treatment of Being and non-Being in the *Logic*, in order to frame it in contradistinction to Fichte's original synthesis of I and not-I. Specifically this will highlight how he is not subject to his criticisms of Fichte's subjectivity. Finally, I will demonstrate the vast explanatory superiority over Fichte's and Kant's systems which the moving power of the dialectics makes possible by showing what Hegel is able to include in the realm of possible knowledge. He goes far beyond merely accounting for causality or the certainty of the external world and far beyond Fichte's subjectivism. In the final section I'll look at the beginning of the *Phenomenology* to demonstrate his

psychological exposition and show how it differs from Kant's and Fichte's. We will proceed to his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* to show how he is able to justify every event in the history of human consciousness and its eventual end point, in Absolute Knowing with the use of the speculative dialectics. I will then have shown that Hegel's dialectics are able to account for so much more than Kant's and Fichte's systems and why this is so.

Section A – From Critical to Speculative Philosophy

Fichte is supposedly an authentic idealist. He is speculative rather than critical as Kant was. Fichte extracted “the highest principle in the whole sphere of human knowledge”, the unity of apperception, into a stricter form, as the self-positing ego. But Fichte thought that the highest dogmatic unity in Spinoza is something that we ought to achieve but will never fully achieve. Fichte added the one thing to legitimize Kant's account of experience, the knowledge of our own rational activity. In Fichte then, we have intellectual intuitions of ourselves, but empirical intuitions of the world (*D* xxiv-xxviii).

According to Hegel, Fichte separated the acts of the ego, and never succeeded in bringing them together again. He should only have postulated the third principle, for in it the first two are necessary. Even though he states that the three principles are necessary and identical, he never proceeds to show this. He reached a point at which no further synthesis was possible leading to the foundations practical knowledge (*D* p. 40). Fichte saw that the first principle needed to be the subject-object, but in his synthetical method, he never got back to proving it was a possible unity. Fichte's move from the original proposition carried him into an antinomy from which he was never actually able to recover unity. In the originary synthesizing act of consciousness, the unity he thought he established needed further unifications for it still contained antinomies.

For Fichte all knowledge must have the structure of our self-knowledge. The world was for him a place where the ego ought to be equal to itself, but in the end could not. Hegel made the important discovery that it is only if Nature is in essence a mirror of the self that that relation can be true self-knowledge. Hegel argued that there must be an *actual*, and not merely *formal*, identity of Being and non-Being. "It must be known to appear in our limited experience. This *knowledge* is the "identity of identity and non-identity," (D p. 46).

Hegel does agree with Fichte that there is a need to begin with the subject, but one cannot assume that the method of and the subject of philosophical inquiry are distinct. At the beginning of philosophical inquiry, the pure ego is something remote and unknown to consciousness. It is only an illusion that it is something known. Empirical self-consciousness is still imprisoned in a sphere of appearances. "True intellectual intuition is the forcible rejection of mediation but it asserts more than simple immediacy, it asserts something concrete, with determinations, and thus as already shown cannot be the beginning. The immediate alone is simple" (SL p. 89). This simple immediacy is pure being with no determinations. This pure being is the beginning of thought and of logic; it presupposes nothing and is mediated by nothing. This for Hegel is the foundation of the whole of science. It is that into which pure knowledge returns; the absolutely immediate is also at the same time the absolutely mediated, having itself as Other for a first element (SL pp. 82-85). This beginning of logic, of all thought, is the undifferentiated unity of being and not-being, differentiated and undifferentiated, identity and non-identity. The beginning of science is not the ego, but the purest definition of the absolute.

To Hegel, since Kant's faculty of Reason transcends the understanding, it can only "spin idle fancy". The understanding is unsatisfied with its mere knowledge of appearances. As knowledge of things-in-themselves is impossible, the knowledge of the understanding is only that of untruth. For Hegel, knowledge-in-itself is an absurd idea in Kant's system.

Hegel's logic is reworked in such a way that it forges the possibility of pure science beyond merely the empirical (*SL* pp. 55-60). Logic is that which abstracts the essentiality of the forms of Reason; it is not one department of thought among others, but branches over them and beyond, it is absolute truth (*SL* p. 70).

Kant's realization of the antinomic nature of reason freed the dialectics from arbitrariness, and made them a necessary procedure of Reason. In his section on the antinomies it is shown that the dialectics build a basis for the "necessity of contradiction which belongs to the very nature of thought-determinations; their inherent Negativity, their self-moving nature" (*SL* p. 67). If a philosopher stops short at the abstract negative they only realize Reason's impotence in the face of the infinite. Since for Hegel the world is in reality, and not just ideality, a reflection of the rational subject, the infinite is reasonable in the same way the subject is. Thus in Kant, Reason is does not even have access to what is reasonable.

