

[What is the meaning of 'Dialectic'?)

Kant Hegel Marx Sartre [unpublished manuscript]

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In the first three sections of these notes I try to establish the following points:

1) Hegel's dialectics is inseparable from his account of the nature of the subject, and his dialectics of nature therefore only makes sense on the basis of the identification of substance with subject.

2) If the dialectic is to be used within a materialist framework it cannot merely be "overturned"; it requires a wholly new philosophical foundation, and this Marx Engels and Lenin fail to give it.

3) Hegel's dialectic is offered as a solution to genuine philosophical problems concerning the nature of the knowing subject, and any attempt at a materialist dialectic must begin by taking these problems seriously.

In the last two sections I have attempted to sketch out an approach to this problem by interpreting Sartre as a materialist critic of Hegel.

Section 1 gives what I hope is an uncontroversial account of the nature and limits of Kant's criticism of empiricism, and of those elements in Kant's alternative to empiricism which are important for an understanding of the genesis of absolute idealism. In the second section, dealing with Hegel, I have concentrated on trying to uncover the steps which lead Hegel to identify substance with subject: in particular, his insistence on the theoretical primacy of conceptual knowledge and his consequent rejection of what can be merely meant but not said; and his definition of being as "identity with self". I have then tried to show very briefly how the mechanisms of the dialectical logic are linked to the notion of a subject as self-identical. In the third section I deal with the attempts by Engels and Lenin to give an account of the theory of the dialectic, rather than with any possible use of dialectical reason by Marx. I try to show that they are almost entirely dependent on Hegel for their concepts, and offer no serious attempt to rethink the dialectic in a materialist context. In the fourth section I suggest one possible way of doing this by looking at the work of Sartre. This section is not intended to be an exhaustive treatment either of Sartre or of the problems of a

materialist dialectic. It is merely intended to suggest a perspective for viewing both Sartre's earlier and his later writings, and to [2] use this perspective, in turn, to illuminate some of the problems of a materialist dialectic. In the last section I refer briefly, and simply on the basis of my own present interests, to a number of problems which arise from the preceding discussion.

These notes obviously deal very selectively with the work of the various philosophers discussed, and in general assume a prior knowledge of the books referred to. One very important point which is not discussed at all is the question of philosophic method. While I point out that Engels has no philosophic method, I do not give an adequate account of the relation between the methods of Kant, Hegel and Sartre, and hence I do not formulate the method which I implicitly use.

These notes are not written as a "defence" of materialism and dialectics. Both terms by now carry so much excess baggage and accreted myth that I would be perfectly happy if they dropped out of circulation. Nevertheless, since they are not likely to do this, it seems useful to attempt to remove some of the accretions by reexamining the philosophical problems associated with the idea of dialectics.[3]

Kant and Empiricism

Hegel's dialectical logic and method were developed within the context of a specifically "idealist" philosophy. Marx and Engels use a number of spatial metaphors to describe the process of situating the dialectic within a "materialist" philosophy: the dialectic has to be turned upside down, or placed on its feet, or turned inside out. In order to understand these metaphors, and to judge what happens to the dialectic in being thus metamorphosed, we need to understand the relation between dialectics and idealism in Hegel's work, and we need to understand the relation between what Hegel meant by "idealism" and what Marx and Engels meant by "materialism".

Why, and in what sense, was Hegel an idealist? It seems to me that this question can only be answered by tracing out Hegel's relation to the set of philosophical problems bequeathed by Kant; in particular, by trying to understand Kant's complex and ambiguous relation to empiricism. At one level Kant unquestioningly accepts an "empiricist" account of the nature of human reality. He accepts that, insofar as human beings are part of the sensible world, they must be understood as part of the causal network that makes up that world. He thereby accepts, a) that perception has to be under-

No. 1 c.f. Habermas

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they say about them what is simply universal. Consequently what is called unspeakable is nothing else than what is untrue, irrational, something barely and simply 'meant'" (PHM 160 PH-G 92) And, immediately before this he has written that somebody attempting to describe this piece of paper would finally have to admit "von einem Dinge zu sprechen, das nicht ist" (PhG 92 PhM160). Thus what cannot be said is untrue and irrational, is not, or does not hold out or exist ("nicht bestehen bleibt oder ist" (PhG 87)).

The rejection of sense-certainty is made easier by the account of perception as transient, but it also involves more than this, as becomes evident in the analogous argument at the beginning of the Logic. It involves the assumption of the primacy of knowledge, in the sense that, to count as real, something must be capable of being expressed in concepts. What cannot be conceptually expressed may simply be expelled from the domain of philosophy. This manifests itself in the treatment of the relation between Being and Nothingness in the Logic. The Logic begins with the decision "to consider thought as such; which requires a pure, presuppositionless, unmediated beginning: "It must, therefore, first be something immediate or, rather, the immediate itself. As it cannot have any determination relatively to Other, so also it cannot hold in itself any determination or content; for this would be differentiation and mutual relation of distincts, and thus mediation. - The beginning therefore is Pure Being" (SL 1.82 EL 142, But, argues Hegel, this mere Being, as mere abstraction, is ¹⁵⁸ absolutely negative, or Nothing. Nothing, in turn, as "complete emptiness, without determination or content is the same empty intuition or thought (Anschauung oder Denken) as pure Being" (SL 94. WL 83). The concepts Being and Nothingness each pass over into the other. Yet, each at the same time retains its identity. "But equally the ~~truth~~ truth is not their lack of distinction, but that they are not the same, that they are absolutely distinct; and yet unseparated and inseparable, each disappearing immediately in its opposite" (SL 95) This transition Hegel calls Becoming. It is only possible because the two terms are conceptually identical, but at the same time, distinct. The nature of this distinction is, therefore, of crucial importance. Hegel discusses it in the same terms in both EL and SL. In EL he writes of Being that "Only in and by nature of this mere generality (dieser reinen Unbestimmtheit) is it Nothing, something inexpressible, whereof the distinction from Nothing is a mere intention or meaning (eine bloße Meinung)" (EL 161-2 German 186,

stood through a causal “sense-data” model of sensation; and b) that human behaviour must be interpreted in terms of a broadly sensualistic notion of desire, pleasure as the satisfaction of desire, and happiness as enduring pleasure (see CPracR 9-24). But he also shows the drastic limitations of such an account of human reality. However, [4] instead of rejecting it and beginning from the beginning again, he attempts to supplement it, by arguing that while it is valid for the empirical subject and the sensible world, these can themselves only be comprehended if we postulate in addition the existence of a transcendental subject and a supersensible world. The result is finally incoherent, but it is such as to lay the foundation for “absolute Idealism”, which attempts to disentangle the theory from its empiricist roots, and thereby also cuts out any reference to the “materialist” idea of the fundamental independence of “being” from “thought” which was still contained in Kant’s empiricist presuppositions. I do not want to try to give a complete summary of Kant’s position here, but I do believe that it is important to remind oneself of the how and the why of Kant’s argument before attempting to interpret Hegel’s defence of idealism.

Kant takes a “sense-datum” model of perception so much for granted that he does not argue it or even formulate it in any detail. Intuition

... is only possible to man at least insofar as the mind is affected in a certain way. The capacity (receptivity) for receiving representations through the mode in which we are affected by objects is entitled sensibility. (*CPR* 65)

Scattered references throughout the text give us some idea of how Kant conceived this sensibility. Sensation is “the sequence of one impression upon another”, each being a unity “contained in a single moment” (*CPR* 131). Each sense-datum is discrete: “Different perceptions occur in the mind separately and singly” (144). Sensation involves a succession of such discrete data. Any actual manifold of intuition is a collection of sense data, [5] rather than only a single datum. In this collection the data are conjoined or related to one another in some way, but the conjunction itself is not an additional datum of the senses. In themselves the data are a mere “rhapsody of perception” (193):

In experience, however, perceptions come together only in an accidental order, so that no necessity determining their connection is or can be revealed in the perceptions themselves. For apprehension is only a placing together of the manifold of empirical intuition; and we can find in it no representation of any necessity which determines the appearances thus combined to have connected existence in space and time. (*CPR* 209)

There is nothing in any of the discrete sense-data which requires us to order them in any specific way. The manner in which they are to be put together to make a “picture” is apparently undetermined. This applies even to the fundamental forms of our experience, space and time.

In order that certain sensations be referred to something outside me (that, to something in another region of space from that in which I find myself), and similarly in order that I may be able to represent them as outside and alongside one another, and accordingly not only as different but as in different places, the representation of space must be presupposed. The representation of space cannot therefore be obtained from the relation of outer appearance. On the contrary, this outer experience is itself possible at all only through this representation. (*CPR* 68).

Sense data can only be put together to form a spatial picture if we already have some idea of space, for each sensation, as an impression in my mind, is what it is and contains no reference to an outer. [sic] The same argument applies to the idea of a temporal order of sense-data, since each datum is in itself atemporal.

This sense-datum model is not, of course, an immediate description of our experience of perception; looking around me I perceive not a rhapsody of discrete data, but a tidy world of stable objects. Rather, it seems to be constructed from a physiological account of perception in terms of external stimulus and bodily reaction transmitted to the “mind” by the nervous system. It assumes a “realist” account of the [6] body and the world outside the body, but, pushed to its logical conclusion, undermines the possibility of such an account. Kant, however, accepts its accuracy and only wishes to show that it is incomplete.

His problem is this. Sensation itself gives only discrete data, but no relations between the data. Nevertheless we do combine them to make “pictures”. How do we do this, and in what way are we entitled to do this? Is the process arbitrary, as in a kaleidoscope, in which any way of combining the elements is both permissible and interesting, or is it rule-bound, as in a jig-saw puzzle, in which there is only one legitimate pattern? We do distinguish between, on the one hand “judgements of perception”, subjectively valid ‘it seems to me’ statements, in which no necessity of connection is claimed, and, on the other hand, “judgements of experience” in which we refer the judgement “to an object, and want the judgement to be valid for us at all times and equally for everybody”. In such a judgement,

I demand that this connection (between sensations) shall stand under a condition which makes it universally valid. I require that I and everybody must necessarily

conjoin the same perceptions under the same circumstances (“Prolegomenon” pp. 56-64).

The fact is that we do make such judgements of experience, although we are not entitled to do so purely on the basis of sensation. In order to legitimise this procedure we have to ask “whether there is any knowledge that is ... independent of experience and even of all impressions of the senses?” (*CPR* 42-3). The criteria for recognising items which might qualify must be their claim to necessity and universality, neither of which can be given merely by sensation. Kant sets out to identify such items and then to see if they really constitute knowledge, that is, whether their use is legitimate.

In the case of the ideas of space and time they are necessary forms for the ordering of our sensible experience, but cannot themselves be derived from sensation, and hence are a priori. [7] They are also necessary in the sense that we cannot imagine the nonexistence of either space or time. Space and time are forms of intuition. Apart from intuition, we also think objects by means of concepts. Each concept is an ordering principle which brings together, classifies and relates various aspects of experience. The concept “dog” is used to classify a number of distinct objects of experience, and to relate them to one another and to various other objects.¹ This relating function is made explicit in the judgement:

In every judgement there is a concept which holds of very many representations, and among them of a given representation that is immediately related to an object. (*CPR* 43)

A judgement is a way of unifying objects of experience by means of concepts, and each form of judgement represents a particular way in which different bits of experience, different representations, can be brought together. Kant therefore argued that in the table of judgements established by logicians we can find an exhaustive list of the possible ways of relating aspects of experience. Leaving aside the question of the adequacy of this table, we can accept the point that judgements do unify aspects of experience, and that the categories for bringing about this unity are not given by and in the sense-data. Insofar as no organisation of our experience can occur without the use of these categories, they are universal and necessary.

Without these categories there can be no experience of “objects”, for to postulate an object of experience is to claim that there is a rule-governed connection between certain sense-data:

¹ [fvg] The odd disinterest in psychoanalysis - even in Sartre, c.f. the exchange with Pontalis - is as old, in its Anglo manifestations, as a specific British distaste for emotionality, for ‘belief’.

Now we find that our thought of the relation of all knowledge to its object carries with it an element of necessity; the object is viewed as that which prevents our modes of knowledge from being haphazard or arbitrary, and which determines them a priori in some definite fashion. For in so far as they are to relate to an object they must necessarily agree with one another, that is, must possess that unity which constitutes the concept of an object. (*CPR* 134-5)

When I add up certain sense-data and end up with a dog, I am applying a rule for the assemblage of particular kinds of sense-data presented [8] in a particular order by the forms of intuition. The rule may be seen as a blue-print for the manufacture of the experience of a dog. A dog is a very complex animal existing in a number of sensory “dimensions”. Yet I glance briefly at the object in the garden and immediately identify it as a dog. In so identifying it I am making predictions about it. I am predicting that it would be a certain appearance if looked at from other perspectives, that it would bleed if cut, and so on. In particular instances I might be wrong, and it might turn out not to be a dog. But it is only possible to even try to verify my initial judgement insofar as an object is always defined in terms of a rule for the assemblage of possible intuitions. It is only in terms of the rule that I can go beyond the limited experience of it that I have had to make predictions as to other possible experiences of it, and then to use these predictions to verify that it actually is a dog. Without the rule, the possibility of verification would not arise, and so they could be no ordered experience whatsoever.

But without an ordered experience of objects there can be no experience of the subject.

Only in so far as I can grasp the manifold of representations in one consciousness do I call them one and all *mine*. For otherwise I should have as many-sided and diverse a self as I have representations of which I am conscious to myself. Synthetic unity of the manifold of intuitions, as generated a priori, is thus the ground of the identity of apperception itself, which precedes a priori all my determinate thoughts (*CPR* 154.)

In order to talk about myself as having a particular experience of a sensedatum, it must be possible to distinguish between myself and the particular experience. If there is no identical I (in some sense of the term “identical”) linking the experiences, then we are left with a “many-coloured and diverse self”, which is in effect nothing other than the sequence of appearances; it is a sequence of selves each of which is in fact identical with the

experience which is supposed to be *its* experience.² But the necessary condition for distinguishing the I from the [9] sequence of experiences is precisely that there should be a “synthetic unity of the manifold generated a priori”. Only if there is a certain objective necessity in the relation of at least some of the bits of my experience to one another is it possible for me to distinguish between myself and my experience, and hence to have a concept of myself as a subject identical through time. It must be possible to distinguish, in the temporal sequence of actual and possible experiences, between the order of appearances for the subject and some other possible order experienced by the subject as being outside its control. Since this experience of objectivity is only possible in virtue of the application of the relational categories, it follows that we are in fact justified in using them.

However, Kant now has to elaborate on the basic sense datum model in order to give some account of the mechanism of synthesis through the application of the categories. Roughly, this synthesis involves:

2 [fvg] What is it that stops Turner from saying here “Kant here already anticipates today’s collective narcissism, which is the same thing Hegel would later call idealism, and in Sartre is called ‘positivism’”? It’s the entirely different meanings of the word ‘idealism’ in Russell - in Analytic Philosophy altogether -, compared to the ‘Continent’. For the Empiricism from which Turner is trying to extricate himself here, ‘idealism’ is that caricature Russell makes of it: an ‘idealist’ is someone who denies reality, for whom ‘everything is in the mind’. “There is an emphasis upon mind as opposed to matter, which leads in the end to the assertion that only mind exists.” (Russell [1961]: History of Western Philosophy, p. 677.) Neither in Russell nor in the Analytic Philosophy he inspired is there any discussion of the way, in Kant, the meaning of the word ‘critique’ is entirely new, with regard to the entire post-Aristotelian conception of ‘truth’, ‘logic’ and ‘authority’, and what this new conception of critique has to do with that relationship which Turner here conceives of something static: the relationship of the ‘I’ and the ‘sensedatum’. This ‘self-objectification’ in which Russell engages here is characteristic of Analytic Philosophy right through to the eighties: “According to Kant, the outer world causes only the matter of sensation, but our own mental apparatus orders this matter in space and time, and supplies the concepts by means of which we understand experience”. (Russell, op. cit., p. 680.) To call what in Kant is termed the awareness of the antinomies ‘an argument’ - in the ordinary sense -, is already pretty weak, though in Ameriks the word ‘critical’ does at least get a mention: “The ‘critical’ solution to this contradiction is to observe that the whole argument rests on a dogmatic premise ...” (Karl Ameriks [1999]: “Immanuel Kant” in: The Columbia History of Western Philosophy, p. 499.) Turner will later use the shorthand ‘A=A’ for exactly this dogma, the so-called ‘identity’ of subject and object, without realising that his own empiricist presuppositions are keeping him from understanding how this is used in the entire tradition from Hegel onwards. It’s this empiricism (or ‘naturalism’, as Henrich prefers to call it) that’s the common denominator between Analytic Philosophy and the Leninists, and is explicitly rejected in Sartre - this is why the charge of ‘positivism’ covers both Analytic Philosophy and what in Sartre is called dogmatic materialism. Turner doesn’t notice that the entire discussion about what he calls the ‘knowing subject’ doesn’t start - as he thinks it does - with ‘dialectical materialism’ (i.e. post-Marx) but right here: in Kant, in the notion of critique itself.

a) a number of discrete elements, brought together by the synthesis of apprehension in intuition:

Each representation, insofar as it is contained in a single moment, can never be anything but absolute unity. In order that unity of intuition may arise out of this manifold ... it must first be run through and held together. (*CPR* 131).

b) each of these representations must not only be preserved as a “now” in a sequence of nows, it must also be reproduced in the present:

If I were always to drop out of thought the preceding representations ... and did not reproduce them while advancing to those that follow, a complete representation would never be obtained (*CPR* 133).

This is the synthesis of reproduction in imagination.

c) the reproduced representations must be organised into a whole, according to a pattern or rule. This is the synthesis of recognition in a concept:

If, in counting, I forget that the units, which now hover before me, have been added to one another in succession, I should never know that a total is being produced through this successive addition of unit to unit, and so would remain ignorant of the number. For the concept of the number is nothing but the consciousness of this unity of synthesis. (*CPR* 134). [10]

The synthesis of apprehension in intuition occurs through the application of the pure forms of intuition, space and time. The intermediary between this and the application of the category is what Kant calls a ‘schema’, which is a “representation of a universal procedure of imagination in providing an image for a concept” (*KS* 182). A schema is a rule of temporal order, and each category coincides with a specific rule of temporal order of representations. Thus the representations received by the subject are first organised into spatial and temporal order by the pure forms of sensibility, and then this order functions as the basis for a further ordering into rule-bound sequences of possible and actual experiences by the imagination and by the understanding which as it were crystallises and identifies the experience by the application of the a priori categories.

Much of this is very obscure, and in particular Kant does not give a clear account of the nature and function of the schemata. But what is important here is the contrast between Kant’s account and the simple empiricist sense-datum model. In the latter, the subject is simply a receiver; purely sensible intuition is nothing but receptivity. It cannot go beyond one representation to relate it to others. Its history would be rather like an unused

movie, in which a series of pictures sit impotently next to one another. By showing that such a model makes it impossible even to conceive of a subject, Kant has shown that it is necessary to understand the subject as being in some way spontaneous as well as receptive. The subject synthesises experience, not only in making judgements, but, more fundamentally, in our very experience of objects. This experience is always of whole which go beyond what is immediately given in perception, towards what is already past perception and also towards continuous rule-based prediction of possible future perceptions. We therefore have to understand the subject not simply as a present consciousness of a present representation, but as what Strawson calls “a temporally extended point of view on the world” (Strawson 104).^[11]

This is connected with the view of a concept as being a *rule*, rather than a special kind of image or representation. For Hume,

Abstract ideas are ... in themselves individual, however they may become general in their representations. The image in the mind is only that of a particular object, though the application of it in our reasoning be the same as if it were universal. (*Treatise*, p. 28).

Here an abstract idea is a special kind of image, or, rather, an ordinary image with a special use. Disputes among the empiricists concerned the nature of this image, but all accepted that the abstract idea was fundamentally an image. A rule, on the other hand, is constructed and articulated in quite a different way from an image. Very roughly, one may say that a rule is a proposition or a set of propositions, while an image is a picture. The rule is expressed in words, which are in turn expressed in other words, insofar as each word is itself a (conceptual) rule. If we think of a concept as being a picture, its meaning is in some sense immediately all present in the picture as we “look” at it. But if we think of it as a set of proposition, each of which extends into other propositions, then we have to try to understand thought itself in quite a different way. It can no longer be in any sense a mere passive “looking at pictures”. Consequently the thinking subject also must be articulated in a different way, insofar as it has to somehow hold together and synthesise this set of rules.

A “realist” or a “materialist” view will have to be able to find room within its own parameters for an account of this ^[12] spontaneous and synthesising role of the subject. Kant, however, develops his own account in the direc-

tion of idealism, as a direct consequence of the sense-datum model from which he begins.³

That in which alone the sensations can be posited and ordered in a certain form cannot itself be sensation; and therefore, while the matter of all experience is given to us a posteriori only, its form must lie ready for the sensations a priori in the mind, and so must allow of being considered apart from all sensation. (*CPR* 66).