Hegel argues that the true method of philosophy should model the pattern of organic growth from unity to totality. Freedom and necessity are only ideal opposites; freedom is the inner aspect of the organic whole, necessity is the external. Hegel can be seen to have employed the assimilation of physical to logical necessity from Spinoza. The philosophy of nature is the theoretical part; transcendental philosophy is the practical part, since nature is the realm where necessity is dominant and nothing spiritual is physically necessitated in a mechanical way. "Construction is the instantiation of the absolute concept in intuition, the *externalization* of the divine Logos," (*D* p. 50). We only come to *be* what we really are when we *know* what we really are. The conscious observer of nature is the "center" of an *external* world which he organizes in his empirical knowledge. But as he does transcendental philosophy he discovers himself to be the *internal* center, to be the focus of the life that animates the world. This is the *true* "begetting of the Logos," the discovery of

our identity with the eternal Reason," (D p. 51). This is a self-making discovery, which when recognized as fundamental passes us from theory to practical philosophy. This is the theory of conscious community. "When the goal of transcendental philosophy is reached, when man knows himself as the Logos, the culminating phase of the Identity philosophy opens" (D p. 51). It is the suspension of the real opposition between the philosophical sciences of nature and self.

Unlike Fichte, Hegel never *separated* the ego, the original unity. For Hegel the original *Being* is entirely indeterminate, and without even an object for thought. Being thus cannot be conceived of without non-Being, or Nothing. It contains Nothing in the emptiness, in the indeterminateness, of its concept. This empty Nothing is just as indeterminate as Being; it is the same empty concept as Being itself was. Thus Being and Nothing are the same. Original Being has passed into Nothing, for without Nothing no determination was possible; and Nothing in its same indeterminateness has passed into Being. They are absolutely distinct and absolutely inseparable, identical in their indeterminateness. They are distinct by virtue of a distinction which itself immediately vanishes. Their identity and opposition create a contradiction which is only overcome in their synthesis, by their *Becoming* of each other. Being and Nothing are the same in this synthesis of concepts (SL p. 100). In Fichte we find the principle of *opposition* as separate from the principle of *identity*, even they are equal and assert the same. The second principle is not derived from the first, and is not contained therein. He begins with two principles and because they were never joined, he never succeeds in bringing them together again in his third principle. Since the first principle never led to the second principle it was only ever the case that they *ought* to be equal, but they were never actually shown to be.

Here we see that in Hegel it is the immediate beginning, as indeterminate Being, which becomes Nothing in its indeterminateness, and vice versa. Whereas Fichte's ego finds

itself as object, but never *becomes* it. Both agree that the intellect cannot tolerate a contradiction and philosophical science must proceed through syntheses until unity is found, but Fichte's synthesis turns out to be mere division that is never again unified. Hegel's dialectics are always in movement; in the sublation [*Aufhebung*] they become other than they were, but the otherness remains in the new concept. The concept becomes its opposite then carries with it its own opposite as it moves. Hegel's system ends where it started, in absolute unity, and the whole of history of the progress of science becomes a circle. I will not continue to follow Hegel's logic through to the absolute idea, for it serves our purposes here to demonstrate only the manner in which Hegel's absolute beginning of science differs from Fichte's and why. We will now look at how this movement here described in the *Logic* is found in Hegel's speculative proposition and how this offers a solid ground on which to build metaphysics and the natural sciences, while also accounting for the unity of consciousness found in experience.

Section B – Grounding Metaphysics in the *Speculativ Satz*

I will here briefly reconstruct Hegel's discussion of the *sign* and the *name* in order to set the stage for the introduction of *der Begriff* and the *speculativ Satz*. A sign for Hegel is the ideal meaning that is attached to the object which transcends its position in the world. It is an object which is separate from the object it is intended to signify. The sign is arbitrarily connected to the object itself and exists only as mediation in relation to a subject. An object can naturally exist in two ways; one, in the world (for-itself), and two, as signs for subjects (for-us). This creation of signs by consciousness is the very first step on the road to objective Spirit and absolute knowing. These signs form themselves into a system of signs, i.e. into a language. But in a formal language, there are words that have no reference to objects in the world. With no reference the meaning of the sign and its referent then falls

exclusively on the conscious subject. The sign as a natural, real object must therefore disappear (Cook 1973, pp. 30-33).