But if these forms lie in the mind, they may be constitutive of our experience of the object, but they can tell us nothing of the thing as it is in itself, independent of our experience of it. This has the paradoxical result that not even the category of causality can be applied to the thing in itself,⁴ although the theory of perception which has lead Kant to postulate a thing in itself assumes its causal action in sensation. Furthermore, in my attempts to

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- 3 [fvg] Turner is encumbered here by two contrary assumptions of the time:
- a) by the positivist misconception that ‘idealism’ - in Kant through to Hegel - leads to a type of solipsism in which the “spontaneous and synthesising role of the subject” loses its ‘foundation’ in the ‘real world’, and is hence dependent upon a later generation of ‘realists’ and ‘materialists’ to put it right;
 - b) by the French ‘existentialist’ reading of Marx going in the diametrically opposite direction: rescuing individuality and autonomy, as they see it, from the dogmatic Marxism of the Communist countries. On the first assumption Kant has lost his grip on the ‘real’ world; on the second that an account of the ‘knowing subject’ had to wait for Sartre and the existentialists before ‘subjectivity’ could be understood. In fact, both the ‘materialism’ and the ‘dialectics’ is already right there in Kant. The ‘picture’/‘rule’ distinction, which Turner here regards as a problem that can only be solved independently of ‘idealism’, then turns out to be indistinguishable from what, within this self-same ‘idealism’, is thematised by a formula Turner himself uses: “A=A”. (The one ‘A’ standing for the word or concept or symbol, the other for what it is that is being referred to or perceived or ‘denoted’.) The purported loss of realism in Kant evaporates once the baselessness of the naturalist assumptions presupposed by such a reading become evident. The idea that Kant’s point of departure is a ‘sense-datum model’ is pure fiction, based on a confusion with Hume.
- 4 [fvg] The ‘thing-in-itself’ is not based on a ‘theory of perception’, but on a bit of history of philosophy that Turner - on positivist premisses - feels can be ignored. Or rather: the notion that epistemology and the history of philosophy is collapsible into a ‘theory of perception’ (of either empiricist or Leninist kind) *is* positivism. (Habermas’ definition: that we deny reflection *is* positivism.) The form/content distinction Kant here invokes as a response to Humean scepticism is a bit of ‘radical Enlightenment’ based on Spinoza, Leibnitz, Wolf, a consequence of the insight that neither causes, nor time, nor space can be observed - in the sense in which empiricists use ‘experience’. Since we can neither observe nor ignore them, we’re forced into a reflection on the way we use them - a reflection not possible in that self-objectifying ‘stance’ in which we treat ourselves as objects. Turner is here on a watershed between two major streams in Western thought, though he is by no means aware of it. Freedom and autonomy can mean either the autonomy gained by freedom from the passions (Freud: freedom from ‘id’-forces, from dissociation, fear, primary process thinking), or freedom to choose one’s own ‘ends’, also, and in particular, politically.

understand myself as subject I am faced with the same limitations. I can have no knowledge of myself as I am, but only as I appear to myself through the form of time, as the inner sense, and by the mediation of the categories. Beyond this I can only know that, for my experience to be mine, it has to be possible for the “I think” to accompany it⁵, and this

I think expresses the identity of the transcendental subject through the changing series of perceptions. We can affirm that it is, but we can say nothing about what it is. We cannot even apply the category of substance to it; it has a purely logical significance (see *CPR* 334).

This faces us with a similar paradox to that concerning the thing in itself. The account of sensation starts from a “natural scientific” causal account, but we have now reached a position from which this is impossible:

The reason for this is that it is not given to us to observe our own mind with any other intuition than that of the inner sense; and that it is yet precisely in the mind that the secret of the source of our sensibility is located. (*CPR* 287). [13]

Kant has settled the problem of the I as a temporally extended point of view on the world by placing the transcendental I outside them. This also has consequences for his moral theory. Here again he accepts a “sensualist” account of human behaviour and motivation as being at least a partly correct description, but, through the distinction between the transcendental I and the empirical I he wishes to supplement it with an account of the relation between morality and reason. The crucial point in his argument is the link established between freedom and reason. He makes the distinction between a heteronomous will, which is subject to determination from inclinations imposing themselves on it from outside, and an autonomous will which gives itself its own principles of action. The heteronomous will has its ends given to it; it may or may not succeed in achieving those ends, but what Kant is concerned with is not the freedom to realise an end, but the question of the freedom to choose ends themselves. Once it is accepted that a particular kind of being can choose its own ends, once it is established that ends are problematic, the question arises as to what ends ought to be chosen.

That is, ends are no longer simply accepted, but reasons are required for them. But in an important sense one demonstrates freedom by the simple

⁵ [fvg] Seeing that Turner himself mentions Lacan, it is again puzzling to explain why he falls back on a Cartesian argument here, isn't at all interested in the idea - despite the huge interest in this at the time in Europe - that, in Kant, this is an adumbration of what would now be called projection - in both the individual and collective sense. Somehow Turner misses the entire psychoanalysis debate, from Fromm through to Marcuse and the Frankfurt School.

action of oneself placing ends in question by demanding reasons for them. Thus Kant can assert

that every being who cannot act except *under the idea of freedom* is by this alone - from a practical point of view - really free,

since to act on the assumption that one is free is to be faced with ought questions. Rational beings necessarily act under the idea of freedom, since

We cannot possibly conceive of a reason as being consciously directed from outside in regard to its judgements; for in that case the subject would attribute the determination of his power of judgement, not to his reason, but to an impulsion. Reason must look upon itself as the author of its own principles independently of alien influences. (*ML* 116).

A rational being will only accept conclusions which have been arrived at by a process of reasoning which at least appears to be autonomous, in the sense that [14] each step in the argument is both necessary to it and is validated within the argument, rather than relying on some unanalysed prejudice which is, as it were, imposed upon the argument from outside. Thus a rational being is autonomous, and so is faced with the question of ends.

This question is itself resolved by showing that the rational being is in fact an end in itself. From this Kant develops the following formulation of the Categorical Imperative:

All maxims as proceeding from our own making of law ought to harmonise with a possible Kingdom of Ends as a kingdom of nature (*ML* 100),

where a “kingdom” is “a systematic union of different rational beings under common laws” (*ML* 100). To ask for reasons is to recognise reason, and one’s own rationality as an end in itself. In acting rationally the will makes universal law, by turning a rational principle into a maxim of conduct. The law as maxim has no hold over the will other than the will’s own affirmation of it as law, and this affirmation comes from the will’s awareness of its own status as a rational being. Both the form of the law and its matter are given in one and the same movement.

However, for Kant the relation between the idea of freedom and the idea of causal determinism in the natural world can only be thought by placing the subject qua free and rational outside time, in the supersensible. The free subject is the transcendental not the empirical ego. This means that it is not possible to give any account of the relation between the two. In particular no account can be given of the development of morality as the move from heteronomy of the will to autonomy of the will. Neither is it possible to give

a unified account of human fulfillment. A dichotomy is maintained between happiness as sensuous contentment and that intellectual contentment which comes from the awareness of oneself as being free in obeying the moral law (see e.g. C Prac R 123). Associated with this is a problem concerning my relation to other people. On the one hand, although the idea of a Kingdom of Ends implies that [15] reason is, in an important sense, social, Kant cannot clearly articulate the relation between reason as lodged in the atemporal transcendental ego and reason as social intersubjectivity. On the other hand, since he makes happiness dependent purely on an internal feeling, and since there can be no guarantee that what produces such a feeling in me will at the same time produce it in others, it follows for him that if my happiness does coincide with that of other people this can only be accidental. Duty, as the principle of my relation to others, cannot be derived from happiness, as the principle of my relation to myself, which is determined by “my finite nature as a being of needs” (CPrac R 24). The idea of the Kingdom of Ends lays the basis for an account of human motivation which shows the extent to which fundamental human needs, far from being mutually incompatible, actually require the other’s satisfaction for their own satisfaction. But he cannot develop this fully, because of the fundamental dichotomy between the transcendental and the empirical.

Kant attempts to resolve some of these problems by two “postulates of pure practical reason”: the immortality of the soul and the existence of God. The postulate of immortality allows us to conceive of a long process in which virtue, as the complete rational control of self in obedience to the moral law, may finally be achieved. God overcomes the apparent divergence of virtue and happiness by guaranteeing that they will in fact coincide in a Kingdom of God “in which nature and morality come into harmony” (see CPracR 129-30). This however only further confuses the problem of the relation between history and the atemporal, while at the same time legitimating a political quietism in terms of which citizens must obey even unjust laws of an unjust government.

Looked at as a whole, Kant’s model contains four elements, concisely summarised in the following passage from the *Critique of Judgement*:

The causality of freedom itself (of pure and practical reason) is the causality of a natural cause subordinated to nature (i.e. of the subject considered as man and therefore as phenomenon). The intelligible, which is [16] thought under freedom, contains the ground of the determination of this natural cause in a further inexplicable way (just as that intelligible does which constitutes the supersensible substrate of nature). (CJ 32-3 note 2).

In the Critiques of Pure and Practical Reason Kant has tried to give an account of the relation between the transcendental ego, on the one hand, and both the empirical ego and the natural world of experience on the other hand. In the *Critique of Judgement* he attempts to complete the system by giving an account of the relation between the supersensible substrate of nature, nature itself, and the subject.

He approaches the problem by way of the difficulties faced by us when we attempt to understand how nature works.

The forms of nature are so manifold, and there are so many modifications of the universal transcendental natural concepts left undetermined by the laws given a priori by the understanding - because these only concern the possibility of nature in general (as an object of sense) - that there must be laws for these also. These, as empirical, may be contingent from the point of view of our understanding; and yet, if they are to be called laws (as the concept of a nature requires) they must be regarded as necessary in virtue of a principle of the unity of the manifold, though it be unknown to us. The reflective judgement, which is obliged to ascend from the particular in nature to the universal, requires on that account a principle which it cannot borrow from experience, because its function is to establish the unity of all empirical principles under higher ones, and hence to establish the possibility of their systematic subordination. (*CJ* 15-16, *KU* 88)

There are two distinct questions involved here. One involves the procedure to be adopted by judgement in attempting to give a unified account of nature. But the second concerns the foundation of the unity of nature itself. Phenomenal nature is nothing but a mass of discrete sense data, organised into objects by the categories of the mind. It has no intrinsic unity, not even that of space:

If we were justified in regarding material beings as beings in themselves, then the unity that constitutes the ground of the possibility of [17] natural formations would simply be the unity of space. But space is no real ground of the products, but only their formal condition ... (*CJ* 257).

On the other hand, the constitutive role of the understanding is also not sufficient to account for the unity of nature, since it only provides very general categories which leave actual behaviour undetermined. The category of cause says that A must have a cause, but not that its cause should be B. But B on its own is finally a mere manifold of sense-data and therefore does not have that solid being on the basis of which we would feel comfortable saying that A simply contingently is caused by B. If B is going to cause A next time around - and in order even to attempt to understand nature we must

assume that it is going to do so - then the ground for this must lie somewhere other than in B itself.

Since for Kant the unity of the object, as necessary connection according to a rule, is guaranteed by the understanding, the only way in which he can actually conceptualise the unity of nature is in terms of imposition on a manifold by an understanding. Thus he concludes that

Particular empirical laws, in respect of what is in them left undetermined by these universal laws (the categories), must be considered in accordance with such a unity as they would have if an understanding (although not our understanding) had furnished them to our cognitive faculties (zum Behuf unserer Erkenntnisvermögen ... gegeben hatte), so as to make possible a system of experience according to particular laws of nature. (CJ 16, KU 89).

This then accounts for the unity of nature, and at the same time it provides the clue to the ordering principle which we need in attempting to understand nature as a unified system. Kant argues that something which has its ground in an understanding is purposed, and so we may take the notion of the purposiveness (*zweckmässigkeit*) of nature as our ordering principle. Assuming that nature is a purposively ordered whole, we can attempt to understand the ways in which the various parts complement one another.^[18] This argument permits the conflation of two different meanings of “necessity”. We may accept that there is a certain necessity in the way in which sense-data are to be combined: a jig-saw puzzle rather than a kaleidoscope. The objects in the world have a certain structure independent of our will, and this structure imposes a certain organisation of the sense-data. From a “realist” position this has no implications for the structure itself: whether the structure could be otherwise, or whether it is necessarily as it is remains open. The imposition of a necessary pattern for organising the sense-data is a function of the independent “thereness” of the world, and this independent thereness still remains to be investigated and interpreted. But for Kant there is no independent thereness of the natural world of experience. It can only be understood as deriving its necessity from an understanding. Hence the pattern of the world is finally to be understood as being “necessary” in the same sense as is the pattern in which sense-data are combined; it has to be thus and no other way. It must thus be rational, and hence have the form of being purposed.

Kant’s own development of this remains confused, since the actual structure of the human understanding remains contingent. He fails to give any account of why there should be just these categories and forms, although such an account would be required in order to establish a rational necessity,

as opposed to a “contingent necessity”. Thus he also retains an ambiguity concerning the sense in which something has its origin in the understanding. In an ordinary sense, something is purposed insofar as it results from a prior idea (or intention) in the understanding. But the categories are not “in the understanding” in this sense, and so we cannot say that the organisation of our experience in terms of the categories is purposed by us. But Kant nevertheless wishes to say that nature as a whole is purposive insofar as it derives its unity from the categories of an understanding other than our own. Kant never explicates this problem, but it is evident that, unless one can in some sense interpret the categories of our understanding themselves, as other than contingently given, the concept of purposiveness is at least misleading. This is brought out by Hegel in his criticism of the failure to deduce the categories. For the moment, though, I wish only to point to the concepts function in the system. [19]

From Kant’s point of view, the central problem in the system concerns the relation between freedom as the characteristic of the transcendental subject, and determinism, as the characteristic of nature.

Nature must be capable of being regarded in such a way that in the conformity of law to its forms it at least harmonises with the possibility of the ends to be effectuated in it according to the laws of freedom. (*CJ* 14)

The idea of purposiveness enables him to establish such a harmony in two different ways, in relation to two different types of judgement. The first is the aesthetic judgement of the beautiful or of the sublime; in particular, the judgement of beauty.

There are certain peculiarities about such a judgement. We both accept that the judgement that a certain object is beautiful concerns our interaction with the object, and in that sense is subjective, but also insist that the judgement is universally valid for all observers. This can only be the case if the content of the judgement can be universally communicated, which is not the case with judgements of physical pleasure. It can only be the case if it refers to some experience available to all individuals. In so far as it is subjective, it cannot involve my subjective peculiarities, but must be connected with that in my subjectivity which is common to the subjectivity of all other individuals. Since all we have in common is the possession of the same cognitive faculties, the experience must concern the relation between these faculties. Sensation, imagination and understanding are all involved in the experience of an object, but the experience of beauty involves mere form, rather than pleasurable sensation. It thus involves imagination and understanding, not sensation as such. [20]

In experience, the function of the imagination is to schematise the discrete sense-data. It acts freely when it does this without concepts, but it becomes rule-bound when operating in conjunction with the understanding and its categories. There are two possible ways in which the two faculties can relate here. Either understanding imposes its rule (forcefully, as it were), or the synthesis of the imagination is such as virtually already to exhibit and conform to the rule, in which case the imagination “in its freedom harmonises with the understanding in its conformity to law” (CJ 129). This is the experience of beauty: a harmony between imagination and understanding, which is subjective but also universal, because it applies to the form or nature of the understanding and the imagination, and not to the particular imagination & understanding of one or more individuals. The representation which is given us has the form of *zweckmässigkeit* (suitability, fitness, purposiveness); it fits in with the nature of the cognitive faculties. The pleasure in the beautiful object is “the subjective purposiveness of the representation for the relation between the cognitive faculties in the act of judging a sensible object in general.” (CJ 132).

The antinomy of taste involves the mutually contradictory but demonstrable arguments that “everyone has his own taste”, but “There may be a dispute about taste”. This contradiction is only resolvable if we make the concept of taste indeterminable, by accepting a) that the experience of beauty is the experience of the subjective purposiveness of nature for the judgement, but that b) this concept cannot be used in proof, to conclusively settle any argument about the beauty of an object, because it refers to the supersensible, insofar as “the determining ground lies perhaps in the concept of that which may be the supersensible strata of humanity” (CJ 185). Thus we can only comprehend the peculiarities of the judgement of beauty if we postulate, as a regulative principle, that nature is purposive for the perceiving subject, in the sense of being coordinated with the nature of the subject by a noumenal understanding. [21]

An analogous argument applies to the second aesthetic judgement, the judgement of the sublime. While the beautiful is an indeterminate concept of understanding, the sublime is an indeterminate concept of reason, that faculty which seeks always for totality. The experience of the sublime is connected with “a representation of *limitlessness*, yet with a superadded thought of its totality.” (CJ 90). That is, it involves a sense of size or force so great that our imagination cannot compass it, yet we are aware, precisely insofar as we recognise that our imagination has failed to encompass it, that we have a further supersensible faculty that transcends the limits of the sense-bound imagination. Yet because we ourselves also remain bound by

the categorial limits of the phenomenal world we cannot turn the idea of totality given by reason into an intuition of the totality. The tension between imagination and reason remains, and the sublime is “a pleasure which is only possible through the mediation of a displeasure” (*CJ* 109). Yet the relation remains purposive, in that the imagination here harmonises directly with the reason in its search for totality.

The second type of judgement which can be used to establish a possible harmony between law and freedom is the teleological judgement. Kant contends that we are justified in using such judgements because the behaviour of organised natural wholes cannot be explained in terms of mere mechanical motion. In such wholes the parts not only fit purposively together but actually reciprocally produce one another in an interaction between whole and part in which the whole may be said to function as end and the parts as means. Such wholes are

objective material purposes which afford objective reality to the concept of purpose in nature ... and so they give to the science of nature the basis for a teleology, i.e. a mode of judgement about natural objects according to a special principle which otherwise we should be by no means justified in introducing (because we cannot see a priori the possibility of this kind of causality.) (*CJ* 222).

But once we admit some natural purposes, we are “justified, nay called upon” (*CJ* 226) to treat nature as a whole as naturally purposive; to assume as a guiding principle for the reflective judgement that nothing in nature is contingent, and that each thing may be understood in terms of its relation to other things and to the whole. [22]

In relation to our ordinary mode of reasoning this gives rise to an antinomy: “All production of material things and their forms must be judged to be possible according to mere mechanical laws” versus “Some products of material nature cannot be judged to be possible according to merely mechanical laws.” Unless we can somehow reduce organised wholes to mechanical principles of nature, which Kant flatly states cannot be done (*CJ* 248), this antinomy can only be resolved by treating the whole of nature as designed by a noumenal understanding which we can postulate but not comprehend. We must “seek the supreme ground of these purposive combinations in an original understanding as the cause of the world” (*CJ* 298). Although we cannot comprehend this understanding, we can at least contrast it with our own. Our understanding is discursive, in the sense that particulars in the world are not determined by the a priori universals of our understanding. Instead, on the basis of each particular we have to seek the universal law which would determine it. A supersensible understanding

which determined the whole system of nature, on the other hand, would be able to proceed directly from its own universals to each particular; to be more precise, it would “move from the synthetic universal, or intuition of a whole as a whole, to the particular, that is to say, from the whole to the parts” (*CJ* 255) Such a directly intuitive understanding Kant calls an *intellectus archetypus*. This *intellectus archetypus* can proceed intuitively from whole to part because it is the principles of its own understanding which give the laws to the whole. It is both intuitive comprehension and cause of the world.

Its actual purpose must remain a secret to us, but we can nevertheless, by seeking to understand the ways in which things in the world are purposive for one another, look to see whether there appears to be some ultimate purpose towards which all others point. Kant’s answer here is that Man

is the ultimate purpose of creation here on earth, because he is the only being upon it who can furnish a concept of purpose and who can, by his reason, make out of an aggregate of purposively formal things a system of purposes. (*CJ* 276)

To investigate nature thus is to investigate from the point of view of [23] man as a choosing being. Man develops his capacity for choice through culture as the freeing of the will from the despotism of desire. The crucial element in this process is the development of a civil community in which “lawful authority in a whole ... is opposed to the abuse of their conflicting freedom” (282). We are thus entitled to conceive of the Kingdom of Ends as the ultimate purpose of nature, and hence to interpret nature as being in harmony with reason, for which the Kingdom of Ends is also the ultimate purpose.

The idea of an historical development of reason is discussed in greater detail in the “Idea for a Human History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose”, where Kant is investigating the possibility that there may be some hidden purpose beneath the apparent surface chaos of history. He connects this with man’s capacity for reason, which neither works instinctively nor develops instinctively, but “requires trial, practice and instruction to enable it to progress gradually from one stage of insight to the next” (*PW* 47). Reason can thus only be fully developed in the species. The method chosen by nature for this is the

unsocial-sociability of men, that is, their tendency to come together in society, coupled, however, with a continued resistance which constantly threatens to break this society up. (*PW* 44)

Human capacities are developed in this struggle, so that eventually “a pathologically enforced social union is transformed into a moral whole” (*PW* 45). We are still far from that endstate, but the increasing interdependence of states and of individuals brought about by trade and industry is moving us in the right direction. In order better to understand what is required for further development we should examine the history of past states to find out

how their defects lead to their overthrow, but in such a way that a germ of enlightenment always survived, developing further with each revolution, and prepared the way for a subsequent higher level of improvement. (*PW* 52)

In the *Critique of Judgement*, then, Kant introduces three new concepts to try to give a more coherent account of his basic phenomenon-noumenon model. The aesthetic judgement leads to an appreciation of the harmony between nature and human cognitive faculties. The necessary regulative principle of [24] the purposiveness of nature gives us the idea of an intellectus archetypus whose understanding would be intuitive and constitutive, rather than discursive, and who is effectively the ground of nature. The idea of purpose leads us to recognise the full development of the rational capacities of the human species as the ultimate purpose of nature, and hence to recognise an historical process working towards this result.

This final synthesis is not intended by Kant to give actual (metaphysical) knowledge of the noumenal world and its relation to our phenomenal experience. He insists throughout that these are only regulative principles, which we need to employ in the necessary task of trying to make sense of the world of experience. But this prohibition itself rests on the distinction between noumenon and phenomenon. Kant’s regulative principles were available to be applied as factual descriptions once the continuing incoherence of the system as a whole led to the rejection of this distinction.

For his final synthesis does not of course work, and the relation between phenomenon and noumenon does remain fundamentally incoherent. We may not think of the relation as causal, since causality is a phenomenal category, but it is not clear how a supersensible ground, which operates “in a further inexplicable way” (*CJ* 32 note) is to be distinguished from a cause. The sense-datum theory continues to rest on the presupposition of an external cause. Moreover, the relation between the historical development of reason and the atemporal rational transcendental ego is inexplicable, whether in the case of the moral history of the individual subject attempting to move from heteronomy to autonomy, or in the historical process as a whole. If rational behaviour is the endstate in human history, fully-devel-

oped human reason does not occur before this point is reached. But this would seem to imply that the Categorical Imperative, as the rational affirmation of the rational actor as an end-in-itself, can only be understood by human beings at or at least near the end of the historical process. In this case the arguments for immortality and the existence of God fall away, insofar as they are both dependent [25] on the empirical impossibility of the Kingdom of Ends, in which there is some correspondence between virtue and happiness. In any event the tension between sensible happiness and moral contentment remains unresolved. While human reality remains split in two human motivation necessarily also is split in two. [26]

Kant and Hegel

Hegel accepts Kant's criticism of empiricism and the key role which he gives to the notion of synthesis, but attempts to develop the theory in such a way as to remove some of the contradictions and inconsistencies to which I have pointed. His criticism and development of Kant's theory is to a considerable extent mediated through the early writings of Fichte and Schelling, but I shall largely ignore their work in this summary.

If a concept is a rule, or a propositional structure, rather than an image or picture, then the question arises as to the nature of the unity of the concept. For Hegel, the importance of Kant's work lies in the fact that in it "the unity which constitutes the essence of the concept is recognised to be the original and synthetic unity of apperception". (SL 11. 218) In perception, it is through the unity of the concept that the object is an object, and not a mere subjective combination of sensation. The Ego thus penetrates the object and reduces it to its own form, universality. The concept is simultaneously universality and individuality, or what Hegel terms negativity and determination, and it is the synthetic unity of these two features which characterises the Ego:

Now Ego is this unity which, first, is pure and self-relating, and is so not immediately but abstracting from every determinateness and content and passing back into the freedom of boundless self-equality. It is thus *universality*: unity which is self-unity only by virtue of this negative attitude which appears as abstraction and therefore contains dissolved within itself all determinateness. Secondly and equally immediately Ego as self-relating negativity is individuality, or absolute determinedness which opposes itself to and excludes Other: it is individual personality (SL II 217/8)

While revealing this fundamental structure of both the concept and the subject, Kant however failed to develop it in any coherent way. The various elements of his model: the categories, the forms of intuition, the different faculties, are collected purely empirically, without any attempt to develop them out of the fundamental unity, and as a consequence the unity of the ‘I think’ is obscured by the heterogenous collection which makes up the knowing subject as a whole. So Hegel tries to remedy this by investigating the unity of the subject, and arguing that the various aspects of the subject can be understood only in and through this unity. His philosophy is a description of the necessary structure of the subject. [27]

But this account of the nature of the subject is given within the context of the identification of subject with substance or, more broadly, the identity of thought and being. In the *History of Philosophy* Hegel argues that the task which faced “modern German philosophy” was that of “taking as its object the unity of thought and being ... and comprehending it, that is, laying hold of the inmost significance of necessity, the Notion” (Vol.III. p. 409) Kant carried out the ‘formal aspect’ of this task by grasping thought itself as the ultimate - that is, as constitutive of the object but he understood the whole process as subjective, so that “the capacity of knowing the absolute is denied to it” (III. 425), and at the same time Kant “can supply no reality to this essence of self-consciousness” (III. 426) That is, Kant leaves the being-in-itself as unknowable. This is because for Kant the criterion for truth must finally include something which is externally given to the subject, but the in-itself cannot be so given. Hegel, however, rejects both elements in this argument.

Kant’s argument concerning the criterion for truth is this:

If truth consists in the accordance of a cognition with its object, this object must be, ipso facto, distinguished from all others, for a cognition is false if it does not accord with the cognition to which it relates, although it contains something which may be affirmed of other objects. Now a universal criterion of truth would be that which is valid for all cognitions, without distinction of their object.(CPR 67)

Thus, with respect to the matter of the object, as that which specifies and distinguishes it, there can be no universal criterion. To attempt to abstract from the content is for Kant equivalent to abstracting from all relation to the object. He wishes to say, I think, that the criterion for the truth of the proposition “This desk is brown” in some sense includes the desk, so that if we ask for a universal criterion, this would mean abstracting from the desk; we

would be asking for a criterion which would not refer at all to the mere unconceptualised givenness of the desk.

For Hegel, on the other hand, what is entirely specific to the desk cannot be conceptualised, or expressed in universal form, and therefore cannot be either true or false. He writes

It would be absurd, we are told, to ask for a criterion of the truth of the content of cognition; - but, according to the definition, it is not the content which constitutes truth, but its correspondence with the Notion. A content such as is spoken of here, that is, without Notion, is notionless and therefore essenceless; of course it is impossible to ask for the criterion of the truth of such an entity, [28] but for the opposite reason, namely because, lacking notion, it is not the requisite correspondence and cannot be anything but what belongs to truthless opinion (*wahrheitslose Meinung*). (*SL II. 228 WL II. 267*)

Thus Hegel wishes to leave “the sense-material, the manifold of intuition”, which is mere *wahrheitslose Meinung*, and instead engage in “a consideration of the Notion and of the categories in and for themselves”, which involves “a speculative method in philosophy” (*SL II.228*) This speculative method involves the acceptance that what Kant describes as the purely formal element in fact has its own special content, which it is the task of philosophy to make explicit. In doing this philosophy is uncovering the structure of the objective in the subject. It is not merely asserting, as did Schelling, that it is possible to have an “intellectual intuition” of the nature of the object, but it is offering a rational method, not limited to the privileged few gifted with intellectual intuition, and available for universal rational application:

Philosophy is in its own nature capable of being universal, for its groundwork is thought and it is through thought that man is man. (*History of Philosophy Vol. III p. 520*)

“Meinen” and the Primacy of Knowledge

It seems to me to be important to distinguish two claims made by Hegel in the above discussion. The first claim is that it is possible to develop a rational philosophical method which will help us to understand the structure of a knowing subject by investigating the preconditions for the possibility of conceptual thought. The second claim concerns the possibility of thereby also in some sense grasping the nature of ‘being’, or of the object. That is, it is possible to distinguish between the claim to be able to offer a universal criterion of knowledge, and the claim to be able to give a rational account

of the ego as synthetic unity of apperception. There are, I think, two steps in the process which leads Hegel to identify these two claims. The first has its roots in Kant's acceptance of the empirical dissolution of the sensuous world. (see *EL* 86'90). Like Kant, Hegel tends to accept rather than to argue this, as in the above reference to *wahrheitslose Meinung* and as in this passage:

But if the given material of intuition and the manifold of ideation are taken as the real in opposition to that which is thought and to the Notion, then this is a view the renunciation of which is not only a condition of philosophy, but is assumed even by religion; for how can these be needed and have [29] significance if the fugitive and superficial appearance of the sensuous and the individual are taken for truth? (*SL* II. 222)

Because the sensuous is 'fugitive and superficial appearance' it can have no independent being of its own. At the same time it is not conceptualisable and hence has a vanishing significance within the speculative philosophy. This emerges at two crucial points in Hegel's philosophy: the discussion of sense-certainty at the beginning of the *Phenomenology*, and the discussion of Being and Nothingness at the beginning of the *Logic*.

In his discussion of the idea that sense-certainty gives the real truth, and the essential reality, Hegel points out that in whatever way we attempt to describe the object of sense-certainty we necessarily use universal terms which refer to more than what is directly present, so that our description of what is directly present is necessarily mediated by what is not present. This applies even to terms such as This, Here, Now, insofar as, for example, the Here and the Now are defined by their relation to the not-here and the not-now. and so to assert that something is here and now is to place it within a certain relation to other heres and other nows. Thus, we do not present it to ourselves as universal, but we *utter* what is universal; in other words we do not actually and absolutely say what in this sense-certainty we really mean ... it is not possible at all for us even to express in words any sensuous existence which we "mean" (*PhM* 152. *PhG* 85). We can, that is, mean the immediate, but we cannot say it. When we try to say it we are left not with the concrete object which sense-certainty claims but with the most abstract of universal, pure 'being'. Now the distinction between what we can only mean and what we can actually say, in the sense of expressing in words, is important and interesting. Faced with an object, we can say many things about it, but each predicate that we attribute to it has the form of a universal: blue, hard etc; it is shared with other objects and so fails to specify the particularity of this object.

No combination of universals can exhaustively specify this particularity. Finally, then, the particularity can only be *meant*; it can never be said. Conceptual knowledge cannot grasp the object in its immediacy.

The question is, what is to be made of this distinction? Referring to those who speak of the existence of external objects as absolute certainty and truth, Hegel writes:

They ‘mean’, then, doubtless this bit of paper here, which is quite different from that bit over there: but they speak of actual things, external or sensible objects, absolutely individual, real and so on; that is, [30] they say about them what is simply universal. Consequently what is called unspeakable is nothing else than what is untrue, irrational, something barely and simply ‘meant’. (*PhM* 160 *PhG* 92)

And, immediately before this he has written that somebody attempting to describe this piece of paper would finally have to admit “von einem Dinge zu sprechen, das nicht ist” (*PhG* 92 *PhM* 160). Thus what cannot be said is untrue and irrational, is not, or does not hold out or exist (“nicht bestehen bleibt oder ist” (*PhG* 87).

The rejection of sense-certainty is made easier by the account of perception as transient, but it also involves more than this, as becomes evident in the analogous argument at the beginning of the *Logic*. It involves the assumption of the primacy of knowledge, in the sense that, to count as real, something must be capable of being expressed in concepts. What cannot be conceptually expressed may simply be expelled from the domain of philosophy. This manifests itself in the treatment of the relation between Being and Nothingness in the *Logic*. The *Logic* begins with the decision “to consider thought as such which requires a pure, presuppositionless, unmediated beginning”:

It must, therefore, first be something immediate or, rather, the immediate itself. As it cannot have any determination relatively to Other, so also it cannot hold in itself any determination or content; for this would be differentiation and mutual relation of distincts [sic], and thus mediation. - The beginning therefore is Pure Being (*SL* I. 82 *EL* 142, 158)

But, argues Hegel, this mere Being, as mere abstraction, is absolutely negative, or Nothing. Nothing, in turn, as “complete emptiness, without determination or content ... is the same empty intuition or thought (*Anschauen* oder *Denken*) as pure Being” (*SL* 94. *WL* 83). The concepts Being and Nothingness each pass over into the other. Yet, each at the same time retains its identity.

But equally the truth is not their lack of distinction, but that they are not the same, that they are absolutely distinct; and yet unseparated and inseparable, each disappearing immediately in its opposite. (*SL* 95)

This transition Hegel calls *Becoming*. It is only possible because the two terms are conceptually identical, but at the same time, distinct. The nature of this distinction is, therefore, of crucial importance. Hegel discusses it in the same terms in both *EL* and *SL*. In *ED* he writes of *Being* that

Only in and by nature of this mere generality (dieser reinen Unbestimmtheit) is it Nothing, something inexpressible, whereof the distinction from Nothing is a mere intention or meaning (eine bloße Meinung) (*EL* 161-2 German 186, [31] Hegel's emphasis).

The same point about a purely “gemeinte” distinction is made in the *Zusatz*, and also in the following paragraph (88). In *SL* Hegel writes:⁶

In the result (*Becoming*) therefore, the distinction between *Being* and *Nothing* is equally asserted, but is asserted as a distinction that is merely intended. It is *intended* (meint) to take *Being*, rather, as that which is simply other than *Nothing*; nothing is clearer than their absolute distinctness, and nothing seems easier than to be able to describe it. But it is equally easy to prove the impossibility of this, and that the distinction cannot be expressed. ... Those who insist on remaining at this standpoint of the distinction of *Being* and *Nothing* should set themselves the task of indicating in what it consists. If *Being* and *Nothing* had any determinate-

6 [fvg] So ist das ganze, wahre Resultat, das sich hier ergeben hat, das *Werden*, welches nicht bloß die einseitige oder abstrakte Einheit des *Seins* und *Nichts* ist. Sondern es besteht in dieser Bewegung, daß das reine *Sein* unmittelbar und einfach ist, daß es darum ebensosehr das reine *Nichts* ist, daß der Unterschied derselben ist, aber ebensosehr sich aufhebt und nicht ist. Das Resultat behauptet also den Unterschied des *Seins* und des *Nichts* ebensosehr, aber als einen nur gemeinten. Man meint, das *Sein* sei vielmehr das schlechthin *Andere*, als das *Nichts* ist, und es ist nichts klarer als ihr absoluter Unterschied, und es scheint nichts leichter, als ihn angeben zu können. Es ist aber ebenso leicht, sich zu überzeugen, daß dies unmöglich, daß er unsagbar ist. Die, welche auf dem Unterschiede von *Sein* und *Nichts* beharren wollen, mögen sich auffordern, anzugeben, worin er besteht. Hätte *Sein* und *Nichts* irgendeine Bestimmtheit, wodurch sie sich unterschieden, so wären sie, wie erinnert worden, bestimmtes *Sein* und bestimmtes *Nichts*, nicht das reine *Sein* und das reine *Nichts*, wie sie es hier noch sind. Ihr Unterschied ist daher völlig leer, jedes der beiden ist auf gleiche Weise das Unbestimmte; er besteht daher nicht an ihnen selbst, sondern nur in einem Dritten, im *Meinen*. Aber das *Meinen* ist eine Form des Subjektiven, das nicht in diese Reihe der Darstellung gehört. Das Dritte aber, worin *Sein* und *Nichts* ihr Bestehen haben, muß auch hier vorkommen; und es ist auch hier vorgekommen; es ist das *Werden*. In ihm sind sie als Unterschiedene; *Werden* ist nur, insofern sie unterschieden sind. Dies Dritte ist ein *Anderes* als sie; - sie bestehen nur in einem *Anderen*, dies heißt gleichfalls, sie bestehen nicht für sich. Das *Werden* ist das Bestehen des *Seins* sosehr als des *Nichtseins*; oder ihr Bestehen ist nur ihr *Sein* in Einem; gerade dies ihr Bestehen ist es, was ihren Unterschied ebensosehr aufhebt.

ness to distinguish one from the other, they would be determinate Being and determinate Nothing, as has been recalled, and not pure Being and pure Nothing, as they are at this stage. The distinction between them is therefore completely void; each is the indeterminate itself, and is so in the same manner; the distinction therefore, does not lie in themselves but in a third being, namely our intention (im Meinen). This, however, is a form of the subjective which does not belong to this stage of the exposition. (*SL* 104 *WL* 95, Hegel's emphasis not given in *SL*.)

The fundamental distinction from which the *Logic* begins is thus a distinction which can be meant, but not said. This would seem to require a serious analysis of Meinen, but Hegel sidesteps the problem by dismissing it as a form of the subjective which is out of place at this stage of the argument. Of the commentators on the *Logic of Being* whom I have read (Bloch, Clark, Gadamer, Hyppolit, Henrich, Kröner, Lenin and Taylor) only Gadamer pays attention to the question of Meinen. He tries to avoid the problem by arguing that Becoming is the real starting point of the *Logic*, that Being and Nothingness appear in thought only from the perspective of Becoming, and that within the context of the concept Becoming they can be conceptually distinguished, as opposed to being meant differently (see Gadamer 59-61.).

The implication of Gadamer's approach seems to be that we can exhaustively determine the concept "Becoming", and thereby enter a purely conceptual world, in which no reference need be made to what is not conceptual. On the contrary, it seems to me that Becoming can only be defined in terms of B. and N. insofar as they are meant differently, since insofar as they are conceptually identical, the assertion of their unity adds nothing.⁷ But insofar [32] they are meant differently we can say that they have conceptual meaning in relation to one another: we can conceptualise the fact that they are different, although we cannot conceptualise the difference itself. Within this relation of difference they can be used to give a genuine conceptual content to a new category. But this category, and all the others

7 [fvg] The idea that the relationship between Becoming Being and Nothingness are 'purely conceptual', that dealing with them is a matter of definition - clara et distincta - is Descartes, via Russell. (And: Lenin, c.f. Negt on this.) "Meinen", in Hegel - this is now Turner's reading - the point of departure for the *Logik*, is a discussion about what "can be meant but not said". If I say 'dog', that's an abstraction with only the most tenuous relationship to the smelly mut at my feet, lazily thumping its tail on the floor. I mean the latter, say the former, since - before the age of smartphones - that's the only way I have of communicating what I'm experiencing, namely by means of words. It's Russell/Strawson here - Analytic Philosophy altogether -, that keeps Turner from registering the Luther in Hegel; science as something non-realistic, as an emancipation from the here-and-now, from what is so intolerable about the 'real world'. There's this odd thing in Turner: he doesn't see - Spro-Cas or no Spro-Cas - the Christianity in Hegel.

built upon it, retains the reference to a fundamental meant difference; it never becomes purely conceptual.

In terms of his own method, Hegel should be obliged to preserve the specificity of that which can be meant but not said as a moment within his developing system. But this is not done, because to do so would be incompatible with the primary which he accords to verbal conceptual knowledge. In *EL* he writes:

Now language is the work of thought, and hence all that is expressed in language must be universal. What I only *mean* or suppose is mine (was ich nur meine ist mein) it belongs to me, - this particular individual. But language expresses nothing but universality, and so I cannot say what I merely mean. And the unutterable - feeling or sensation - far from being the highest truth, is the most unimportant and untrue. (*EL* 38 German 74)

In the *Phenomenology* Hegel makes the following distinction between consciousness which “(knows) about objective things as opposed to itself, and about itself as opposed to them” and science which “in knowing keeps within itself, and never goes beyond itself” (*PhM* 87 *PhG* 30) Using this definition of consciousness, we may say that for Hegel knowledge in the sense of ‘science’ or organised conceptual knowledge) has primacy over consciousness; consciousness has finally to be shown to be a ‘primitive stage’, an ‘unscientific standpoint’ (*PhM* 88,89) Whereas consciousness is faced with an other, knowledge takes its other back into itself, or is infinite. Particular things are finite, in that they are both limited and determined by other beings: “The sun is a finite entity, for it cannot be thought without other entities, since the reality of its Notion comprises not merely the sun itself but the entire solar system” (*Phil Mind* 23) The finite is “a reality which is not adequate to its notion”, in that the identity of each finite thing lies in its relation to other finite things. This relation does not exist for the thing but only for us as we compare it with other things. *Mind*, on the other hand, recognises that its identity lies in its relation to its other - and thereby overcomes its finitude by integrating its other, its limitations, into itself: [33]

We make ourselves finite by receiving an Other into our consciousness; but in the very fact of our knowing this Other we have transcended this limitation. (*Phil Mind* 24).

A known limit is no longer a limit, because to know it is to go beyond it and to dissolve it.

The mind, as infinite, as containing its own other within itself, is thus contrasted with the thing which is not complete in itself but ideal (das

Ideelle) as “a determination or content, which though distinct does not exist independently, but only as moment” (*SL* I 63).

The proposition that the finite is of ideal nature constitutes Idealism. In philosophy idealism consists of nothing else than the recognition that the finite has no veritable being (*SL* I 168, cf *EL* 178).

It is the primacy of conceptual knowledge which permits Hegel to ignore the purely meant at the beginning of his system, and then, at the end, to show that otherness itself, as purely conceptual, is absorbed back into the knowing subject, as merely one element in what is purely a system of concepts. The finite has no self-subsistent being of its own⁸ because the empiricists and Kant have dissolved the thing into a rhapsody of sense-data; hence its specificity can only come from its position within the total system of concepts, which means that finitude is necessarily equated with ideality, and that only the total system has “veritable being”.

Yet the fact of the apparent otherness of being to thought still has to be overcome. This is achieved by showing that being itself has the structure of thought. This, however, can only be done because Hegel builds an element characteristic of the subject into his initial definition of being. This is the second step in the argument to show that the method for investigating the structure of a knowing subject can also enable him to grasp the nature of being.