The medium for language is then found to be in memory, where the sense perception is transformed into something other than the object perceived. This referent gains a purely ideal existence distinct from the natural world of objects; this is what Hegel refers to as a *name*. Names free thought, since they are not attached to the natural world. They allow for manipulation and creativity. In being named, an object does not cease to exist in the natural world, but it is seen as a connective of a larger set of conceptual categories. A name refers not only to an object which it names, but to a large category of concepts through its negation; *i.e. it also refers to what it is not*. It is through this process of appropriation, naming and manipulation that the self comes to grasp its own existence and the existence of objects in the world as part of a relational network of objects. This creates an objective sense in which these objects exist. In the relations of language the object gains objectivity and meaning; it moves from the imagination of memory to the understanding (Cook 1973, pp. 33-38).

We will now look at the *Phenomenology* itself to examine the Notion or Concept [*der Begriff*]. *Der Begriff* is very important for understanding how Hegel can claim to do speculative philosophy at all. *Der Begriff* is distinct from the sign or the name in that the essence and content of *ein Begriff* are one. That is, the concept and the object are one. "The self-moving concrete shape makes itself into a simple determinateness; in so doing it raises itself to logical form, and exists in its essentiality; its concrete existence is just this movement, and is directly a logical existence" (PS §56). The form of *der Begriff* is its own content; *der Begriff* is not arbitrary nor contingent, but logical. "This requires attention to the Notion as such, to the simple determinations, e.g. of Being-in-itself, Being-for-itself, Self-identity, etc.; for these are pure self-movements such as could be called souls is their Notion

did not designate something higher than soul" (PS §58). Unlike a sign or a name, a *Begriff* does not refer to, or signify, anything outside of itself. *Der Begriff* is its own meaning. It is an element in Hegel's thought which has come about through the dialectic process already. In *der Begriff*, Being and idea are one. Being and Spirit [*Geist*] are reconciled in *der Begriff*. This is most important for Hegel since it will be central in language's ability to be unifying as we will see in the section on 'Reason'. We turn next to Hegel's discussion of the advantages of speculation and its proposition over the Kantian style of judgment and argumentation.

Hegel distinguishes between *material thinking*, involving only the world on the one hand, and critical *argumentation* on the other, which is akin to a logic with laws of valid inference, free of all content. It is easy to see how material thinking can be severely handicapped when attempting to communicate (especially more complex ideas), and so argumentation is quickly seen to be superior. However, argumentation also has its shortcomings in comparison with speculative thinking. Argumentation has only the power to destroy and to refute claims; it cannot subsume and supersede them. It is the method of the critical philosophers. Argumentation assumes the dualism of the positive and negative. Argumentation "is the negative which fails to see the positive within itself" (PS §59).

Argumentation only has the power to negate. Speculative thinking on the other hand carries with it its determinate negative, and is therefore also a positive content. "In speculative [begreifende] thinking, as we have already shown, the negative belongs to the content itself, and is the positive, both as immanent movement and determination of the content, and as the whole of this process" (ibid.). The subject of a *speculativ Satz* is itself a moving concept, both subject and predicate. In speculation the opposition between positive and negative is overcome. Speculation is the mode of thought for Hegel's dialectics; it is the form of the propositions of metaphysics. It is the proper linguistic form of the movement of thought.

As we have seen, in the Kantian judgment the propositions of metaphysics are synthetic *a priori*, and as such are already rent asymmetrically into a substance and its accidents, the essential and the unessential parts of the proposition. The subject is seen as a passive element supporting accidents. "This subject constitutes the basis to which the content is attached, and upon which the movement runs back and forth" (PS §60). The subject is ontologically prior to and independent of its accidents, thus rendering the proposition asymmetrical. The form of judgment in the very fact of its strict use of the subject-predicate form puts limitations on what can properly be thought, and what propositions constitute metaphysics. In Fichte we saw a fixed analytic statement where subject was merely equal to predicate. However, Hegel goes on to say that in speculative thinking the subject is not merely passive but is "the self-moving Notion which takes its determinations back into itself" (PS §60). The subject perishes, it becomes a *movement* and the solid ground of the passive subject is lost. The subject becomes the object. And conversely, the object is now the also the subject. As soon as the subject changes into the accident, the accident turns into the substance of the proposition and both are immediately each other.

To demonstrate how this functions, Hegel uses the example of the judgment 'God is being'. Read as a judgment 'God' takes the place of the subject and 'being' takes that of the accident. However, it can be seen that 'being' is not intended to function as a predicate of 'God', but rather to give its true essence through a definite article. *Der speculativ Satz* is not merely a proposition of the type 'The cat is black', but rather that of 'The cat is *the* black'. 'Being' in the former example is not a predicate, but rather a definite article; more specifically, a *Begriff*; this renders the proposition speculative [*begreifende*]. The subject here becomes the predicate since what 'God' is, in His essentiality, is 'Being'. Thinking consciousness is thus thrown from the subject immediately into the predicate, but predicate

is at the same time the subject, and so consciousness is "thrown back onto the thought of the subject" (PS §62). This occurs since the predicate itself is moved to the place of the subject term; the thinking consciousness immediately finds the subject in the predicate and the predicate in the subject. In this immediate self-movement of the *speculativ Satz*, the predicate just is the subject's concept. It is only in a speculative proposition where the Being and the Concept of the subject are one. There is a reversal of that which was originally taken to be essential and that which was inessential. Thinking loses the objective basis it had in holding the subject as an essentiality with accidents. This attitude is destroyed by the speculative philosophical content of metaphysics.