Being as selfrelation

The starting point of the *Logic* is “the decision to consider Thought as such” (*SL* I 82); it is pure knowledge, which is thought thinking itself. This pure knowledge has no relation to an other: it has “shrunk into this unity” in which all reference to an other and to mediation are transcended (see *SL* I 81). It is this thought thinking itself which is the immediate, or pure being. Being thus has that immediate relation to self which is characteristic of thought thinking itself. Being is “similar to itself alone” (*sich selbst gleich*), just as nothingness is “simple equality with itself” (*einfache Gleichheit mit sich selbst*) (*SL* I 76, *WL* 83).

In *EL* this characteristic of being equal or identical to itself is used to establish the identity of thought and being: “If we understand Being as it is

⁸ [fvg] Hegel can't be realistic - on Turner's reading -, because, following Kant, our ordinary 'life-world' notion of objects has been dissolved into a 'rhapsody of sense data'. There's this equivocation in Turner: 'Being' is both empirical reality and knowing subject, without him registering that it is this equivocation itself which comes to full consciousness, for the first time, in the West, in Hegel. In the term 'dialectic'.

defined by reflection, all that we can say [34] of it is that it is what is wholly identical and affirmative. And if we then look at thought, it cannot escape us that thought also is at least what is absolutely identical with itself. Both, therefore, Being as well as Thought, have the same attribute” (*TM*, 168). The same point is made in the opposite direction in the preface to the *Phenomenology*: “The subsistence or substance of anything that exists is its self-identity; for its want of identity, or oneness with itself, would be its dissolution. But self-identity is pure abstraction; and this is just thinking.” (*PH M* 113)

In his discussion of Hegel’s relation to Fichte and Hegel Kröner brings out some of the ideas underlying this notion of self-identity. He points out that Fichte, in beginning from the proposition $A=A$, fails to notice the dialectic hidden therein. It in fact begins by making a distinction between A as subject and A as object, and then asserts a relation between the two. The identifying of the two A s is a synthesis which goes beyond each of the A ’s to relate it to the other. Kröner links this with the structure of the I: “Er ist synthetisch, weil sich das Ich=Ich in ihm verbirgt” (It is synthetic because the $I=I$ is concealed within it) (Kröner 314). For Kröner, this is because

Das selbst ist nur, indem es aus der Entselbstung, aus der Entäusserung zu sich zurückkehrt; in der Bewegung, die es beschreibt, verleugnet es zugleich die Bewegung, es bewegt sich und bleibt doch unbewegt dasselbe (The Self is only insofar as it returns to itself from its “outselling” or externalisation; in the movement which it carries out it at the same time denies movement; it moves itself yet remains unmovedly the same. (Kröner II 315).

The possibility of $A=A$ depends on the possibility of the I going beyond itself from the first enunciation of A to the second (from A' to A'') while at the same time remaining identical with itself in order to retain A' in its passage to A'' , and so to be able to identify the two. Kröner goes on to conclude from this, with Hegel, that everything which is thinkable is “itself”, as identical with itself, in the sense of containing within itself this movement, so that “Being is Self, or Substance is Subject” (Kröner II 317).

Hegel thus argues that the so-called Law of Identity adopts the propositional form but in fact contradicts the nature of a proposition:

The form of the proposition which expresses Identity contains more, then, than Identity simple and abstract; it contains this pure movement of Reflection, in which the Other figures only as Show and as immediate disappearance. A is a beginning which imagines a different term that is to be reached; but this term never is reached; A is - A ; the difference is only a disappearance and the movement withdraws into itself (*SL* II 42, *WL* II 44).

That is, [35] the propositional form has a synthetic function, and the proposition $A=A$ derives its meaning from the background of ordinary synthetic propositions in the context of which it is formulated. The ordinary proposition contains both the assertion and the overcoming of otherness: it is “Identity as the disappearance of otherness” (*SL* II 43). The Law of Identity, by separating the two A’s in the process of making them identical itself shows its synthetic nature. Identity cannot be thought without thinking difference. In the context of the identity of thought and being, this means that any thing must be a “relation to self” in this synthetic sense.

By deriving his initial concept of Being from thought thinking itself, and by building this synthetic notion of self-identity into his definition of Being, Hegel lays the foundation for an absolute idealism which develops a mediated and complex notion of the self-identical subject out of the immediate self-identity of being. But the question as to whether in fact this desk is “identical with itself” in the same sense as is thought thinking itself is never asked. This is at least partly because the sense-datum theory has dissolved this desk into discrete data which have to be held together in some way.

Subject and Dialectic

For Hegel, then, “everything depends on grasping and expressing the ultimate truth not as substance but as subject as well” (*PhM* 80). I would like now to look at his account of the nature of the subject as subject, leaving aside the question of its identity with substance. Hegel’s criticism of Kant is that he, like Fichte and Schelling, enumerates various aspects of the subject empirically, rather than developing these aspects coherently from the fundamental idea of the subject as synthesis. In contrast with this, Hegel’s own work, more particularly the *Logic*, may be read as always operating simultaneously on two planes. He is unpacking concepts in such a way as to show the systematic dependence of each concept on other concepts, thereby making explicit of each concept that it is not an image but a rule. And at the same time he is showing what the structure of the knowing subject must be in order for it to be able to hold together each of these chains of concepts in the unity of a single concept. What interests me here is not the actual details of the relation between the concepts, but the account of the subject which must be presupposed in order for such relations to be possible. Hegel’s guiding thread is the idea of unity or identity as self-relation. Using this thread, he wishes to show that the unity of the concept, and the unity of the conceptual system as a whole, both have the same structure as

the unity of the subject. By starting with the most abstract one can show that this concept [36] unpacks itself in a certain way into a system of concepts which reveals the necessary structure of the subject as the synthetic unity of the system. Since identity, as relation to self, also involves difference from self, the structure of the argument involves making explicit the element of difference contained in any given concept postulated as relation to self, and then revealing a third term which restores the unity of the concept. That is, starting with any given concept we discover that it can only be understood in and through its relation to at least one other concept, and the relation between these two concepts, once made explicit, has to be in its turn grasped by means of a further concept which takes this relation as explicit, rather than as implicit. It is this demonstration of the interdependence of concepts which Hegel describes as dialectic:

We term dialectic that higher movement of Reason where terms appearing absolutely distinct pass into one another because they are what they are, where the assumption of their separation cancels itself. (*SL* 117, *WL* III)

In his discussion of the Logic of Being, Taylor interprets this in terms of the idea that a descriptive concept can only be understood contrastively - that is, in relation to another concept with which it is contrasted (see Taylor 234). In relation to my earlier discussion of Kant, this can also be formulated in terms of the distinction between 'image' and 'rule'. Knowledge is not 'immediate' in the sense of occurring in the form of a single intuition of a single unambiguously clear idea. Every concept contains within it a network of relationships, of interconnected secondary concepts. Hegel describes this as a 'negative unity' in order to emphasise that the concepts which it contains are held apart and maintain their individuality in it, while the concept is itself nevertheless the synthesis of these elements.

The differences contained within the concept are described by Hegel as 'contradictions'. His exposition of the concept is not entirely clear and is sometimes confused rather than clarified by the examples he uses. Contradiction: here is a function not of mere external comparison (Pens are unlike camels) but, rather of specific differences. In the relation of like and unlike in specific difference, they "do not fall on different aspects or points of view in the thing, without any mutual affinity but one throws light into the other" (*EL* 215) The relation between the 'unlikes' here is what Hegel calls *opposition* (*EL* 218 cf. *SL* II 50). It involves the contrasting of the differences of similar things. In the relation of opposition

the different is not confronted by any other, but by its other. That is, either of these two ... is stamped with a [37] characteristic of its own only in its relation to the

other: the one is only reflected into itself as it is reflected into the other. And so with the other. Either in this way is the other's own other (*EL* 220)

What is involved is not, e.g. the 'opposition' between blue and not-blue, but rather that between blue and yellow. Both are colours and as distinct colours they may be defined e.g. by their position in the spectrum, that is, by their relation to other colours. Most of Hegel's examples in *EL* at this point involve polar opposition, e.g. positive and negative, north and south. But the definition does not require this polar opposition.

In *SL* the complementarity of opposition is brought out even more clearly in the assertion that

each is self-mediated by its Other and contains it. But it is also self-mediated by the Not-Being of the Other: it is, therefore, self-existent unity and excludes the Other. (*SL* II 58) (see also the discussion of the law of excluded middle (*SL* II 65-6))

where Hegel rejects the idea of opposition as mere 'deficiency' or 'indeterminateness')

In the opposition, then, each defines itself against the other in terms of the other. This Hegel describes as *contradiction*. Each term both includes and excludes the other. But this relationship is not one in which the two terms cancel each other out (as blue would cancel not-blue). It is a contradiction which is necessarily resolved: "very determination, every concrete, every concept is essentially a union of distinguished and distinguishable moments which pass over through determinate and essential difference into contradictory moments. It is true that this contradictory concretion resolves itself into nothing - it passes back into its negative unity. Now the thing, the subject, or the concept is just this negative unity: it is contradictory in itself, but also it is resolved contradiction; it is the ground which contains and supports its determinations" (*SL* II 70).

The way in which these ideas of contradiction and negative unity are linked to Hegel's overall conception is clearly illustrated by the way in which he deals with the problem of perception in Ph G. Having argued, in the discussion of sense-certainty, that any attempt to conceptualise the object of sense-certainty results in a universal, Hegel goes on to discuss perception as that which "takes what exists for itself to be a universal" (*PhM* 162) that is, as taking the sense-element as a property of an object. Here the object is "the thing with many properties" (*PhM* 163) A property is a universal, in the sense that to say "this is blue" is to go beyond the this and to relate it to other blue objects. But [38] the problem is, how are these various properties related? Each is itself a universal as a negative unity or determi-

nate character. The lump of salt is a simple Here; but it is also white, cubic and pungent. Each property, as a universal, is related negatively to the others. But at the same time, as properties of this thing, they have to be held together in the One, which is “an excluding repelling unity” (*PhM* 165) The reason that this is problematic is that, if one assumes a Humean view of mind, one can have before one only a succession of discrete “impressions” - white, cubical, pungent, etc. but not all of them at once. The problem is that they have to be there *at once and as distinct*. It is this which is the ‘contradictory’ demand. In his discussion of perception, therefore, Hegel deals with the various ways in which consciousness tries to avoid this ‘contradiction’, and concludes that “we see that consciousness alternately makes itself, as well as the thing, into a pure atomic ‘one’, and an ‘also’ resolved into independent constituent elements (materials or matters). Consciousness thus finds through this comparison that not only its way of taking the truth contains the diverse moments of apprehension and return upon itself, but that the truth itself, the thing, manifests itself in this two-fold manner” (*PhM* 172) Thus consciousness has to find a way of grasping this two-fold manner of manifestation of the thing as existing in a single unity. This is achieved through the concept of law. The argument is expressed with great concision in paragraphs 422 and 423 of the *Encyclopaedia*. He writes that “the essence of law, whether this relates to external Nature or the ethical world order, consists in an inseparable unity, a necessary inner connection, of distinct determinations” (*Enc* III 163) This is also the transition to the I as self-consciousness “just as law is something differentiated within itself and not merely relative to an Other, an identity with itself in its difference, so, too, is the ‘I’ that has itself for object, that is aware of itself” (*Enc* III. 164) (This, it seems to me, is a further development of Kant’s idea that a universal is a rule, not an image, and that the structure of the I has to be understood in terms of this.)

In perception, the problem is to hold together the distinct, negatively related properties in one whole. In the *Logic* the analagous problem is that the concept is defined by its other. This problem first arises in the *Logic* with the transition from Becoming to Determinate Being (*Dasein*) as Quality, that is, as limited, determined and so possessing a specific, distinguishable [39] characteristic. We began from the definition of Being as identity with itself. This identity as a relation has to be preserved in each further determination of Being. But determination is negation, in the form of relation to an other, and so the preservation of identity in the face of this otherness is a negation of the otherness. “Therefore, the truth which we have, is, Determinate Being in general distinction in it, and the transcendence of this distinc-

tion; Determinate Being is not merely undifferentiated, as at the beginning; it is once more identical with itself through the transcendence of the distinction, and the simple nature of Determinate Being is mediated through this transcendence ... it is Being-in-itself, that which is a determinate, or Something (Etwas). Something is the first negation of negation as simple existent self-relation.” (SL 127; WL 123) That is, the restoration of identity, but now as a differentiated identity, is what Hegel calls “the negation of the negation”. Each new determination of Being, involving an increasing multiplicity of inner determination, threatens the original unity or identity of Being. It thus requires a further determination which reorganises the set of concepts which are threatening to lose their coherence. The source of this threat lies in the very nature of concepts, in the fact that they are defined in relation to other concepts. The other has to be reintegrated anew at each step, but also threatens to break out anew at each step. It is this process which Hegel describes in the final chapter of the Logic “The Absolute Idea” in which he discusses and sums up his dialectical method.

The first negation is not any negation, or any other: “It is not, therefore, the Other of a term to which it is indifferent, for thus it would be neither an Other, nor a reference nor a relation; it is the Other in itself, the Other of an Other. It thus includes its own Other, and so is contradiction, or the posited dialectical of itself” (SL II 477). It is not a ‘negation’ like ‘The Mind is no elephant’ (cf. EL 306), but rather of the type “blue is not green”, in which one is defining value by distinguishing it from another colour. That is the negation occurs within the context of a relationship, the fact that blue and green are both colours. It is the making explicit of a distinction which is already implicitly present, and this making explicit is the first dialectical moment. The second dialectical moment consists in positing the unity which is implicitly contained in the contradiction. Here Hegel makes explicit the relation between the structure of the concept and the structure of the subject. The second negative, the negative of the negative which we have reached, is this transcendence of the contradiction, but no more the activity [40] of an external reflection than the contradiction is: it is the innermost and most objective moment of Life and Spirit by virtue of which a subject is “personal and free” (SL II 477-8)

This achieved unity of opposites cannot be thought of as a static identity: it is self-mediating movement and activity. As a “self-identical whole” any given concept is once more in the same form as the beginning, and can in turn serve as a further beginning. The method can thus be extended into a system, not as a bad infinite progression, but as a totality in which the beginning is preserved in ever greater concreteness, which involves at the

same time an ever greater depth of subjectivity, and more and more complexly articulated subject: “The highest and acutest point is simple personality, which by virtue alone of the absolute dialectic which is its nature, equally holds and comprehends everything within itself because it perfectly liberates itself, - becoming simplicity which is first immediacy and universality” (*SL II* 483).

The relation between negation of negation and subject is of course referred to frequently, in more and more developed forms, throughout the *Logic*, beginning with the first introduction of the negation of the negation in the discussion of ‘Etwas’:

The negative of the negative, as Something, is only the beginning of the subject and the Being-in-Self is quite indeterminate. It next determines itself as being-for-self and so on, until finally as Notion it receives the concrete intensity of the subject. The negative unity with self is the basis of all these determinations; though here the first negation (negation in general) must carefully be distinguished from the second, the negation of negation, which is concrete and absolute negativity, while the first is only abstract negativity (*SL I* 188) [41]

Thus Hegel describes the structure of the concept in terms of the key categories negation, opposition, contradiction, and negation of the negation.⁹ The specific meaning of a given concept within a system of concepts is given it by determining it negatively in relation to the other concepts, which are its “opposites”. But this means that its meaning nevertheless still includes its negative relation of opposition to these concepts, and in this sense it is a contradiction which contains its other within itself. Since it is not simply dissolved by this contradiction, or coexistence of opposites, it has to be understood as their negative unity; as the coexistence of opposites (or of distinctions) which retain their distinctness within the unity. It is thus the negation of the original negation, where this negation of the negation is understood not as the mere removal of the original opposition, but as the maintenance of it in existence, as a stabilised opposition which constitutes the complex meaning of the concept. The knowing subject must be able to hold the various elements of the concept together as one concept. As the ontological foundation of the unity of the concept it must have this same

9 Hegel’s idealism, in Turner’s rendition, consists in this: he dissolves all reality into thinking; - and in politics he’s hence quietistic, ‘contemplative’, hence of no use in - say - situations of manifold injustice, exploitation, repression. (The rationalism/empiricism dualism coming from the Russell/Strawson/Taylor direction, merges smoothly with the romanticised ‘humanist’ Marxism of Sartre, both culminating in a rejection of ‘dialectics’ in Hegel.) ‘Scientifically unsound, politically unreliable’ is the verdict, also in Turner. This very Anglo view is mirrored, uncannily, in the dialectical/mechanical materialism controversies in Russia during the thirties - Negt! xxxxxxx

structure; it must be the negation of the negation as the negative unity of opposed elements.

Absolute Idealism

In the “Subjective Logic” Hegel explores this structure further. Here he shows that the concept is:

- a) the unity of Universality and Particularity in Individuality;
- b) the explicit formulation of this unity in judgement;
- c) the development of the various aspects of the judgement in the syllogism. This account makes explicit the characteristic of any concept as a systematic interconnection of other concepts.

In the context of Hegel’s system it has further implications. In terms of the primacy of knowledge, a final synthesis is achieved in the form of the genuine infinity in which the other becomes completely integrated with and transparent to the subject. This is expressed in the form of a [42] syllogism which no longer takes the form of an original in which two quite separate terms are mediated by a third term, since such an argument retains an element of contingency in it. It is, rather, a syllogism which involves the simple explication of what is contained in the genus. It is no longer subjective, in the sense of being related only to the subject’s knowledge, but gives adequate expression to the nature of the Object:

Consequently the result is an immediacy which has emerged through the transcendence of mediation, a Being which is equally identical with mediation, and is the Notion which has constructed itself out of and in its otherness. Hence this Being is a Thing which is in and for itself, or Objectivity (*SL* II 342)

Knowledge achieves objectivity when it understands the process of the object as a transparently necessary process. But this is the same thing as saying that it understands the process of the object as its own process, as the self-determining idea positing itself as real and existent. This is Hegel’s version of the Ontological Proof. The subject he describes here is Kant’s intellectus archetypus, an intellect which does not proceed discursively from particular to universal, but deductively from universal to particular, and for whom, therefore, the universe is transparent. Hegel can only reach this position because he has carefully excluded that which can only be meant, not said, from consideration, since this, in its very resistance to conceptualisation, would necessarily remain opaque. But, once he has done this, he is able to avoid Kant’s absolute ontological gulf between sensible and intelligible world. The laws of nature and the laws of reason can be

directly equated, and the empirical subject becomes an historically constitutive element in the self-development of the noumenal subject, or *intellectus archetypus*. The dialectical account of the subject makes it possible to historicise both the individual subject and the *intellectus archetypus*. This enables Hegel to give a content to Kant's Categorical Imperative, which he criticises as essentially empty, by arguing that the "substance of ethical reality" is an historical product of reason (see eg. Ph M 453), in the sense that it already exists as a highly developed complex of responsibilities and rights which take the realities of the situation into account. Leaving aside the weakness of the grounds for absolute idealism, the problem with the system is its incapacity to deal [43] adequately with contingency. On the one hand the world, as the product of the *intellectus archetypus*, has a completely rational structure, and hence necessarily develops as it does. On the other hand, Hegel has to allow at all levels for what Taylor calls "interstitial contingency" (Taylor 260) Hegel insists that he is not claiming to be able to deduce the necessary existence and nature of his pen. He attempts to integrate interstitial contingency by arguing that "Error or other-being, when superseded, is still a necessary dynamic element of truth: for truth can only be where it makes itself its own result" (*EL* 352)

Interstitial contingency occurs in nature and in society. But the problem is that once one has admitted any form of contingency, the problem arises of criteria for distinguishing between what in any given situation is contingent and what is rational and necessary. Hegel asserts that "Within the range of the finite we can never see or experience that the End has been really received. The consummation of the infinite End, therefore, consists merely in removing the illusion which makes it seem: yet unaccomplished" (*EL* 351/2) Yet the illusion, like any belief, must have consequences for the way in which we act, and therefore for the world which we help to create by our actions. Thus removing the illusions must also involve changing the world. And Hegel would not deny this; his political and ethical positions are not stoical or quietistic; they are only reformist, rather than revolutionary. This State, as outlined in *The Philosophy of Right* is not a mere reflection of the existing Prussian Monarchy; it is a reformed and rationalised version of it.

Even in his earlier writings he believed that reformist political practice must be tied to, and an expression of, the objective spirit of the time, that is, it must be tied to the consciousness of the people and be institutionally with the people. The task of the philosopher is to articulate the objective spirit, as a guide to the political leadership. If the leadership fails to carry out the

necessary reform, revolution occurs as a ‘natural force’ which cannot be channelled by theory, and which has a purely negative content.

Even this modest reformism, however, is significantly distanced from what is, and thus raises the question of criteria for criticising what is. One may accept the criticism of Kant for failing to anchor his Kingdom of Ends sufficiently firmly within the historical reality of a particular society. But absolute idealism by identifying thought and being, at the same time theoretically removes that distance between thought and being which we need to be [44] able to understand if we are to act rightly.