In the proposition seen earlier that 'Being and Nothing are the same,' when read as a judgment, the emphasis is on 'are the same' where it is a predicate that tells us what the subject is. It actually asserts the identity and distinction of Being and Nothing; it is self contradictory. The very unity of Being and Nothing is inseparable from them, yet it is other than them. It is only in *Becoming* that Being and Nothing can subsist (SL pp. 102-104). The grounding of science relies on the logical precept that "Negation is just as much Affirmation as Negation" (SL p. 65). That which is self-contradictory resolves itself into negation of its particular content and not into abstract nothingness. It becomes a new concept, a higher concept enriched by its preceding concept, containing it and its negation as well as their unity. It is by virtue of the negative which it carries within itself that it is able to push forward.

In demonstrating the shortcomings of Fichte's primary synthesis, and demonstrating the necessary identity of subject and predicate in Hegel's *speculativ Satz* we are able to show how his dialectics can be absolute. We have shown how Hegel's synthetic method and its recognition of self in other reaches beyond Fichte's subjective idealism. The movement of the dialectics grants it the objectivity it was lacking in Fichte's *Grundsatz*. The

world just is the subject and the subject is the world. One becomes the other and vice versa rather than being fundamentally opposed to it. With absoluteness Hegel's method is able to justify the entire history of human consciousness and explain every occurrence. He is able to provide more than merely a ground for metaphysics and an account of the unity of consciousness. The absoluteness of Hegel's system is what gives it its place beyond Kant and Fichte. It is to this absoluteness which we will now focus. This becomes the final subsection where the power of the dialectics will be demonstrated, in looking at his philosophy of history and his phenomenology.

Section C – The Explanatory Power of the Dialectics

In this last subsection I will be taking a broad look at some of Hegel's works in order to show how his absolute idealism goes beyond the Kantian and Fichtean idealisms. Hegel's work is not critical, and so does not limit the use of Reason to the regulative role found in Kant. Reason ought to be able to know what is reasonable; it ought to have access to metaphysics in a substantial way, rather than merely in a transcendental way. The scope of what is knowable should not be limited to merely the subjective either. We have already seen that Hegel's dialectical synthesis differs from Fichte's in an important way. The dialectics move of their own internal force, beginning and ending with the absolute. Hegel's Reason is absolute, and here I will attempt to show that its explanatory power is unparalleled.

We will begin with Hegel's psychological dialectic in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Hegel's dialectics proceed in a logical fashion, only reaching the next stage due to the negation of the previous one. Consciousness advances through its various shapes in a certain logical order. One shape of consciousness is always found to be self-contradictory, and through the resolution of its contradiction advances necessarily and only to the next

shape. Consciousness carries with it its own negative and it advances towards knowledge of itself as *Geist* in the shape of absolute knowing.

He begins with the section on Sense-certainty, and follows through with the claim on which sense-certainty is based. The claim is that consciousness can have direct knowledge of objects from the senses. However, Hegel shows that this is in fact contradictory and knowledge from the senses can only come about through the mediation of concepts. That which is taken to be essential, the senses, and that which is taken to be inessential, the concepts, are in fact reversed in their roles. This is exactly as we saw in the beginning of the *Logic* and in examples of the *speculativ Satz*. This new concept then becomes the next section on perception, where knowledge can come about with the senses and the use of universals, or mediating concepts. In this section the unity of perception was intended to be found in the objects themselves. But Hegel once again finds that this is contradictory and what was intended to be essential for unity, the object, was in fact inessential, and vice versa. And so now consciousness is only acquainted with itself. It is required to provide the mediating concepts and the unity to account for perception. This becomes the claim of the section on Force and the Understanding. We will reconstruct the beginning of Hegel's dialectics one shape of consciousness at a time in order to demonstrate the movement of the dialectics. I have chosen the first few stages as they parallel the synthesis of Fichte's consciousness. We will cover the stages up to the movement to self-consciousness, and though the later stages are as necessary and important to Hegel's project as the rest, they bare less direct importance for the purposes of this chapter.

In the first shape of Consciousness, sense-certainty's claim is that it can have *direct knowledge of objects*, i.e. without the use of mediating concepts. It is a simple process of passive, receptive consciousness and sense impressions. Consciousness here adds nothing to the sensual information, it merely knows it. Hegel's method is to reduce the claims of

sense-certainty to absurdity to show that it must necessarily advance based on its own internal contradictions. Sense-certainty attempts to communicate its knowledge without the use of mediating concepts, but even the demonstratives 'Here' 'This', 'Now', etc. are actually concepts. However, any attempt at expression of knowledge will fail without the use of mediating concepts. For even if one were to speak of the object in question as 'this here now', as soon as one turns around or waits, the claim is no longer truthful. In our most basic attempts to point out a particular object we necessarily find ourselves using universal concepts. Our use of concepts in trying to receive objects immediately, mediates our reception of them. And so, we see a reversal of essentiality; the object which was to be essential is now unessential, and the *knowing of* the object is now the essential element. "Sense-certainty, then, though indeed expelled from the object is not yet thereby overcome, but only driven back into the 'I,'" (PS §100). We can see that it is language which has said more than it intends, but could not have done otherwise. It has more specifically *reversed* what was intended. "They *mean* 'this' bit of paper on which I am writing- or rather have written- 'this'; but what they mean is not what they say. If they wanted to *say* 'this' bit of paper which they mean, if they wanted to say it, then this is impossible, because the sensuous This that is meant cannot be reached by language, which belongs to consciousness," (PS §110). Here we can clearly see the reversing effect language necessarily has, which restricts what is meant from being put into words at all. Sense-certainty cannot make any claims about its knowledge. What was thought to be immediate is no longer the object, as claimed by sense-certainty, but one's seeing, hearing, etc., i.e. oneself. What is now certain is what we perceive, which is not the objects, but the *universals* by which we know them.

Perception: In this shape of consciousness, Hegel will show what happens when one takes seriously the claims of the perceptive mind, which in accord with the previous shape

of consciousness is one which allows for mediating concepts from the subject. It claims that the object perceived is not the object itself but rather its universal properties. This becomes problematic since the *object itself* must come to knowledge in some manner, or we would never know one object from another. The conscious subject would then only be able to think in terms of a set of universals, and never grasp a unified object, merely its properties. But it is to unity which we are first related, which is to say that we are primarily relating to objects not their universals. It is said of the object that it "is white only to *our eyes*, also tart to *our tongue*, also cubical to *our touch* and so on" (PS §119). Hegel here introduces the 'also' in order to justify our distinct perceptions of unitary objects, i.e. to account for the unity of the object despite its manifold universals. Something further which Hegel must account for is the need to keep the properties distinct. Here the 'in so far as' is introduced in order to do so. The properties are not one, and they are not found in the object, but posited by consciousness. Thus we can say of an object that "*in so far as* it is white, it is not cubical, and *in so far as* it is cubical and also white, it is not tart, and so on" (PS §121). The 'also' is used to unite the universals but at the same time the 'in so far as' is used to keep the properties distinct from each other. "Positing these properties as a oneness is the work of consciousness alone which, therefore, has to prevent them from collapsing into oneness *in the Thing*. To this end it brings in the 'in so far as', in this way preserving the properties as mutually external, and the thing as the Also" (ibid). Here it can be seen that the unity of the object is dependent upon consciousness positing the 'Also' and the 'in so far as'. It is the language which consciousness uses to 'come to terms with the world' that allows it to progress in the movement of dialectics.

In order to apprehend the object as a unity, there must be a 'oneness' as well as the set of its universals. An object's essential character is not merely its properties, but that which makes its independent universals subsist, or whole. There needs to be a consistency,

a togetherness over time and through space, since we do in fact have the ability to conceive of permanent and changing objects. In order to take this shape of consciousness seriously one must be able to reconcile these two components with nothing other than perception. However, that which unites the universals cannot itself be a universal, and thus cannot be grasped in perception (PS §121-130). The only answer for Hegel is that the unifying aspect is provided by the subjective consciousness. That which was seen in the beginning to be essential to the object itself is found to lie in the subject's apprehension. The object's differentiation from other objects is what constitutes its essentiality, its unity. But this 'Also' is not to be found in the object itself, but is rather the work of subjective consciousness. The essential unity, formerly thought to be in the object itself, is now found in the previously thought to be unessential (to the object), viz. the subject (PS §123-124).