However, even if we reject the identity of thought and being, this does not mean that Hegel is not dealing with important problems in his attempt to explicate the nature of the concept and of the subject. When Hegel insists that the proposition “The swan is black” enunciates the contradictory assertion “the individual is a universal” he is pointing to the following question: How can I “know” (or be conscious of etc) this individual swan sailing on the lake before me as being related in certain ways to thunderclouds, darkness, panthers and the anarchist flag - none of which are to be seen before me, or are even consciously present to me in any way? A subject is “identical with itself” in quite a different way from the way in which a table might conceivably be said to be “identical with itself”. And this is revealed, *inter alia*, in the subject’s capacity to hold together the vastly complex set of relations contained in the judgement “The swan is black”.

Kant revealed the element of synthesis according to a rule as an essential moment in the process of the subject. Hegel’s main additional contribution is to bring out the element of distinction or negativity which is the logical complement of synthesis, and to give an initial account of the relation between the two elements by the use of the concept of “negation of the negation”.

Apart from this, Hegel and Kant each express one essential element for a “materialist” theory of knowledge. Against Kant’s scepticism about the possibility of knowledge of the being in itself, Hegel is a realist for whom the relation of knowledge is, finally, a direct relation to the actual being which I know. This is part of the meaning of “identity” in the assertions of the identity of thought and being. Against Hegel’s absolute idealism which finally dissolves the finite being, Kant is a realist who insists on the ultimate “otherness” of the thing. When I look at this pen, from a reasonable distance and in a good light, I am seeing the pen; my ‘percept’ is in some sense identical with the pen. But when I attempt to describe the pen, I can never exhaust it fully. My conceptual knowledge is of the pen, but it is not identical with the pen. Kant denies the identity of my ‘percept’ with the pen

as it is in itself. In his eagerness to restore this identity; Hegel asserts the identity of my conceptual knowledge with the pen. [45]

Hegel's account of the structure of the subject cannot be assumed to be unmarked by the idealist context in which it occurs. A 'materialist' theory of knowledge, therefore, would have to redescribe the dialectic of the subject within the context of an adequate account of the relation between conceptual knowledge, and consciousness as a direct relation to an independent object.

Analogous considerations apply to Hegel's historical dialectic. The structure of the dialectic is derived from the account of the subject, and then applied to history through the identification of individual subject with the "intellectus archetypus" as absolute subject unfolding itself in history. The persuasiveness at least some parts of Hegel's actual account of an historical dialectic stems the fact that he is often dealing with the genesis and development of systems of thought, which necessarily do have the structure of a concept. Thus the attempt to found a "materialist" dialectic of history and of society is faced with two alternatives. It must either give the dialectic a new foundation quite independent of the concept and of the subject, or it must show that it is possible to treat either the whole or some aspects of social reality having the structure of a concept or of a subject. This would necessarily involve some account of the element of "intersubjectivity" in social reality: an account of the way in which social reality is constituted in the interrelation of subjects.¹⁰ [46]

10 [fvg] If one overlays Turner here onto the Russian debates of the time, then he's closer to Deborin than to Bucharin, in the sense that 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity' are 'one'. It doesn't mean in the least that it's not capable of delivering an empirically convincing analysis of current globalised capitalism - it really is in crisis - but this is then immediately fused with the interests of the 'world proletariat', for whom Cronin maintains he's speaking. Refuting Cronin is more difficult than it seems. It's not just that the fusing of the empirical and the gnostic isolates it from non-believers with the crudely polemic formula that the critics are all 'white capitalists'. In it there lurks something deeper, namely that which to this day could motivate another look at the *Grundrisse*. Academic and corporate Economics understands itself as a science, but unlike the medical profession, economists do not have an ethics body that controls what the putative science is used for. The economists that see their duty to be that of public intellectuals warning of what needs to be done to avert the next meltdown (e.g. why Glass-Steagall is/was so vital) are few and far between. Most see no problem at all in personal and/or corporate greed. Though even that doesn't get to the core of it all, which is that the same social Darwinism that on the Continent did so much damage is alive and well - and taught in every "Economics I" course at university.

Marx, Engels, Lenin and the Dialectics of Nature

The classic statement of the relation between Marx's dialectic and that of Hegel is found in the Preface to the second edition of *Capital*:

Although in Hegel's hands dialectic underwent a mystification, this does not obviate the fact that he was the first to expand the general form of its movement in a comprehensive and fully conscious way. In Hegel's writings, dialectic stands on its head. You must turn it right way up again if you want to discover the rational kernel that is hidden away within the wrappings of mystification. (*Capital* p. 873.)

The metaphor of the Hegelian dialectic being 'upside down'¹¹ (or perhaps 'turned inside out' see Fulda) is repeated a number of times by Engels (e.g. *MEW XX* a.a.o. 23 - trans Feuer 86-7, Selected Correspondence 439), as is the assertion that only Hegel (apart from Aristotle) has made a thorough study of the dialectic (e.g. *MEW XX DN* 330).

11 [fvg] Historically (but that's the point about Turner's naturalism here, that the history of philosophy is replaced by 'logic') it goes back to Lessing, Kant, Mendelssohn and others, regarding Spinoza. Another way of putting it: in that head/foot metaphor there's nothing less than the possibility/consequences/drawbacks of secularisation, 'modernity' altogether. A truly Faustian topic. "Enamored of the old concept of God, Jacobi was not a theologian of the spirit who dissolves the distinction between God and humans by incorporating God into the race. It is impossible, in his view, to explicate the beliefs in freedom and a personal God in a way that transforms them into rational arguments. These beliefs need to remain as beliefs. It is impossible to make them dependent on reason, to prove their truth, or to arrive at them by starting from some elementary philosophical propositions. [newline] All of which is to say that Spinozism is the only possible philosophy, rendering beliefs in freedom and a personal God impossible. This is tantamount to saying that what matters cannot be proven, which was, after all, Jacobi's strategy. Jacobi underscored the absurdity of Spinoza's position when he said, 'but, unfortunately, he who has once fallen in love with certain explanations will accept, like the blind, any conclusion whatsoever that follows from a proof he cannot refute, even if it means that he will be walking on his head.[fn12] In response, Hegel quipped that this was the great event of the French Revolution: that man started to turn himself upside down, actually to walk on his head, that is, to construct human society and thus human life rationally. Without quoting Jacobi, Hegel echoes him: 'Since the sun has risen and the stars are shining in the skies, no one noticed,' says Hegel, 'that man started to walk on his head.'[fn13] In a later rejoinder, Karl Marx added, 'What I had to do was turn Hegel from his head back to his feet, so that we can start walking again'. [fn14] 'Walking' here means advancing to philosophy's real goal, not just interpreting the world, and although Marx did not know it, he echoes Jacobi's criticism. For Marxism also implies that there is something that cannot be constructed and explicated in the sense in which the idealists tried to construct and explain everything." Dieter Henrich: "Jacobi and the Philosophy of Immediacy" in: *Between Kant and Hegel - Lectures on German Idealism*, p. 109 f.

Clearly, then, Marx and Engels place considerable reliance on Hegel. But the meaning of the metaphor of inversion, in its various forms, is not at all clear. Neither Marx nor Engels ever sets out to give a complete materialist reinterpretation of Hegel's *Logic*. The exact intention of Engels' occasional writings on the dialectic remain unclear. Firstly, the notion of 'dialectics' contained therein is ambiguous. Secondly, Engels' method of argument is questionable.

In *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Engels states that

Nature is the proof of dialectics, and it must be said for modern science that it has furnished this proof with very rich materials, increasing daily, and thus has shown that, in the last resort, nature works dialectically and not metaphysically; that she does not move in the eternal oneness of a perpetually recurring cycle, but goes through a real historical evolution. (Feuer 84).

This passage contains what I shall describe as the 'weak' definition of dialectics: the (unexceptionable) idea that nature goes through a real historical evolution. This raises the question of how this weak definition might be related to a 'strong' definition including some or all of the features of Hegel's logic. Secondly, the passage contains the suggestion that the dialectic can be proved by the scientific investigation of nature. This raises the methodological problem as to how the dialectic might be 'proved'. At times Engels seems to repeat the implication that this is a task for natural science, developing the dialectic out of nature, rather than building it into nature (e.g. *MEW XX: A-D 12, DN 334*). But at other points he suggests that this is a task for philosophy; [47] scientists can be tripped up and led astray by their acceptance of outmoded "metaphysical" conceptions, and it is the task of philosophy to criticise and replace these conceptions (e.g. *DN 330 and 480*). But the problem of how philosophy is to provide laws of pure thought for this purpose is not discussed. In the event, the method Engels actually uses seems to involve the listing of examples of the various laws of the dialectic. In the *Dialectics of Nature* he writes that

I have taken the liberty of bringing forward natural processes and natural laws as *demonstrative examples* (beweisende Exempel) of my general theoretical view. (*DN 329-30*)

In the *Dialectics of Nature* he gives a "strong" definition of dialectic as follows:

The laws of dialectic are nothing other than the most general laws ... of the historical development of nature and of human society, as well as of thought itself. Essentially they may be reduced to three:

The law of the transition of quantity into quality and vice versa.

The law of the interpenetration of opposites.

The law of the negation of the negation. (DN 348)¹²

He does not explain why he chooses just these three laws, nor does he attempt to explain the relationship between these laws, excusing himself from this task on the grounds that he is not preparing a handbook of the dialectic but only trying to show that dialectical laws actually are laws of development of nature and hence valid for natural science. In pursuit of this task Engels lists a variety of examples of the operation of each of these laws. Leaving aside the question of the status of examples in philosophical argument, there are also problems about the nature of the examples themselves. In discussing the change of quantity into quality and vice versa, Engels provides no clear criteria as to what is to count as quantitative change and what is to count as qualitative change. If one looks at his examples closely they turn out to be quite varied in nature. For example in the case of water the quantitative change is a change in temperature which is in turn a measure of the amount of heat present in the water. In the case of the carbon compound series, on the other hand, we do not move from CH₂₀₂ to C₂H₄₀₂ by the addition of more CH₂₀₂, that is by quantitative increase in CH₂₀₂. Instead we require the quantitative addition of qualitatively specific and distinct elements. Also it seems evident that the change in state of H₂O from solid to liquid to gas is a qualitative change in a different sense from that in which the change from CH₂₀₂ to C₂H₄₀₂ is a qualitative change. Similarly, in discussing the interpenetration of opposites and the idea of [48] contradiction,¹³ Engels doesn't state clearly what is to count as opposite and what is to count as contradiction, and in his examples it is clear that, say, the relation between the positive and negative poles of a magnet is very different from the relation between heredity and adaptation in the process of evolution. In Engels' mathematical examples it is not clear why they should be considered contradictory at all. In other cases, it is not clear why Engels should think that the examples he presents involves logical contradiction rather than real opposition. For example, if we concentrate for a moment on the question of life considered as involving a

12 [fvg] This section of Turner's argument is taken straight from Sartre.

13 [fvg] It's worth contrasting here Habermas's position on this. Turner mentions him, there's no question that this would have been a major topic of discussion between us if he'd made it to Germany. So what are the implications of that doctrine of 'stances' for the 'real world'? (Habermas had taken that doctrine almost directly from Merleau-Ponty's *Adventures of the Dialectic*, esp. chap. 1, "The Crisis of Reason". Which Turner would have worked through, in his years in Paris.) Sartre is supposed to say somewhere that it was Merleau-Ponty who had converted him to Marxism, so it makes sense to consult the latter's views on the meaning of the word 'dialectic'.

contradiction because it involves both being itself and being another in the sense of being a process of exchange of matter with its environment, we can see that Engels is pointing to an interesting phenomenon: the dependence of an organism on its environment, in terms of which the organism is both a separate entity with its own boundary, but also only possible through an interchange with the environment which lies beyond that boundary. For example, part of the definition of a rabbit is that it is a vegetarian, and this involves reference to one aspect of its mode of interaction with its environment. But within a materialist context this reference to the environment in terms of which the rabbit is defined does not seem to involve a logical contradiction. For Hegel, as I've attempted to show, the relation between the rabbit and the carrot here is contradictory only in the sense that in defining the rabbit as a carrot eater I have to hold together in my mind two distinct concepts *in their distinctness*. The question of how to manage to do this is an interesting question but it has nothing to do with real rabbits and carrots. Here, as Colletti has cogently argued, if we are dealing with opposition at all we are dealing with a real opposition which, far from contradicting the law of identity, is directly dependent on it; the rabbit can only eat the carrot if it's a real independent carrot.

Similar objections apply to the various examples of negation and negation of the negation which Engels gives. In 'Elucidation' he writes:

The kind of negation is here determined first by the general then by the specific nature of the process. I must not only negate, but also transcend (Wieder aufheben) the negation. I must therefore so arrange the first negation that the second remains or becomes possible. How? In accordance with the specific nature of each individual case each kind of thing thus has its own specific way of being negated in order for something to develop out of it, and the same applies to each kind of image or concept. (AD 132) [49]

But once Engels admits that I must so arrange it that the first negation makes the second negation possible, then there is no automatic evolutionary sequence leading ever onwards and upwards; it is always possible that any particular negation may make a further 'positive' negation impossible. But then all that is left is the fact that if something "positive" comes into being it must have done so by developing out of something else which in turn developed out of something else; this seems finally to reduce to the tautology that "it is a general law of evolution that evolution can occur".

Engels' own account of the status of this law is odd. He writes

it goes without saying that I say nothing about the specific process of development which, for example, the barleycorn undergoes from germination until the

death of the fruitbearing plant, when I say that it is the negation of the negation. (AD 131).

This oddity also emerges from Engels' defence of Marx against two criticisms of Dühring. In both cases Dühring criticises Marx for allegedly using one of the general laws of the dialectic to prove that some historical process must occur. Engels' response is the same in each case. He asserts that Marx did not use the dialectical law to prove anything; instead, after having shown by other means why the result would occur, he merely mentioned in passing that this was an example of the particular law of the dialectic, or a proof of the law. In the second case Engels writes

insofar, therefore, as Marx designates the occurrence as negation of the negation, he does not thereby intend to prove its historical necessity. On the contrary, after he has demonstrated that in fact the process has in part already occurred, and in part must still occur, he describes it as a process which fulfils itself according to a specific dialectical law. That is all. (AD 125)

That is the dialectical laws are not used to prove anything; they are only brought in after something has been 'historically proved', or, as Engels says earlier, after 'historical economic proof'. What the function of these laws is if they cannot be used as part of the process of predicting further occurrences, or explaining occurrences, or proving the necessity of certain consequences following certain initial actions, is not at all clear. But the fact that Engels is consistent with himself on this point is indicated by the fact that none of the three laws of the dialectic is referred to or used in the sections of *Anti-Düring* dealing with society, nor, as far as I can ascertain, in such important works as *The Origins of the Family or the Peasant Wars in Germany*. Engels then goes on to argue that the dialectic is not an instrument of proof but is rather a method for the discovery [50] of new results "for progress from the known to the unknown" (AD 125) But Engels here gives no account of how the three laws of the dialectic might be used as part of a method of investigation. On the one hand, he might be referring to dialectics in a weak sense, in the form of an injunction always to look for interconnection and interdependencies between apparently discrete phenomena. On the other hand, he might be suggesting that it is possible to formulate the three laws into a more rigorous set of methodological principles. However, he does not carry out this task, or explain how it might be carried out.

Thus it is possible to distinguish a weak definition of dialectics, which is both unexceptionable and perhaps not very interesting, from a strong definition which proffers a theory of specific laws of dialectical thought, but

which neither defines with sufficient precision what these laws mean, nor specifies what function they are supposed to perform, nor provides any justification for accepting them.

Lenin, the other major figure in the development of orthodox dialectical materialism, adds nothing to Engels' work insofar as the question of dialectics is concerned. In *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* he scarcely discusses dialectics, and does not refer to any of the laws of dialectical thought as discussed in *Anti-Düring* and *the Dialectics of Nature*. To the extent that he does use the term dialectics, it is in a very weak sense with reference to the idea that knowledge is relative rather than absolute, in that we can never be sure of achieving finally accurate knowledge of the nature of reality. Added to this is the idea of a non-dogmatic view of the nature of matter. In his posthumously published *Philosophical Notebooks* he does discuss dialectics in greater detail but is very reliant on Hegel. Here he takes the idea of the 'unity of opposites' as a key to the dialectic. Unfortunately, like Engels, he fails to specify what would constitute an 'opposite' and what would constitute a 'unity' of opposites. Thus he tends to move between a weak definition in terms of "the universal, all-sided vital connection of everything with everything and the reflection of this connection ... in human concepts" (Vol. 38 146): and various stronger definitions which specify various aspects of this universal connectedness. The most important aspect of Lenin's strong definition is the idea of 'self-movement'. In the 'Note on Dialectics' he writes:

The condition for the knowledge of all processes of the world in their 'self-movement', in their [51] spontaneous development, in their real life, is the knowledge of them as a unity of opposites. Development is the 'struggle of opposites' (Vol 360.)

This statement raises problems apart from that of what is meant by 'opposite'! It is not clear what the unit is of whose 'self-movement' we are speaking. It is not clear in what sense 'self-movement' is related to 'unity of opposites'. Nor is it clear why opposites should struggle, rather than complement one another, or, as Paul Gregory suggests, love one another (see *In search of Dialectics*). But what is clear is Lenin's absolute dependence on Hegel in these notes. He accepts that Hegel's dialectic is an account of the structure of the world, and merely repeats Marx's metaphor about standing Hegel on his feet, without recognising the relation between Hegel's dialectic and the structure of the concept and the subject.

The obverse of the acceptance of the dialectic of nature is a failure to investigate the dialectic of the subject. Engels rejects the question as to how it

is that human ideas and principles might correspond with nature. He suggests that such a question

Comes from the fact that ‘consciousness’ and ‘thought’ are taken quite naturalistically as something given and as opposed from the beginning to being and nature. Then one must find it highly remarkable that consciousness and nature, thought and being, the laws of thought and the laws of nature agree so precisely. If one however, asks further, what thought and consciousness are, and from whence they come, one finds that they are the product of the human brain, and that humans are themselves a product of nature which has developed in and with its environment; from which it is self-evident, that the products of the human brain, which are in the last instance also natural products, do not contradict but rather express the rest of the complex of nature. (AD 33)

In the *Dialectics of Nature* he uses a similar argument to support the contention that the main result of Hegel’s philosophy, the unity of thought and being, despite its idealist form, is incontrovertible (see DN 529). But Engels himself provides the answer to the claim that a thought, because it is a product of nature must therefore correspond to nature, in a later joking aside, in reference to Dühring’s claim to be speaking of any rational being:

When I say: human knowledge, I do not say it with the intention of offending the inhabitants of other planets, whom I do not have the honour of knowing, but only because animals also know, but in no way sovereignly. The dog knows his God in his master, while this master may be the greatest lout. (AD .79)

The dog’s ‘knowledge’ is also a natural product: but it does not [52] correspond with nature. So what is it that distinguishes human knowledge, with its at least potential sovereign validity, from the dog’s knowledge?

This question is linked with the question of freedom. Here again Engels accepts Hegel’s formulation:

Hegel was the first to state correctly the relation between freedom and necessity. To him, freedom is the appreciation of necessity. “Necessity is blind only *insofar as it is not understood*” (Engels’ emphasis Enc Logic para 147 zusatz) Freedom does not consist in the dream of independence of natural laws, but in the knowledge of these laws, and in the possibility this gives of systematically making them work towards definite ends. This holds good in relation both to the laws of external nature and to those which govern the bodily and mental life of men themselves - two classes of laws which we can separate from each other at most only in thought, but not in reality. Freedom of the will, therefore, means nothing but the capacity to make decisions with real knowledge of the subject. (AD 106 - trans Feuer p. 279).

Once again the question arises here of to what extent one can abstract a particular idea from its Hegelian context and then attempt to apply it in quite a different context. For the very paragraph from which Engels' quotation from Hegel is taken, clearly indicates its rootedness in Hegel's idealism, and also within his particular interpretation of Christianity. Hegel begins:

The theory however which regards the world as determined through necessity and the belief in a divine providence are by no means mutually excluding points of view. The intellectual principle underlying the idea of divine providence will hereafter be shown to be the notion. But the notion is the truth of necessity, which it contains in suspension in itself; just as, conversely, [53] necessity is the notion implicit. Necessity is blind only so long as it is not understood. (*EL* 268/9)

For Hegel, what is necessary is not so through its antecedents, but only through itself: "We thus hold it to be simple self-relation, in which all dependence on something else is removed." (268) This can only be the case in a teleological process, in which the end is the cause which necessitates the process. The end is, in our everyday experience, not implicitly present, and in this sense "necessity is blind". But when we come to recognise the world as the self-expression of the notion, or as the *intellectus archetypus* rationally creating itself, then we recognise it as no longer blind; it is as it is because it is rational.

In his difference from God, man, with his own private opinion and will, follows the call of caprice and arbitrary humour, and thus often finds his acts turn out something quite different from what he had meant or willed. But God knows what he wills, is determined in his eternal will neither by accident from within nor from without, and what He wills He also accomplishes, irresistibly. (*EL* 269)

It is this relation between the irrational caprice of man and the rational necessity with which God acts with which Hegel is concerned when he says that necessity is no longer blind when understood. The proposition depends, further, on the ultimate relation between self and God, or between myself as subject and the notion as subject. In discussing this, Hegel contrasts the Greek concept of destiny with the Christian concept of consolation. He argues that the Greeks could accept destiny because for them personal subjectivity had acquired no great significance. When subjectivity appears it does so in two forms: as private interest and inclination, in necessary rebellion against the course of the world; or it appears as an understanding of the infinite world of subjectivity in terms of which

that consoling power of Christianity just lies in the fact that God himself is in it known as the absolute subjectivity so that, inasmuch as subjectivity involves the

element of particularity, our particular personality too is recognised not merely as something to be solely and simply nullified, but as at the same time something to be preserved. (*EL* 270)

That is, I am finally a part of that infinite subject who rationally wills the world, and it is in understanding this that I can overcome the sense of bondage to an external necessity. The consequence of such a position is, in practical terms, rather quietistic: [54]

A man who lives in dispeace with himself and his lot, commits much that is perverse and amiss, for no other reason than because of the false opinion that he is wronged by others. (*EL* 271)

In what way can Hegel here be “placed on his feet”? One could, of course, develop a ‘weak’ but also trivial, interpretation of what Engels means as implied by the last sentence quoted above: freedom of the will therefore means nothing but the capacity to make decisions with real knowledge of the subject. The more you understand the world, the more you can control what it does to you; hence the steam engine is “a gigantic and liberating revolution” (*AD* 106 Feuer 279) In one sense this is trivial. In another sense, as Timpanano points out, it is unacceptable as a definition of freedom insofar as it

denies the importance of the meaning of freedom as the absence of painful constraint and the presence of all those conditions which ensure the happiness of the individual. (Temp. 106)

But, beyond this, it is not all that Engels means. For he refers not only to the laws of external nature, but also to “the laws which govern the bodily and mental life of man themselves”. And this brings us back to the problem of the dog’s ‘knowledge’ of his master as “God”. If my knowledge is a natural product, governed by natural laws, in what sense can I claim that it is knowledge, while the dog’s belief is delusion? Engels links freedom with knowledge and hence implicitly with reason. We may accept, say, that a syllogism worked out in my head is a ‘natural product’. But in what sense is it a natural product; is it a natural product in the same sense that a blade of grass is? Hegel could answer this question in the affirmative, because both blade of grass and syllogism have the rational structure of the concept. But can Engels? The problem of knowledge is intimately linked to the problem of freedom, but not in the way in which Engels supposes. As we have seen, in particular in discussing Kant, both freedom and the possibility of knowledge are linked to the idea of autonomy, as opposed to heteronomy. Engels, by subjecting the inner workings of the mind to ‘natural laws’ of the same

type, and in the same way, as external nature is so subjected, seems to be making the mind irrecuperably heteronomous.

This is connected with the question of “materialism”. In the above analysis we have seen that, for Engels, there is an external world existing quite independently of the subject, but [55] in his main published philosophical work, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Lenin gives an account of the epistemology of dialectical materialism which can, I think, be summarised in the following four propositions:

1) An external world exists independent of our consciousness or knowledge of it.

2) The nature of this external world is knowable, in that our senses give us copies of it in our minds.

3) Our images of the external world are only relatively exact: absolute accuracy occurs, if at all, only at the end of long process of correction.

4) The criterion (or the most important criterion) of the accuracy of our images is practice. The main problem of this approach is that it retains the empiricist idea that the mind works with images, rather than with rules.

Lenin is clearly aware that these four propositions are not a final resolution¹⁴ of all epistemological problems, and in particular he is aware that the exact relation between mind and matter still needs to be worked out. Although the materialist theory of knowledge is that “Matter is primary, and thought, consciousness, sensation are products of a very high development” (69), Lenin insists that “It is, of course, utterly absurd to say that materialism has ever maintained that consciousness is ‘less’ real (than matter and motion)” (290), and he criticises Dietzgen for claiming that thought is “material”. He agrees with Dietzgen, rather where the latter speaks of a “relative and not excessive” difference between matter and mind (See p. 251); it must remain possible to make the epistemological contrast between mind and matter, but this contrast must not be made “excessive, exaggerated, metaphysical” (253).

The exact nature of the relationship, and in particular the problem of how the mind can mirror this world is unresolved:

... There still remains to be investigated and reinvestigated how matter, apparently entirely devoid of sensation, is related to matter which, though composed of the same atoms (or electrons) is yet endowed with a well-defined faculty of sensation. Materialism clearly formulates the as yet unsolved problem and thereby stimulates the attempt to solve it, to undertake further experimental investigations. (39)

14 typo: “final solution”.

That is, Lenin's materialism is 'dialectical' (39) in the sense that it doesn't insist on reduction of everything to a 'mechanical' model of matter in motion [56] but permits "some other, immeasurably more complex, picture of the world of moving matter" (290), a picture which permits irreducibly distinct levels of the organisation of "matter". Our understanding of the nature of "matter" will change as our knowledge penetrates deeper, and we are still a long way from achieving that understanding which would permit us to understand sensation.

From the above it seems to me to be possible to derive a 'weak' definition of 'materialist' epistemology, in terms of which it a) justifies 'naive realism' negatively, by arguing that there are contradictions in the various sceptical positions; and b) asserts simply that the problem of how it is that naive realism can be correct remains to be solved. On the other hand there is a 'strong' definition which is reductionist in character, insofar as it implies that that specificity of human consciousness which enable it to 'mirror' reality has no further implication for an understanding of human reality, and that we can safely treat human reality as a part of nature, just like any other part. But in either definition the relation between 'mind' and 'world' remains inadequately explicated. In order to bring out some of the problems involved, I will now discuss the contrasting views of two contemporary Marxist writers, Timpanaro and Colletti.

In his book *On Materialism* Timpanaro provides the following definition of materialism, which seems to me to be a variant of the 'strong' definition:

By materialism we understand above all acknowledgement of the priority of nature over 'mind'; or if you like, of the physical level over the biological level, and of the biological level over the socio-economic and cultural level: both in the sense of chronological priority (the very long time which supervened before life appeared on earth, and between the origin of life and the origin of man) and in the sense of the conditioning which nature still exercises on man and will continue to exercise at least for the foreseeable future. Cognitively, therefore, the materialist maintains that experience cannot be reduced either to a production of reality by a subject (however such production is conceived) or to a reciprocal implication of subject and object. We cannot, in other words, deny or evade the element of passivity in experience: the external situation which we do not create but which imposes itself upon us. Nor can we in any way reabsorb this external datum by making it a mere negative moment in the activity of the subject, or by making both the subject and the object mere moments, distinguishable only in abstraction, of a single effective reality constituted by experience. [57]

This emphasis on the passive element in experience certainly does not claim to be a theory of knowledge - something which in any case can be constructed only by experimental research on the physiology of the brain and the sense organs, and not by merely conceptual or philosophical exercises. But it is the preliminary

condition for any theory of knowledge which is not content with verbalistic and illusory solutions. (Timp. 34)

The term ‘priority’ is unfortunately a little vague. But the last two sentences do bring out clearly the idea that understanding the nature of ‘the mind’ is to be taken as an entirely ‘scientific’ problem, involving no specifically philosophical questions. Timpanaro follows the same lines in his discussion of the notion of free-will, where he rejects the idea that the choice of ends is a ‘free’ choice, in the sense of being determined by anything other than all of the preceding history of the individual, including his heredity:

The something more that man possesses in relation to animals is a greater capacity to foresee and order means in relation to an end and greater understanding in the determination of the end, but it is not a greater measure of ‘free will’ in choosing between various ends. (105)

Thus for Timpanaro the conscious human being is a thing among other things, placed squarely within the determining network of natural laws.

For Colletti, on the other hand, the issue is much less clear-cut. He recognises that there are important insights contained within Hegel’s account of the nature of the subject and of reason:

Reason is a totality. This is what Hegel saw clearly. But since this ‘totality’ is also nothing but reason, it is clear that, in addition to being itself, this totality must also be intellect; in addition to totality it must also be only ‘one of the two’; and that, in short, thought in addition to being the unity of thought and being in thought, must also be a function of a reality external to itself. (Colletti: *Marxism and Hegel*, p. 35)

Colletti clarifies what he understands by reason as ‘totality’ in a later discussion of Marx’s concept of man as a ‘generic natural being’; that is, as a being whose species characteristic is his lack of specificity, or his capacity through thought, in some sense to identify himself with what is contained in any specific being, and what is common or generic to all things. This point is elaborated on in a very interesting discussion of the work of two Renaissance thinkers, Pico della Mirandola and Bovillus, who develop the theme of the ‘nothingness’ or non-substantiality of [58] man in thought:

Inasmuch as man is thought, he is both everything and nothing; everything in that he is what is GENERAL AND COMMON to all things, in all natural, living species; nothing in that this generality which is the universal, or thought, is none of the particular species contained within it. (Col 233).

But, on the other hand, man is also a ‘natural being’, a part of reality, and as such his thought is not the totality, but is a relation to a quite independent other; it is Kant’s “Verstand” (‘intellect’ or ‘understanding’) as well as Hegel’s “Vernunft”. Colletti also formulates this problem in terms of the relation between on the one hand, Hegel’s idea of dialectical contradiction, as constitutive of reason, or of the subject as embodying reason, and, on the other hand, ‘non-contradiction’ as the real externality of material beings one to another, and the real externality of thought to being. The problem for philosophy then becomes “to rethink in an organic fashion the meaning of non-contradictory or material determinacy, and that of dialectical contradiction or reason” (Co1.104). Colletti himself does not make a detailed attempt at such an “organic rethinking”. Nor, as he points out, did Marx develop the notion of “generic natural being” into a fully-fledged theory. Colletti argues that this is because it became absorbed into his theory of “social relations of production”, in terms of which “production” as man’s specific mode of relating to the objective otherness of non-human species, is shown to be at the same time a way of relating “socially” to other humans; “i.e. a way of communicating to other men his needs and aims by means of objectivity” (246) Production as a relation to objectivity (one of two) is a social relation of communication (totality) and social relations of communication take place within the relation to objectivity.

But however one formulates it, this gives rise to a transcendental question. What must human reality be in order to be both rational-social and other-related productive? To put it another way, if this account is to be justified, we still need once again to go over the ground traversed by Hegel in his account of the subject, but now within the context of the relation of the subject to an absolute other. If we can do this in a way which makes sense, we will then be in a position to give an account not only of the structure of the history of an individual subject, but we will also be able to investigate the question of the nature and history of a “social” subject, in order to see to what extent we can treat history as more than a mere concatenation of events. [59]

In the above discussion I have tried to point to various inadequacies in the theoretical discussion of materialism and dialectics in the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin. In particular I have tried to show that they offer no serious justification for the claim that there are general dialectical laws which apply to nature and society alike. But this does not exclude the possibility that there are certain specific domains in which the dialectic can be applied, and that Marx may have in fact done this in practice without having given it an entirely adequate theoretical foundation. Colletti has argued that in

much ‘Marxist’ writing there is a confusion between ‘contradiction’ and ‘real opposition’. The relationship of ‘real opposition’ characteristic of things in the world depends on a notion of identity as described by ordinary formal logic. The dialectical notion of contradiction, on the other hand, involves at the same time a unity of opposites, in the sense described earlier in the discussion of Hegel. Now Colletti argues that this idea of dialectical contradiction is in fact used by Marx in the analysis of *Capital*, and this, he argues, is because although capitalism appears as a system of relations between things, it is not really so: the elements of capitalism

have been made as real as things, while still not being things: they are, in short, a product of alienation, they are entities which are unreal in themselves and yet have been reified. (Colletti *NLR* 26)

That is, the elements, and the system have an ontological status somewhere between that of ‘things’ and that of the ‘unreal’, or the merely thought, being related in various ways to each of these domains. It would therefore be by understanding this peculiar ontological status of entities such as the capitalist system that we could begin to say whether and in what way it might be possible to use the dialectic (in some strong sense) in our account of such systems.

Marx himself was aware of this. He began *Capital* with an account of the nature of the ‘commodity’, in which he shows that the market situation is nothing but a set of relationships between people. It has, as it were, no independent ontological status. Nevertheless, it appears to be a set of relationships between objects, governed by natural laws which operate in the same constraining way as do other natural laws of thing-behaviour. Why is this? Marx writes:

Only such products can become commodities with regard to each other as result from different kinds of labour, each kind being carried on independently and for the account of private individuals.

More precisely, commodity production is production on the basis of private property, by separate individuals. [60]

Instead of the division of labour being mediated by direct contact between these individuals, they come into contact only via the market. It is therefore the separation of individuals through the institution of private property which gives the market and the laws of the market their apparently independent status.

A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men’s labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the

product of that labour, because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves but between the products of their labour ... It is a definite social relation between men that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things. This I call the fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities. (*Cap* 42)

Marx introduces the concept “fetishism” to describe the status of the laws of political economy. They are not ‘natural’ laws, but only appear as such in the contrast of human separation. But in this context they do act as independent laws and impose real constraint on human behaviour. This introduces a kind of determinism into human history. The process whereby ‘the market’ becomes an independent entity is part of what Marx describes as “alienation”. What he is suggesting, therefore, is that it is under conditions of alienation that men experience social structures as ‘external facticities’ and are conditioned by the laws which describe the social structures and their patterns of change. The development of capitalist society, which Marx considers in the rest of *Capital*, he sees occurring not as the result of a set of inexorable external laws, but rather as the result of laws which depend for their continued operation on people continuing to fetishise them. He writes:

The life process of society, this meaning the material process of production, will not lose its veil of mystery until it becomes a process carried on by a free association of producers, under their conscious and purposive control. (*Cap* 54)

- that is, the laws will only operate as long as men are ignorant of their roots.

However, Marx does not give an account of the possibility of the production of such fetishised entities, nor give any systematic account of their nature. But such an account is required if we are to fully understand how to deal with these entities. [61]

We may approach the problem from another angle through a consideration of the question of identity and the nature of “wholes”. I have attempted to show that a crucial step in the move to absolute idealism is made by Hegel when he analyses the notion of identity in terms of relation to self (not A, but $A = A$) and includes this idea of relation to self in his definition of ‘Being’. This is also the basis for his treatment of a ‘whole’ as a self-moving unity of opposites. Lenin quotes as “the core of Hegelianism” (and with approval) the following passage:

Something, therefore, is living only insofar as it contains contradiction, and is that force which can both comprehend and endure contradiction. But if an existent something cannot in its positive determination also encroach on its negative, cannot hold fast the one in the other, and contain contradiction within itself, then it is not living unity or ground, but perishes in contradiction. (Lenin Vol. 138 p. 141, *SL II* 68)

In his introduction to the *Grundrisse*, Nikolaus argues that the essence of Marx's method is "to grasp wholes as contradictions" (*Grundrisse* 31)

Ollman, in *Alienation*, elaborates on this approach using the notion of 'internal relations', and defines 'Identity' as

the relation between mutually dependent aspects of a whole before differences are noted. The aspects, as yet unnamed because unspecified, are identical in containing through their internal relations with each other the same whole. (Preface to 2nd Edition, reprinted in *Radical Philosophy* 13, p. 19).

Ollman believes, with Lenin, in "the universal, all-sided vital connection of everything with everything" (Lenin Vol 38 p.146); he is thus willing to treat the real world as a 'whole' which "admits as many totalities (structured wholes) as there are take-off points for analysis" (p. 19) Although he distinguishes 'dialectical and materialist' conception of whole from Hegel's 'formalist' conception on the ground that the latter attributes an identity to the whole independent of its parts, while the former views the whole as the structured interdependence of its relational parts, it is nevertheless evident that his account of the structure of such a whole is derived from Hegel's.

Hegel's notion of 'whole' is based on his account of the identity of a subject. The world, and the things in the world, have the same structure because for him substance is subject. But from a materialist point of view this equation cannot automatically be made. Hegel must be seen as using terms such as 'identity' and 'whole' in a special technical sense. This raises the question [62] as to the criteria for identifying an 'entity' which corresponds to Hegel's concept of a 'whole' and which can therefore be described or investigated 'dialectically'. In our ordinary usage a rock, a clock, a rabbit, a human subject, an ecosystem, a society and the universe might each be described as a 'whole'. But a more thorough analysis might well reveal that not all of these 'wholes' are self-related identical wholes in the Hegelian sense, and/or dialectical sense. This is why it is necessary to begin from the beginning again to give an account of the identity of the nature of the subject which takes Hegel's account of the structure of the concept into consideration but situates it within a framework which recognises the irreduc-

ible ‘otherness’ of the thing, from this perspective. On the basis of such an account it will then be possible to determine more precisely the kind of ‘whole’ to which the dialectic is applicable, and to answer the question as to whether there are ‘social wholes’ which need to be investigated dialectically. [63]

Sartre's materialist dialectics

In a recent interview Sartre has given the following account of his concern in *EN*. It was

to give a philosophical foundation to realism. Something which is, in my opinion, possible today, and which I have tried to do all my life. The question was: how to give man both his autonomy and his reality among real objects while avoiding idealism and without falling into a mechanical materialism? I posed the problem in these terms because I was ignorant of dialectical materialism, but I must say that this enabled me, later, to assign certain limits to dialectical materialism - by validating the historical dialectic while rejecting a dialectic of nature which would reduce man, like any thing, to a simple product of physical laws. (*Situations IX* p. 104/5)

Being and Nothingness was not written to contribute to a debate within a ‘Marxist’ framework, and perhaps this is why very few ‘Marxists’ have understood it. But it was written specifically against idealism, in an attempt to provide an alternative phenomenological or descriptive ontology which would not start from the identity of subject and substance.

Sartre starts *B.N.* with the assertion that “Modern thought has realised considerable progress by reducing the existent to the series of appearances which manifest it.” (*BN XiV*). I am not quite sure what he means by ‘modern thought’ here, but his position is explicitly opposed to Kant’s noumenon and is, at this point, compatible with Hegel’s insistence that appearance does not conceal essence. For Sartre, “the appearance does not hide the essence”; it reveals it insofar as the essence is “the manifest law which presides over the succession of its appearances, it is the principle of the series (of appearances)” (*BN XLvi*) That is, when I look at the cup, I see the cup; that which ‘appears’ to me is not distinct from the actual cup. But to say that it is a cup, and not a mirage, is to go beyond the particular ‘appearance’ to a series of possible appearances, a series which is effectively infinite, but is at the same time determined according to a rule.

What appears in fact is only an aspect of the object, and the object is altogether in that aspect and altogether outside of it. It is altogether *within*, in that it manifests

itself in that aspect; it shows itself as the structure of the appearance, which is at the same time the principle of the series. It is altogether outside, for the-series itself will never appear nor can it appear. (*BN* xlvii) [64]

Now, insofar as the ‘appearance’ does not refer to a ‘being’ distinct from and concealed by the appearance, we need to enquire as to the nature of the being of the appearance or of the phenomenon. We can talk about ‘being’, take being as the theme of our reflection, and in this case there is a phenomenon of being. But this is not the same as the being of the phenomenon. It is not as though ‘being’ were a specific quality or aspect of certain objects, which could be focussed upon and become phenomenon. The being of the object is not something which is revealed by an investigation of the object; rather “Being is simply the condition of all revelation” (*BN* xlix) We must distinguish between a “phenomenon of being” which can be “determined in concepts”, and that being of the phenomenon which escapes conceptualisations because it is the transphenomenality of the phenomenon; its ‘thereness’ as extending beyond its immediate appearance. Sartre is saying here that that merely ‘meant’ distinction between being and nothingness is fundamental; that what distinguishes what is from what is not is not an additional (conceptualisable) quality or characteristic, but our unsayable experience of its thereness as something which goes beyond any one appearance. Its status is different from that of the ‘essence’ of the thing, as the principle of the series of appearances, because the essence can be progressively uncovered, while

being accompanies all the appearances of an object. It is not different in each of these appearances. (*CS* and *KS* 120)

The alternate hypothesis is that the ‘being’ of the appearance is nothing but its appearing; that is, that to be is to be perceived. But this does not avoid the problem of transphenomenality: the being of the perceiver cannot on its turn consist in its being perceived, otherwise the whole thing dissolves. Thus we must at the very least refer to the dimension of transphenomenality in the subject, which Sartre calls consciousness. The fundamental objection to the theoretical primacy of knowledge is that it dissolves itself. To know something involves being conscious that one knows it. But this consciousness must not in its turn be taken as a kind of knowledge. If we say that “to know is to know that one knows”, then this definition applies also to the first ‘know’ in the definition itself, and it expands infinitely. Taking Kant’s example of counting, Sartre points out that I am thematically conscious of the objects which I am counting, but at the same time what makes what I am doing counting, that is, what constitutes the rule-bound unity of

my action, and gives the last number the meaning of a total, is precisely my [65] my consciousness that I am counting the objects, rather than pointing to them while chanting an incantation. But while counting I do not have to keep repeating 'I am counting'; this is a secondary, reflective consciousness, which depends entirely on the fact of the pre-reflecting consciousness. While knowledge is necessarily distanced from its object, this pre-reflective consciousness is an immediate, non-cognitive relation of the self to itself' (*BN* liii) it is that consciousness is, not what it does; or it is "the only mode of existence for a consciousness of something" (*BN* liv) Any act, any process of conceptualisation, any attitude, presumes as a condition of its continuation (hence of its unity), the underlying consciousness that it is this act, this concept, this attitude, rather than another one. Although I must be conscious of what I am doing, I need not know what I am doing, in the sense of being able to conceptualise it (c.f. Ryle's distinction between 'knowing how' and 'knowing that'). Pre-reflective consciousness is logically prior to and independent of conceptual knowledge.