Force and the understanding: A force is a power which causes all particulars; it subsumes particular objects under general laws which are only accessible to the understanding. A Force is a movement between two vanishing opposed moments (PS §134-136). Force is thus seen as that which is *beneath* the showing of objects, i.e. beneath their appearances; it is the laws which govern the appearances. But these are nonetheless essential to the objects themselves (PS §137-143). The world is thus divided, and there is then a world beyond which is posited, essential to the objects and mediated by the appearances. This beyond to which we have access Hegel calls the 'inner' world. The inner world is an inverted world of laws. The movement of force here in the inner is strictly verbal and tautological, it pretends to say something different, but always says the same. Consciousness here realizes that this inner world is created through the concepts of the understanding, and becomes consciousness of self in its otherness (PS §155). It was intended to be the object which had in-itself its unity (though not given to us by universals, for this was not found in perception), but instead this was found in the inner realm, the

realm to which we are in truth first related. And so as it turns out we were only ever related to ourselves; the essentiality which was originally thought to be found in the object, was found in our self-relation, our self-identity. The movement of the forces in constructed laws falls within the understanding, and not in the object. And now as Hegel puts it, the curtain of appearances is drawn away, and the inner world and the subject gazing into the inner world vanish (only insofar as they are appearance-mediated extremes) and the self becomes infinite. That is, consciousness carries its negative within it and in seeing itself as its object, becomes self-consciousness (PS §160-165).

Self-Consciousness - Lordship and Bondage: In the famous section on *Lordship and Bondage* we enter the first stage of self-consciousness. There are two simple aspects to consciousness which arose from the previous moment, that which is conscious of things and that which is conscious of that other consciousness. The two consciousnesses strive to be recognized as equal, as worthy of respect and deference. They seek reconciliation and unity, and as the simplest form of unity is the simple negation of the other, they enter into the struggle to the death. The mutual and reciprocal negation (since it comes from each) is the source of the struggle to the death. For unity to result from this battle one must die, or surrender and become dominated. One consciousness cannot kill the other, because they are both essentially united and so the result is that one consciousness loses out and becomes bondsman to the other as lord. The lord sees himself as essential and sees the bondsman as inessential. The lord demands recognition and deference from the bondsman. However, the problem in this situation is that the respect and deference now comes from someone who is in a lower position, and so is no longer valuable to the lord. The lord requires that recognition, respect and deference come from his equal in order to be meaningful. He is trying to find his essentiality in that which he denies any. Thus, here is the inversion whereby the lord is now dependent upon the bondsman in order to have his self

reflected back unto himself. The lord requires the bondsman for his own self-recognition, his own self-knowledge. The bondsman does not have this problem and thereby becomes the essential of the pair, the lord becomes the inessential. The bondsman consciousness works on and is conscious of objects, he can see in the independence of objects, his own independence. His own being for self is present in him; it comes through his subordination to the lord. What emerges is the attitude that is necessary for subservience to a lord (*PS* §178-196). This Hegel carries over into Stoicism, Scepticism and the Unhappy Consciousness', of which we shall have to forego discussion. We shall instead look at the final section on absolute knowing and show that the dialectic movement is explicitly indebted to language. This will bring forth the prior idea of *der Begriff* and its role as a powerful unifier and motor for the dialectics.

Through a long, yet logical path from consciousness through self-consciousness, reason, spirit, and religion, consciousness arrives at the final stage of its journey. In this final section of the *Phenomenology*, *Geist* achieves its true form and knows that it itself is the object of its own consciousness. Through history *Geist* moves ever closer to its reconciliation and recognition of itself as Absolute. Consciousness attains the final stage of perfect self-knowledge when it recognizes that the object of its consciousness is itself its own consciousness. The entire course of human history is merely the process of *Geist's* returning to itself. The entire dialectics proceed in the same dynamical manner as the *speculativ Satz*. Subject and object are rent apart and become their own opposites. Then return to themselves with the proper knowledge of themselves as they are. It is only through the movement of the dialectics that true knowledge can be achieved. Knowledge of the subject, of oneself, of *Geist*, can only come through knowledge of what is essentially other. There is a perfect connection of predicate in the *Satz* with the other of the dialectics. The movement of Spirit is the very same movement through which subject becomes its

predicate, and vice versa. The movement of the *Satz*, as identical with that of the self-consciousness, leads to the perfect integration of the consciousness of itself as absolute *Geist*.

In the Kantian system we have seen the need for the propositional judgment for the resulting dichotomy of subject and object. The structure of the propositional judgment allowed only one possible outcome. The separation of essential and inessential in the sentence is directly responsible for the same separation in reality. In Fichte we have seen the lack of unity that is found in Kant overcome in the system following from the *Grundsatz*. Fichte's system attempts to account for both the unity and the freedom present in human experience by starting with a simple true sentence and logically developing all the laws of consciousness from this first principle. Consciousness is here based on a single proposition and so in the end subject and object are found to be one and the same consciousness. There is a logical deduction to the other propositions of consciousness, but there is no movement in Fichte. His system is static and balanced and united. His system starts from what Hegel would consider merely a concluding position with the *Grundsatz*. It is a fixed analytic proposition, but contains no movement and does not ground itself, and so Hegel must find a ground for the *Grundsatz*. This he does with the movement of *der speculativ Satz*. This sentence has in it its own principle of movement. It results in the system of dialectics through the internal reversal of essential and inessential, of subject and predicate, in every shape of consciousness. The position of absolute knowing is the resulting shape of consciousness from the movement of consciousness itself. Rather than proceeding with logical deduction as Fichte did, Hegel's *Satz* moves of its own internal necessity towards the goal of total self-recognition as absolute *Geist* and the dissolution of the subject-object dichotomy. The structures of the subject and object in Kant, Fichte and Hegel are directly dependent upon the structures of their respective propositions. Had Hegel been limited to

either the Kantian or Fichtean analyses of propositions, the dialectics could never have been conceived and his philosophy would have been short of the absolute. By showing how the subject becomes the predicate, he can make it a grounded certainty, rather than a merely posited equality as in Fichte.

In Hegel, all of philosophy can be treated historically, as information belonging to the past. Spirit spills out into time presented as a succession of Spirits in history. Reason however, cannot regard its former states as merely useful preludes to itself, it is an organic shape. Each remains as part of the whole as it advances through time (*PS* §808). Hegel's history is absolute. The movement of each stage is purposeful and necessary. It is the slow resolution of self-consciousness knowing itself as *Geist* through the medium of time. Just as consciousness and just as the *speculativ Satz* moved, so does all of history. Through its movement it comes to know itself as its own history. Through history self-consciousness is reunited with itself. We can see in Hegel's history the theatre of Spirit's self-becoming. The movement of the subject becoming the predicate and returning to the subject brings it to a new higher form. It has become other, and come back to itself, with the knowledge that it is this other.

Hegel's philosophical history brings reason to the facts and sees that the history of the world is rational. This he says has been proved in philosophy, but nonetheless proceeds to empirically demonstrate the necessity of the world-historical path. Hegel firmly holds that if one looks at the world rationally, the world will appear in a rational aspect. One can see its dialectic nature in its essential movement, as we have seen the dialectic nature of the *speculativ Satz* in its movement.

The final stage of history is for Hegel where Spirit knows itself as Spirit; where subject knows itself as subject and object. All of history is nothing other than the progress through time of Spirit's realization of what it is in potential. In particular, it is the rational

progress of freedom. The progress is divided into three large parts, the first stage is the Oriental where only *one* is known to be free, the second is the Greek and Roman where only *some* are known to be free, and finally the German where under God *all* are known to be free. Thus the final cause of the world is the consciousness of its own freedom. Spirit is itself the object of its own attainment; the goal is the freedom of Spirit universally realized (*LPH* pp. 17-20).

Here the objective and the subjective are reconciled. The subjective reaches out and through its knowledge of the objective comes back to itself with a more profound understanding of itself. Just as in the *Satz*, the subject becomes predicate and returns to itself changed. It is its becoming of the other; something essentially self-transcending. The subject is not merely subject, nor is it merely object; it is each the movement of each becoming the other. Thus Spirit has no past for Hegel; the entire course of human history is the eternal present of Spirit. It carries with it all the contradictions of the past as it progresses to its final goal (*LPH* pp. 63-79).

History is nothing other than the process of Spirit's realization of itself through time. Hegel has used the narrative of the development of Spirit in order to legitimize all knowledge of history and to account for every event in human history. His historical Spirit is the ultimate theodicy, giving justification for all events and every seemingly insignificant action. The history of the world is nothing but the development of the idea of freedom. Unlike what he found in Fichte, in its final stage the real world actually is as it ought to be. The absolute for Hegel was the beginning and the end of his project. Time allows history to bring to self-consciousness this conceptual reunion of subject and other, of the finite and the infinite. In the end consciousness comes to be known by itself as itself; it is defined as both subject and object. History is the history of consciousness and dialectical progress through the gradual resolution of its internal contradictions. Just as the *Phenomenology* proceeded

through stages of consciousness so does the *Philosophy of History* pass through stages towards the realization of what it always contained in it in potential, towards a self-reunion. All that has come to be has done so by the necessity of reason. Reason contains the very grounds of its own existence (*LPH* pp. 456-7). The subject of Hegel's metaphysical propositions, the *speculative Satz*, is its own transcendence. What it is is becoming other.