But the condition for pre-reflective consciousness to constitute the unity of any act, is that consciousness be autonomous and contentless. It must be autonomous for the reason that external intervention destroys the unity of the act. If I find myself saying one, two, three, four, eng, glumph, I should no longer be counting; my act would have dissolved into a broken sequence beyond my control. It must be contentless because to place a thing "in" consciousness, like a foreign body in a container, would be to give consciousness itself the opacity of that thing, by making it impossible to disentangle itself from the thing; consciousness must be transparent to itself. This means that it is conscious of something which is outside and other than it.

This transparency of consciousness is distinguished from the self transparency of Hegel's absolute mind knowing itself in that that is a mediated transparency, an end product as the final dissolution of all otherness. But consciousness must be transparent in the above sense from the beginning, for it requires from the beginning an immediate and total certainty; to count is to be conscious that I am counting; it is not to hypothesise on a basis of the consideration of various probabilities, that I may be counting (cf *CS* and *KS* 119-124). But if I have to wait until the totality of knowledge is achieved until I can be certainly conscious that I am counting, then knowledge itself can never begin. [66]

It is because consciousness is necessarily transparent that it cannot be the foundation of the thing perceived:

Consciousness is consciousness of something. This means that transcendence is the constitutive structure of consciousness; that is, that consciousness is born supported by a being which is not itself. This is what we call the ontological proof. (*BN* lxi)

Thus Sartre concludes that there are two radically different forms of being; the being of the pre-reflective cogito which, as an immediate relation of the self to itself is ‘being-for-itself’, and the being of the phenomenon. The being of the phenomenon is nothing but otherness. It is ‘inherence in itself without the least distance’, it is ‘not a connection with itself. It is itself’, or ‘being is in itself’. But Sartre is anxious to make it clear that these statements must not be taken in the sense of Hegel’s $A = A$, as an identity which is already implicitly a difference. He writes

But if being is in itself, this means that it does not refer to itself as self-consciousness does. It is this self. It is itself so completely that the perpetual reflection which constitutes the self is dissolved in an identity. That is why being is at the bottom beyond the self. (*BN* lxv).

For Hegel, the thing is a subject because it is identical in the sense of being equal to itself. For Sartre, the being is not a self because it contains no such relation. The identity which characterizes it is the identity of analytic judgments, not the dialectical identity of the unity of opposites. Finally, Being-in-itself merely is. It is neither possible nor necessary; this is the consequence of its otherness or opacity.

Being-for-itself, on the other hand, is presence to itself, “the outline of duality”, “an internal opposition”; “In other words, the dimension of being of the whole of consciousness is opposition” (*CS & KS* 126-127). This is Hegel’s notion of identity, but for Sartre it is the mode of one specific type of being, consciousness. It is what Sartre sometimes describes in a technical sense as ‘existence’; “Existence is distance from itself, separateness. It is not coincidence with itself but is for-itself”. (*CS* and *KS* 114)

Thus in the Introduction to *Being and Nothingness* Sartre rejects the primacy of (conceptual) knowledge, by showing that it is self-contradictory, and that the possibility of knowledge, as of any other mode of human behaviour, presumes consciousness as its pre-conceptual transphenomenal foundation. Further, consciousness itself cannot be the foundation of the being of the phenomenon, since this would contradict its own preconditions, autonomy and [67] and transparency. Hence consciousness itself depends on another being as the transphenomenality of the appearance. This otherness is presupposed by consciousness, it is not a ‘known’ other which,

by being known, is, in Hegel's term, no longer other. It remains other, and can be described only as being-in-itself, once more not in Hegel's sense of implicit self-relation, but in the sense of a complete opacity which contains within it no opposition. As such, it is also purely contingent; there is no room within it for that structure of logical conceptual necessity which Hegel discovers in being as relation to self. These two elements, irreducible otherness and contingency, define Sartre's philosophy as materialist. But it is not a reductionist or a mechanical materialism, because it establishes, over against being-in-itself, a second type of being, being-for-itself, which is characterised by a different mode of identity from being-in-itself; identity which contains within it the moment of negativity or opposition.

Being and Nothingness, then, is an investigation of the nature of these two types of being, and of their interrelation; in particular, of the nature of consciousness and of its dependence on being-in-itself, insofar as "consciousness is a being, such that in its being, its being is in question insofar as this being implies a being other than itself" (*BN* lxii) It may thus be read as an attempt to give a new account of consciousness as dialectical identity within the context of materialism, which is the necessary prerequisite for an investigation of the possibility of a materialist dialectic.¹⁵

For Hegel, Kant's idea of freedom as rational autonomy becomes the identity of freedom with necessity in the self-creation of absolute mind. Both were concerned initially with the idea of freedom not as the ability to get what one chooses, but as the ability to determine one's own ends, but for Hegel this is finally identified with also achieving ends, insofar as substance is reduced to the one infinite subject. Engels misunderstands the identification of freedom and necessity by interpreting freedom as knowledge of necessity and hence as the ability to manipulate natural laws in order to achieve one's ends. Sartre is once more concerned with the Kant-Hegel notion of freedom; that is, with exploring the relation between the presupposition for the possibility of knowledge and freedom as the ability to determine one's own ends.

This method may be briefly described as an alternating sequence of phenomenological descriptions and transcendental arguments. [68] After having given a description of questioning as a fundamental attitude to the world, which reveals the dimension of 'nothingness' in the question, he asks the transcendental question "What must man be in his being in order that through him nothingness may come to being?" (*BN* 24) The attempt to answer this question is then clarified and illustrated by a new pheno-

15 [fvg] No Heidegger, Gadamer, Horkheimer and Adorno, Ebelling, Blumenberg, Henrich, Theunissen, Merleau-Ponty, Lacan.

menological description, which in turn provides the basis for a further transcendental question. The crucial advantage of this approach is that he is thereby able to begin without presupposition about the nature of perception, as Kant explicitly did, and as Hegel, as I have tried to show, implicitly did. The notion of ‘phenomenon’ with which he begins does not have the status of an empirical sense-datum. He does not begin by asking whether, on the basis of discrete sense-data, we are justified in postulating an external world of a certain shape and kind. He is concerned, rather, to demonstrate the immediate ontological dependence of consciousness on a being other than itself, and to do this by showing that this is implied by the nature of any conscious activity.

Essentially his argument expands on Kant’s recognition that knowledge implies a temporally extended point of view which always transcends the immediate given in order to relate it to what is not given. But while for Kant this involves the imagination in a process of ‘representing’ the past manifold so as to permit synthesis, Sartre makes consciousness itself temporal:

It is not because I ‘represent’ my past that it exists. But it is because I am my past that it enters into the world and it is in terms of its being-in-the-world that I can, by applying a particular psychological process, represent it to myself. (*BN* 115-16)

Consciousness is thus a movement from past to future, and it must be self-consciousness in order to safeguard the unity of the movement of transcendence. The act of transcendence is in turn made possible by that distance from self which characterises self-consciousness, and which Sartre calls ‘nothingness’. Freedom is that combination of transcendence and self-consciousness which involves the possibility of consciousness placing itself, and its own actions, in question. Just as, in counting, I have to make myself count, in the sense of carrying through a project which constitutes the unity of my act of counting, so, in other situations I have to make myself be what I am. In Sartre’s example “the waiter in the café cannot be immediately a café waiter in the sense that this inkwell is an inkwell or the glass is a glass” (*BN* 59) In the fact that he has to ‘make himself be’ or ‘play at being’ a waiter [69] lies the possibility of ceasing to be a waiter, or, at least, of re-evaluating waiterhood by changing from a willing into an unwilling waiter. This process is temporally articulated as a project from an irremediable past towards an open future. The two elements, the irremediability (I took on this job, and I cannot avoid having taken it on) and the openness (I can change the significance of the fact that I took it on; it can be the beginning of a career, a mistake, or perhaps the introduction to trade union activity) is united in Sartre’s aphorism “Consciousness is what it is not and is not

what it is". It is its past which it is no longer, and it is not its future by which it defines what it is. For Sartre freedom is absolute in the sense that the ontological structure of consciousness is to be always at a distance from itself, but the constraint of the for-itself is equally absolute, since "the for-itself is sustained by a perpetual contingency for which it assumes the responsibility and which it assimilates without ever being able to suppress it. This perpetually evanescent contingency of the in-itself haunts the for-itself and reattaches it to being-in-itself." (BN 82-3) This is what Sartre describes as facticity. Terms such as 'nothingness' and 'lack' which Sartre uses to describe the for-itself are designed precisely to bring out the weight of the facticity. In the relation of knowledge

it is the in-itself in person which is the concrete pole in its plenitude, and the for-itself is nothing other than the emptiness in which the in-itself is detached. The known is not; he is not apprehensible. He is nothing other than that which brings it about that there is a being there on the part of the known - a presence - for by itself the known is neither present nor absent, it simply is. (BN 177)

This is a materialist and realist position which insists that the object as known is not in any way different from the object 'in-itself'. But it is not a 'reflection' in Lenin's sense, because it is not an image. It is a direct relation to the thing, but a relation from a perspective, and Sartre tries to show how the main categories of empirical knowledge derive from the fact that

there is a this because I am not yet my future negations and because I am no longer my past negations. (BN 182)

For this reason the in-itself dissolves into a plurality of 'this's', which are quite untouched by my negation, and hence are related externally to one another. Space and Time, each being one and yet infinitely divisible, are the appearance of the in-itself, in the context of limitation from a perspective. Quality is an abstraction as a particular 'profile' of the this through which it appears to me. [70]

Potentiality and instrumentality are involved in the fact that the for-itself transcends the this towards a future and another this, and the fact that it does this in the context of its own projects. Thus although in one sense knowledge is of being as it is, in another sense the world as we experience it is organised in categories which are a function of the fact that consciousness is present to being from a particular perspective and in the context of a project. On the one hand the world is a human world, or, even more specifically my world. This is because the things in the world are necessarily evaluated or given significance by the nature of my projects. As projection to-

wards an open future the for-itself is necessarily value-creating. But, equally, the for-itself is normally engaged in its projects, in what Sartre calls “the spirit of seriousness:” It is not reflecting on its projects, but is simply carrying them through. In this situation “the meaning which my freedom has given to the world I apprehend as coming from the world, and as constituting my obligation”. (*BN* 39-40) Moreover, since my project is a way of structuring and organising the world, and since in the spirit of seriousness I am entirely absorbed in this world, this world is

the transcendent image of what I am ... My clothing (a uniform or a lounge suit, a soft or a starched shirt) whether neglected or cared for, carefully chosen or ordinary, my furniture, the street on which I live, the city in which I reside, the books with which I surround myself, the recreation which I enjoy, everything which is mine (that is, finally, the world of which I am perpetually conscious, at least by way of a meaning implied by the object which I look at or use) all this informs me of my choice, that is, of my being. (*BN* 463)

But all this is dependent for its meaning on my project: it has no meaning in itself. It has a structure: this tree is on the hill, rather than in the valley. But this structure only becomes a system of meanings, and therefore only contains significance for action, in terms of an evaluating project. This relation between a resisting world with its own coefficient of adversity and the evaluating project is described by Sartre using the concept ‘situation’. This situation includes my place, my past, my environment, my fellows and my death. I am always present to the world in a particular place, from a particular past, within a particular social and physical environment, which includes a certain available set of techniques, and also, of course, in the light of the certainty of my own death. These are all, in various ways, limitations on my freedom to get what I want, but Sartre is concerned [71] to show that each nevertheless derives its significance within my situation from my own project, and my project is a free project; rather than one which is the result of my ‘essence’, understood as a set of necessary behaviour patterns. Ontologically, freedom is an absolute; consciousness is necessarily autonomous and transparent. But, on the one hand, freedom becomes lost in the ‘spirit of seriousness’ which attributes value to the in-itself directly and, on the other hand, freedom has to be understood in relation to the weight of facticity. Moreover, there is an interrelation between these two. One element of facticity is the social environment from which I acquire techniques, including language as a technique for clarifying and describing the world, and intellectual techniques of various kinds. The for-itself, as presence to self, is the permanent possibility of reflection, in that the for-itself can make its

own project and values the theme of its attention, and thereby bring them into question. But the project and values constitute a ‘very complex symbolic structure’ (BN 567), and the task of actually changing pre-reflective consciousness of this structure into knowledge requires ‘instruments and techniques’ to ‘permit analysis and conceptualisation’ (BN 571).

It seems to me that Sartre does not clearly bring out the implications of this, but that it does make possible a distinction within the for-itself between freedom as implicit structure and freedom as historically realised in a fully selfconscious reflection. In the light of this, I think it is possible to make the following comparisons between Sartre and Hegel.

1) For Hegel the otherness of being is finally overcome and absorbed within the good infinity of the intellectus archetypus. For Sartre, being-in-itself only constitutes a world insofar as it is traversed by the projects of the for-itself. Thus the world is a system of meanings and values. But it nevertheless retains its absolute otherness within this context. The ‘phenomenon of being’ which Sartre attempts to describe in ‘Nausea’ is always a possible experience. Thus although the world is mediated through a system of meaning which has the structure of a Hegelian concept, it is not reducible to this structure, and so is not subject to a dialectical logic.

2) Similarly, Sartre’s for-itself, like Hegel’s subject, is an absolutely free self-creation, but while Hegel’s subject is a closed totality, Sartre’s for-itself necessarily remains what he calls a ‘detotalised totality’. Both it and its values remain contingent, because dependent on its other, it can never become the foundation of [72] its own being, an in-itself-for-itself, or God. But, as a being which nevertheless ‘is what it is not and is not what it is’ it has the dialectical identity of a unity of opposites.

3) The implicit freedom of the for-itself may become a fully reflective, self-conscious freedom, and this depends both on the moral experience of the individual and also on the extent to which language and the techniques of analysis are developed within the historical evolution of society. But this possible historical evolution of freedom is not the necessary working out of a set of logical contradictions borne in the unique subject of all history. In a tantalisingly brief discussion at the end of his lecture on “Consciousness of Self and Knowledge of Self” Sartre says that from his point of view, “the reflective act is an initiative, and not a moment in a philosophical dialectic”, and asserts that “there is no necessity for transition from one to another” (CS and KS 136) This may underestimate the possibility of uncovering some kind of dialectic in the development of techniques, but it does bring out clearly the idea that the application of the techniques of reflection

must be seen as an origination and creative act, rather than as the unfolding of an inner necessity.

4) For Hegel the other person is a constitutive moment in the development of full self-consciousness. But full self-consciousness itself is a dissolution of all otherness. It assumes an end point at which I know the other and myself in exactly the same way, at which point particularity is dissolved in common will and common knowledge. For Sartre, neither my relation to myself nor my relation to the other can be reduced to knowledge and become universal and equivalent to one another. There is an ‘ontological separation’ between consciousness. The Other is encountered as a contingent facticity.

These four points constitute, it seems to me, at least the basis for a materialist transformation of the philosophical advances made by Kant and Hegel. It is on the basis of this materialist critique of Kant and Hegel in *Being and Nothingness* that Sartre is able to approach the problem of founding the dialectic in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. The distinction between the two types of being lays the foundation for the delimitation of the applicability of types of reason, while the account of the individual subject as a detotalised totality contingently related to other similar individuals makes it possible to develop a concept of a social dialectic which does not carry the deterministic implication given it by Hegel. [73]

In the preface to the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* Sartre defines a type of reason as “an ordering of our thoughts” which “reproduces or constitutes the order of being” (*RD* 10). He goes on to say,

the goal of my research will therefore be to establish whether the positivist reason of the natural sciences is in fact the reason which we find in the development of anthropology, or whether the knowledge and the comprehension of man by man implies not only specific methods but a new Reason, that is to say a new relation between thought and its object. (*RD* 10)

The “positivist reason of the natural sciences” he describes as “analytic reason”, and his question is, whether the categories of analytic reason are adequate to deal with human reality. A type of reason, then, is a particular way of ordering our thoughts, or a set of rules or categories in terms of which we may distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate ways of ordering our thoughts. The way of ordering thoughts acquires its normative status as reason from the fact that it is related in a specific way to the order of being; as Sartre expresses it in a lapidary phrase: “Reason is a certain relation of knowledge and being” (*RD* 10). In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre has shown that there are two types of being. There can be no science of

Being-in-itself as such, yet that world which is made to “be there” by the presence of consciousness to being shares the fundamental contingency of Being-in-itself. It is both a synthetic totality and also “a purely additive collection of all the thises” (*BN* 18). When revealed from a particular perspective, the indifference of being shows itself as the spatial arrangement of determinate objects. Space is neutral, and within space objects are related to one another externally. Quantity is this exteriority of objects to one another. Change appears as the replacement of one state of affairs by another, and time thus, appears as a succession of instants, as “universal time” quite distinct from the ekstastic temporalisation of Being-for-itself. The natural sciences study this purely additive collection of all the thises. They treat things, quite legitimately, as independent entities, quantifiable and moving in neutral space and time, and attempt to make satisfactory descriptive generalisations concerning their relationships.

The categories of analytic reason, being the categories of externality, are not adequate to Being-for-itself, which is what it is not and is not what it is. Sartre’s aim, then, is to give an account of the type of “reason” needed to deal with such a being, and to establish its limits. [74]

Being and Nothingness is, in spite of the many concrete descriptions, a work written at a very high level of abstraction. It is an attempt to describe certain fundamental ontological structures, rather than to give a full account of human reality. I think many of the misunderstandings of the work come from a failure to situate it at its proper level of abstraction, and that Sartre himself was in some of his earlier writing sometimes guilty of moving too hastily from this level of abstraction to attempt to interpret the concrete. The Critique assumes the account of these fundamental structures, but attempts to work out their implications at a lower level of abstraction. Sartre objects that dialectical materialism fails adequately to take account of the fact that “Thought is both being and knowledge of being” (*RD* 122) It tends therefore to turn into a dogmatic materialism,

giving man a constituted reason, that is, making of thought a form of behaviour rigorously conditioned by the world (which it is), while omitting to tell us that it is also knowledge of the world. (*RD* 127).

This can only be accounted for by means of the kind of description already given of consciousness, and this is the only possible foundation of the dialectics, since the various ‘laws’ of the dialectic are comprehensible in terms of totalisation, which is the structure of consciousness. In individual praxis the relations of exteriority which characterise things are taken up and

transmuted within a unified field which gets its significance from my project, the way in which I totalise it.

Action is itself the negating transcendence of contradiction, the determination of a present totalisation in the name of a future totality, and the real effective working of matter. (*CDR* 80)

It involves the interiorisation of exteriority and the re-exteriorisation of interiority, through which the individual's project makes the external environment into a practical value-laden totality. Individual praxis is thus a dialectical totalisation. But the problem is, to what extent, if any, can we treat not individual praxis but social ensembles as 'totalisation in progress'?

Sartre's fundamental concern is to bring out fully the implication of the basic ontological separation of human individuals for each kind of ensemble. He therefore begins his account with a more thorough analysis of the relation to the other. The other signifies in so far as he gives values to the world which I can recognise as his values. My relation to him is reciprocal, because, since we both unify the same material world we integrate one another as independent creators of value in our respective systems [75] or 'worlds'. But this reciprocity is not itself a totality:

Thus each lives in the absolute interiority of a relationship without unity. This concrete certainty is the mutual adaptation in separation, the existence of a relationship with a double focus which he can never grasp in its totality. This disunion in solidarity comes from an excess rather than from a lack; it is in fact produced by the existence of two rigorously equivalent synthetic unifications. (*RD* 194)

The possibility of further totalisation would dissolve at this point if it were not for the fact that our reciprocal actions leave traces in the world, and these traces can be understood as objective meanings by a person standing outside our original reciprocal relationship. This person Sartre calls the Third. Thus matter mediates between people, and worked matter, as the objectification of this process of mediation is the basis for a totalisation by a Third who reanimates the objectified meanings. Now the significance of this is that each individual is both I, Other and Third. From this there can arise a system of totalisation which, however, because it is always via each in the status of Third, is always mediated, never direct.

Matter mediates between people, but not as matter, rather, as a system of meanings which has to be reanimated by individual praxis, but, once it is so reanimated, can function as a coercive facticity. This Sartre calls the "practico-inert". It is possible for an individual in this situation to identify

with some object in such a way that his activity no longer derives directly from his own need but rather “is induced in him, from outside, by worked matter, as the practical exigence of the inanimate object.” (RD 252) The capitalist identifies with the factory and works to conserve and develop it, rather than using it for the satisfaction of his own needs. Thus the relation of producer to product is inverted; this inversion is, however, only possible because the meanings objectified in matter do not act directly, but only insofar as they are reintegrated into a human meaning system. This inverted meaning is that ‘interest’ which is the fundamental category of liberal economic theory. The relation of ‘interests’ involves the practical communication of individuals “through the antagonisms or compatibilities of the matter which represents them” (RD 263)

The totalisation of my reciprocal relation to the Other occurs through the Third, and thus the significance of this totalisation for me will depend on the nature of my relation to the Third. This relation may vary from complete separation to complete [76] cooperation. Separation here also functions as a relation, since it is never an absolute separation, but is always a separation in the face of a common material world. Insofar as self, Other and Third are all totalising the same material world, the final result will be a jointly produced result, and this is recognised by each in his praxis. Thus each depends on the other, but has no control over what the other does: “each one waits for the act of the other, and each makes himself the impotence of the other in so far as the other is his impotence” (RD 325). The relationship here is what Sartre calls a ‘series’. It is characteristic of the series that all actions are necessarily alienated and rebound upon the actor in an unrecognisable form.