I have not attempted here to demonstrate that Hegel is actually the end of philosophy, or that his philosophy is void of problems, I intend only to show that in this particular light his speculative philosophy is the result of the previous philosophies of German idealism, and that his theodicy requires his speculative proposition. He would never have been able to begin his dialectics without its original movement in the basic form of metaphysical propositions. Had he restricted himself to the Kantian or even Fichtean propositions, his dialectics could never have moved. The propositions of metaphysics would have remained either synthetic *a priori* as in Kant, or analytic as in Fichte. No critical evaluation of Hegel has been attempted for he marks the end of the particular thread which I wished to draw out among these philosophers. Marx and Kierkegaard are among the most serious philosophers to follow Hegel, and while they are his detractors, they tried to restrict his system rather than expand it, and contributed nothing new in the form of the metaphysical proposition. No further expansion on his system was possible. Hegel had created an explanatory system of philosophy so vast and powerful that Kierkegaard claimed that his epistemology was only fit for God, not man. Whether or not, like Schelling or Kierkegaard claim, Hegel oversteps his bounds in claiming that reason's knowledge of itself as the world is in fact comprehensible is unimportant here. The logical basis of Hegel's system of dialectics is rooted in his use of the speculative sentence. His dialectics amount to a massive onto-theodicy and is the final attempt at a grounding of metaphysics in this particular understanding.

Conclusion

We have seen that Kant's discovery of the antinomic nature of reason in his grounding of metaphysics through a strictly austere epistemology left cognition in an uncomfortable duality for some of his contemporaries. The duality stems from his subject-predicate form of judgment which he needs in order to talk about *a priori* synthetic propositions, the propositions of metaphysics, at all. In this light, the most influential aspect of Kant was his discovery of the antinomies. Kant demonstrated the problematic nature of the pure use of reason and the danger of its transcendent tendencies. It became the task of the idealists after Kant to find a satisfactory way to deal with the fact of the antinomies of reason. Kant's own exposition only relegated their content to the transcendental realm. They became illusory oppositions that through a strict, critical epistemology could be ignored. This prompted attempts at revisions of the Kantian critical philosophy.

Fichte's attempt treated the oppositions of Reason as real, but began from the unity of consciousness in the form of an originary analytic proposition and from there he set out to deduce the objective world. This was destined to either fail in its deduction, in its original analysis of opposition, or fail to maintain unity. The second principle was never shown to be identical with the first. According to Hegel, he posited two principles and attempted a synthesis of both. The original positing of $A = A$ and the opposing of $A = B$, was intended to lead to the conclusion that $A = A + B$. In the principle of opposition, the self passed through its identity with the Not-Self and in so doing constructed existence according to its own principles of cause =X, between A and A. His resolution is only an analytic play of the

intellect and limits itself to the subjective realm where we have access to the intellectual intuition. So far as concerns objective reality, we have no intellectual intuitions and our basis for knowledge of the world, is based on our subjective certainty of ourselves. Thus he fails to make his idealism more than subjective. The original synthetic operation of the self is never shown to be the actual objective world, rather than just a world of and for the intellect.

We began with the Kantian critical method and in finding it insufficient to both ground metaphysics and maintain the unity of consciousness we moved to its opposite. Instead of beginning with the distinction of phenomena and noumena, we began with unity. Fichte took the negative of the Kant's claim in this sense, and tried to resolve the contradiction by beginning in unity. He carried the negative through to the next philosophy, his own speculative idealism. With the failure of both the transcendental method of grounding and that of its Fichtean opposite, Hegel is able to finally resolve the contradictions. As such, his speculative philosophy is the final shape of the metaphysical proposition. It is only by means of the failures of the preceding idealisms, transcendental and subjective, that the absolute form of idealism is able to come about. The history of idealism moves and is subject to the dialectics which it describes. Through resolutions of contradictions it proceeds to its absolute form. "Speculative reason finds in its spirit of its spirit, flesh of its flesh, it intuitively itself in it as one and the same and yet as another living being. Every philosophy is complete in itself, and like an authentic work of art, carries the totality within itself," (*D* pp. 88-89).

The subjective limitation in Fichte's attempt at a resolution of the antinomic nature of Reason discovered by Kant demanded an objective certainty, which it is only granted in the movement of Hegel's dialectics. Each philosopher required the proposition to be analyzed in just the way it was in order for their systems to proceed as they did. It is the

synthesis of Becoming in Hegel's *speculativ Satz* that allows him to ground metaphysics and perform his dialectics as a moving whole, as the historical manifestation of Spirit itself, and satisfy the need for a unified consciousness. I've shown that the possibility of the Absolute in the dialectics rests in Hegel's dialectical syntheses. His speculative philosophy is finally able to account for the grounding of metaphysics absolutely and thereby performs the ultimate justificatory act in accounting for the entire history of human consciousness as it progresses towards the realization of itself as Spirit. In this light an interesting thread can be drawn out between these three philosophers, which places them in a dialectical order according to changes in the conceptions of the form of the basic propositions of metaphysics.

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