The milieu of interest and the series, which is, of course, the milieu of capitalism as a fetishised system (although not exclusively of capitalism) is the milieu of the experience of necessity, in which human behaviour is trapped by the exigencies of worked matter and by serial impotence. It is what Sartre calls the level of the ‘anti-dialectic’, insofar as it appears to be governed purely by the laws of exteriority (analytical reason), as in bourgeois economic theory. But it can only be comprehended in relation to the constituting dialectic of individual praxis and its deviation in the field of the practico-inert, which transforms human praxis into

praxis without an author, transcending the given towards rigid ends, whose hidden meaning is counter-finality. (RD 235 CDR 166)

Serial praxis, based on separation, may be contrasted with group praxis, based on coordination. The problem is, however, that the group can never

become a genuine ‘hyper-organism’, or a genuine totality. It always remains based on the Self - Other - Third structure, and is therefore threatened either with disintegration or with ossification as a result of the measures which it takes to prevent disintegration. Sartre gives his account of the structure of the group as an historical account of the genesis of the purest group, the ‘fused group’, and then of its progressive degeneration back into the series. However, this is not to be understood as an inevitable historical process. It is merely designed to reveal the various structures of the group in a coherent manner.

The specific characteristic of the group is that, within it, other’s act no longer distorts the meaning of my act but is, rather, complementary to it. In the fused group this complementarity is effectively spontaneous. It is a situation of ‘common sovereignty’ in which my membership of the group is part of the structure of my action, but as a free invention rather than as an external imposition. [77] Sartre gives the example of the first days of the French Revolution in which the crowd organises itself into an effective unity in the face of the external threat. In this situation, common to many revolutionary ‘days’ and to many strikes, there is no formally authorised leadership, but, rather, individual ‘leaders’ emerge and are immediately re-absorbed in a process in which each recognises in the others his own motives and actions. In a slightly more structured group, such as a (good) football team, the process is more clearly visible. At any given moment the player who has the ball serves as the ‘Regulating Third’ for the others, as they adjust their positions according to his, and he totalises the field for the group. This is a system of ‘circulating sovereignty’ in which the power of the ball player is not exerted externally, but is nothing but the way in which he integrates himself with the group.

The fused group functions as a group because of a common understanding of the situation on the basis of which each individual knows how to act. This common understanding may be the result of prior planning and training (the football team) or it may be a sudden common reaction to, for example, a common situation of oppression the fragility of which is for some reason suddenly revealed. But the common understanding does not overcome the fundamental separation of the members of the group. The group makes use of these relations of exteriority in making itself into a ‘mechanical system’ which acts on the world. But the group praxis remains a ‘constituted dialectic’, dependent on the ‘constituting dialectic’ of the individual praxis. That is, it has no independent ontological status. The ‘otherness’ of each individual has to be integrated into the group, but remains also as a permanent threat to its unity. In a group more permanent than the revolu-

tionary crowd this requires differentiation and specialisation of function, which in turn requires the concentration of sovereignty as a specific function in the form of authority. In ideal circumstances, “as a member of a living organisation I understand that the Other is a practical and signifying invention of we-the-same” (*RD* . 475). But at the other end of the scale each individual is no longer “quasi-sovereign”, but is concerned only with his or her particular function in a hierarchy, rather than with the ends of the group as such, and the institutionalised authority can only fight this implicit serialisation by the use of coercive techniques of various kinds: the group has reached the ultimate stage of bureaucratisation.

The significance of Sartre’s extremely rich description of the various forms of group (reduced here from 400 to 1 pages) is [78] twofold. Firstly, insofar as

Every organisation with reciprocity of oaths is a first beginning (of humanity) because it is always a conquest of man as common freedom over seriality (*RD* 453 n 1),

the analysis brings out clearly the ontologically rooted and hence permanent ‘political’ problems which will exist even in the realm of freedom. Freedom as group praxis is no automatic result of the ending of economic exploitation. The struggle against serialisation is permanent, and this requires careful reflection on the question of political organisations and institutions in a socialist society.

Secondly, in analysing any given society or section of society one must take account of the probable simultaneous existence of series and of groups of different kinds in complex interaction. In particular one cannot without more ado treat a class as though it has the structure of a fused group:

Class manifests simultaneously as an institutionalised apparatus, as a (serial or organised) ensemble of direct action groups, and as a collective which receives its status from the field of the pratico-inert (through and by its relations of production with other classes) and its universal schema of practical unification from the groups which form ceaselessly on its surface. (*RD* 649)

This raises the question of the dialectical intelligibility of the notions of class and class struggle. Even if one were to show the existence of a relation of exploitation between two classes, whereby some of the product of the one is acquired by the other, it might still be possible to interpret this relation as the automatic result of the working of the economic system. This would be exploitation as a process. To speak of class *struggle* is to speak not of a process but of praxis rooted in some way in a consciousness of

class and of class interests. It involves treating a class as in some sense a totality, rather than as having the merely external and additive unity of a collection of things. In order to do this one must be able to show that there is a praxis of oppression on the part of the dominant class, and that this praxis is rooted in an understanding of class interest. This praxis of oppression would in turn be the basis for the intelligibility of praxis of resistance to oppression embodying an understanding of the relation between the praxis of oppression and the process of exploitation. But this praxis of oppression, as *class* behaviour, cannot be interpreted initially as the praxis of a fused group. There is [79] no conspiracy to oppress. Instead there is what may be described as a process of serial oppression, in which each individual capitalist, rather than acting consciously to ‘oppress the working class’ acts as other, and on the basis of the exigencies of his ‘interest’, in such a way as to perpetuate that condition of atomisation and dependence through which the workers are exploited:

To lower costs is to decrease the number of his workers. In other words, it is directly against the future unemployed that he buys his machines; not, as it is said, ‘without caring what happens to them’ (*RD* 697).

The everyday praxis of the individual capitalist embodies an understanding of the worker as “the enemy”, and this shows itself in the use of the machine against the worker, and in routine action, varying with the possibilities of the situation, designed to maintain the workers in a state of serial impotence by preventing or inhibiting organisations. This understanding constitutes what Sartre calls “the objective spirit of the class” (*RD* 721). It is not a single articulated theory, but rather “the general schema of a situated understanding” (*RD* 715), or “a milieu for the circulation of meanings” (*RD* 721). It is not a rationalisation, in the sense of a secondary phenomenon designed to conceal or distort the reality of oppression as the primary phenomenon. It is, in fact, largely implicit, and to the extent that it becomes explicit it is as a thematisation of taken-for-granted action. Praxis is project, or the embodiment of values; the values and meanings are constitutive of the praxis, rather than separate from it. It is, then, the objective spirit of the class which provides the fundamental unity of the class praxis of oppression, and which ensures that an apparently serial action will have the desired result - at least in the short term since one can conceive of situations in which the historically created objective spirit of the ruling class is such as to produce a type and level of oppression which finally produces revolt.

In the face of this praxis of oppression the resistance of the dominant class appears firstly as purely serial, and, secondly, as the more or less con-

conscious process whereby the members of the class acquires a consciousness of class, through the growth and activity of various kinds of group within the context of the common material condition which constitutes the practico-inert being of the class. This must in turn be expressed in a general ‘objective spirit’ of the class which is not a developed class consciousness but a much broader system of meanings. This, like the objective spirit of the ruling class, is an historical product [80] and will therefore necessarily differ from society to society. Thus one cannot apply a universal schema, except in the very broadest sense, but must instead decipher a different system of meanings in each case.

The actual result of this class struggle is, however, necessarily something other than that which is consciously intended by any of the participants. At the end of the *Critique* Sartre raises the question of the intelligibility of this

complex phenomenon which has to be described as a praxis-process and which sets classes in opposition to one another as circular totalisations of institutions, groups and series (*CDR* 806).

In general terms, the praxis of struggle involves a reciprocal intelligibility for each as

the comprehension of his object being (insofar as it exists for the Other and threatens to enclose him one day in the Other) through his practical existence as a subject. (*CDR* 814)

But this formal comprehension of each by the other in the struggle is not necessarily the same as the comprehension of the result, which always embodies the partial failure of each side, and so necessarily is a mutilated and truncated meaning. Sartre here states only that

History is intelligible if the different practices which can be found and located at a given moment of the historical temporalisation finally appear as partially totalising and as connected and merged in their very oppositions and diversities by an intelligible totalisation from which there is no appeal. (*CDR* 817).

He leaves the investigation of the possibility of such an intelligibility to a second volume, which is unfinished and unpublished.

The idea of an intelligible totalisation “from which there is no appeal” is very obscure. It is, however, clear from what has gone before that we are not dealing with a Hegelian dialectic which is a self-transparent logical process, or with the simplified Marxist dialectic in which the classless society is the inevitable and necessary result of the class conflict. We are dealing, rather, with a praxis which “by definition has ignorance and error as

basic structures” (*CDR* 811), and with a complex which includes within itself the level of the anti-dialectic. Thus Sartre’s argument here has to be interpreted in the light of his earlier account of the regressive-progressive method. The regressive moment, undertaken in the published volume of *CDR*, is the investigation of the fundamental structures of society, while the progressive moment is the attempt to understand how these structures are lived in the actual historical project. The “intelligibility” here is not a deductive intelligibility which [81] shows how event B logically followed from event A, but rather a dialectical intelligibility which grasps the free invention of a praxis producing event B out of situation A. It is thus always an *ex post facto* understanding, but the possibility of such an understanding is identical with the possibility of freely creating B in an intelligent response to situation A. Sartre is therefore saying here that at best we may act intelligently on the basis of a more rather than less complete grasp of the situation, and that we may understand an historical result as the creation of human praxis acting within a system of meaning and with a margin of ignorance and error which may themselves be understood, but that finally we are dealing with a “totalisation without a totaliser” which does not have the immediate self-transparency of an individual praxis. In Sartre’s own terms, it is an intellection, not a comprehension. (see *CDR* 74-76)

History is a combination of the constituting dialectic of individual praxis, the anti-dialectic of the *pratico-inert* and serial impotence, and the constituted dialectic of common praxis. The level of the anti-dialectic is characterised by relations of exteriority, and so can be described using the concept of identity of analytic reason. But it cannot be understood by analytic reason, because it is that inverted fetishised reality referred to by Colletti. It is a system of human meanings which has taken on thing-like form. As such it can be understood finally only in relation to the constituting dialectic, but as the deviation and loss of this praxis. It is in this sense that it is the level of necessity, and the ‘laws’ which govern its operation have the status of ‘natural’ laws. Because praxis is always interiorisation as well as exteriorisation, each actor is necessarily, as he acts, engaged in the attempt to decipher his or her historical situation. Sartre’s argument seems to me to be that this is not a necessarily vain project, because the elements of intelligibility are there, but that the hope that when this is achieved it will be possible to dissolve every element of necessity and turn history into a (Hegelian) dialectic of a free subject is vain. The reasons are, firstly, that the condition for serialisation persist under any circumstances, and so all otherness can never be dissolved, and, secondly, that at any given time the fact that history is being made serially, and on the basis of a *pratico-inert* reality which

includes even language and ideology, is likely to continually overrun the intelligibility that we are able to wrest from it. This is not a ‘pessimistic’ or quietistic conclusion; history is still ontological, [82] rooted in individual praxis, and this gives us the promise of freedom as a real historical possibility. But it does have implications for political action; at the very least it must place in question the triumphalist view that “history is on our side”. [83]

Some Problems

i) In a 1975 interview, Sartre said that

I think in fact that a theory of freedom which does not explain at the same time what alienations are, to what extent freedom can be manipulated, deflected, turned against itself, could cruelly deceive somebody who does not understand what it implies, and who believes that freedom is everywhere. But if one reads carefully what I have written, I do not believe that one can make such a mistake. (*Situations X*. p. 223)

This is I think correct, but I think that it is also true that the gap between consciousness as presence-to-self and reflection as liberating knowledge of self has widened, as Sartre has tried to show the implications for the abstract structure of the for-itself of its embeddedness in a concrete reality.

This emerges, for example, in Sartre’s discussion of objective spirit in his study of Flaubert (*l’Idiot de la Famille* III 41-58). He defines objective spirit as “Culture as pratico-inert” (P44), and contrasts it with the origin of culture in “lived actual work, in so far as, by definition, it transcends nature and retains it within itself” (44) as interiorisation of the exterior and reexteriorisation of the interior. This transcendence is an understanding of the environment, of the tool used, and of the human relations involved in the mode of production concerned. But this lived understanding as part of the structure of praxis Sartre describes as

an intuitive, implicit and non-verbal knowing, a certain direct and totalising but wordless comprehension. At this level the whole thought is given, but it does not posit itself for itself and thus finally in its extreme compression, escapes verbal elaboration. (45)

This pratico-theoretical knowing is however the foundation for a ‘super-structure’ in which it becomes systematically elaborated. In this process

reflection isolates in the totality of praxis the moment of theory, which has never existed alone but only as a practical mediation determined by the goal itself. It is

then that it has recourse to language. This, on the one hand, isolates and transforms into a finite product the knowing which existed implicitly in the act of the worker. It gives names and hardens, in the forms of definite structures, all the elements which interpenetrated in the cultural revelation of work ... Named, and thereby perpetuated these pieces of the real, becoming pieces of knowledge, are thereby falsified. (45)

This explicit and elaborated, but falsified knowledge is developed into ideologies. The original “wild and immediate thought”, which [84] which is necessarily accompanied by a non-positional consciousness of itself, is a continually changing supple adaptation. But once it is verbalised as a system of values and an ideology it takes on a more rigid form because “language is matter ... written words are stones” (47) It is the passive systems of thought which constitute the objective spirit. As pratico-inert it imposes itself on human individual subjects as a series of imperatives. Living thought is in a continual state of tension with this objective mind. Its original interiority, as “translucent presence of the whole to the parts and the parts to the whole” (49) has been broken by the opacity of this materialised culture. But the objective mind, in its turn only exists as spirit, rather than as a mere collection of things, through the activity of individuals.

There are two problems here. Firstly, there is the question of the nature of the ‘lived’. It has the essential structure of consciousness as described in *Being and Nothingness*: non-positional consciousness of self and a certain translucidity. On the other hand, elsewhere Sartre also contrasts the lived with the earlier account of consciousness, not as a rejection, but as a deepening:

The introduction of the notion of the lived represents an attempt to conserve that ‘presence to self’ which appears to me to be indispensable to the existence of any psychic fact, a presence which is at the same time so opaque, so blind to itself, that it is also ‘absence from self’. The lived is always, simultaneously, present to itself and absent from itself. (*Situations* 1X p. 112)

Some psychic facts at least, while being the object of a ‘comprehension’ cannot be named or known (*connu*). This seems to place in question the possibility of reflection, insofar as reflection is tied to language. Further, and this is the second problem, it is not clear to me whether Sartre is saying that language necessarily falsifies the lived, or only that it has the potentiality for doing so. To the extent that Sartre certainly does envisage the working class achieving a class consciousness which dissolves bourgeois ideology (see p. 46 and also *Situations* VIII 414/417) it would appear that he finally intends the latter. But he is stressing the difficulty of a task which,

although it is ultimately possible because of the foundation of the objective spirit in individual praxis, is nevertheless made extremely difficult by the necessity of trying to articulate a new consciousness in a language which denies that consciousness. [85]

A thorough explanation of the way in which Sartre deals with the relation between the lived, language and ideology, would require a much more thorough and careful reading of the study of Flaubert than I have yet been able to give it. It seems to me that it would also be very useful to compare the position of Sartre here with Habermas's *Knowledge and Human Interests*, in which he develops the notion of ordinary language as

the articulation of a life context, which represents an individual meaning, which cannot be wholly grasped in general categories. (*KHI* 173)

and uses this to develop an account of distorted communication on both the individual and the social level. Sartre does suggest, following Lacan, that

the presence of certain structures of language account for the unconscious ... as a counter-finality of language (de la parole). (*Situations* 97).

Habermas writes that

Today the problem of language has taken the place of the traditional problematic of consciousness: the transcendental critique of language replaces that of consciousness. (*LSW* 220).

Against this, however, Sartre would argue that language is ontologically rooted in consciousness, and if that language as a system of meaning is made possible by the dialectical, self-reflective structure of consciousness. Nevertheless, the relation between the two seems to constitute a fundamental problem, which is certainly not fully resolved by either writer.

2) The problem in Kant's ethical theory was that, while he could show the relation between knowledge, reason and freedom, he had to simply place this set of concepts over against the heteronomy of the natural world, and could give no account of how the move from empirical heteronomy to transcendental autonomy might be possible. Hegel's dialectic of consciousness was, inter alia, an attempt to solve this problem by showing that what divides the heteronomous from the autonomous not so much an ontological fissure as the relation between the implicit and the explicit. Freedom is therefore the necessary result of the working out of the contradiction contained in the original heteronomous state-being-in-itself. Sartre's materialist transformation of Hegel, while retaining a suggestion of the implicit versus the explicit in consciousness, takes away the necessity of the dialectical

transition. The transition becomes finally a choice: freedom is chosen, rather than produced by an historical dialectic. Yet there does seem to be a problem here. Is the choice of freedom entirely unmotivated, or is it possible to give some account of why one might or even should choose freedom? In the discussion at the end of Sartre's lecture on "Knowledge of Self and Consciousness of Self", the question is asked: "How is this [86] transition made from prereflective experience to the reflective cogito?" (p. 133) Sartre replies that the reflective act is an initiative, not a moment in a philosophical dialectic, and goes on to speak of a morality of revolution, rather than a morality of progress. (p.142) In a recent discussion "On a raison de se revolter" Sartre also places great stress on the moment of choice in political action; there is a free decision that the situation is unbearable, rather than a pre-determined threshold at which revolt inevitably occurs:

To the extent that the moment of revolt is new in relation to the preceding given, and cannot be explained by a determinism, the facts determine other facts, but cannot account for revolt, that is, for the passage to value and to the evaluation 'that is not just'. (140)

All this raises moral problems on two different levels. Firstly, there is the question of one's own choice: if one decides to 'choose freedom', to attempt to live on the level of pure reflection or autonomy, is there anything which justifies such a choice, not of course in the sense of showing that it is necessary, but in the sense of at least making it comprehensible? Why not live in the immediate, or in bad faith, or in impure reflection? Secondly, what does it mean to choose freedom *for other people*? What justifies such a choice, and what justifies action flowing from such a choice? Of course, insofar as my freedom requires the freedom of other people, requires the dissolution of ideologies and of serial impotence, the choice of freedom for myself implies the choice of freedom for others. But this argument in itself is self-defeating; what happens if others do not want to be free? Sartre's work certainly contains many accounts of motives for not wanting to be free. At the same time, of course, Being and Nothingness can be taken as an account of the necessary failure of the attempt to avoid one's freedom. There is always the suggestion in Sartre's work of a tension between a fundamental experience of freedom and all those phenomena connected with its avoidance or repression.

Freedom pre-exists in individuals, in the sense that it appears from the beginning as exploited and alienated, but that each, in his very alienation ... grasps his freedom as a deflected affirmation of his sovereignty. (On a raison de se revolter, 140).

Thus although one may well not be able to show a Hegelian dialectic leading inevitably to freedom, it may be possible, by exploring this tension, to establish a meaningful distinction between true and false consciousness, to understand the eruption of freedom into our alienated reality, and finally to provide moral criteria for [87] evaluating political action. Habermas's discussions of the practical knowledge-constitutive interest in reflection should be compared with Sartre here.

3) Aside from the question of moral criteria for political action, Sartre's work seems to me to have important implications for political strategy and for the nature of political institutions. Hegel used the idea of Objective Mind to justify reformist political policies which continually adjust political institutions to the changing values embodied in Objective Mind as an historical process. In an important sense Marx remains within this framework. He links the question of political change to the development of consciousness, but he differs from Hegel in trying to show how consciousness is related to mode of production, and how the whole complex is likely to develop in the light of certain fundamental contradictions within the capitalist mode of production. He is opposed to the voluntarist or jacobin activities which Hegel describes in the *Phenomenology of Mind* (599-610) in which each faction tries to construct the world anew by imposing its own will as universal will, without being rooted in the actual life of the society. Lenin's idea of the vanguard party, although in principle designed merely to facilitate, through its possession of science, the development of revolutionary class consciousness, tends towards jacobinism, and in its Stalinist form theoretically substitutes the party's science for the consciousness of the working class. Sartre's analysis of the exceedingly complex relation between individual praxis, the pratico-inert, series and groups lays the foundation for a much more thorough investigation of this problem. In particular, Sartre's notion of sovereignty (which I have not dealt with explicitly here) can be used in the analysis of political strategy and of political institutions under socialism. Sartre himself, after flirting with the idea of the vanguard party, has since decisively rejected it. The party has no legitimacy apart from any legitimacy which it achieves in action:

it is for this reason that one cannot conceive of the real representatives of the proletariat in periods of waiting or in a dictatorship of the Stalinist type. (quoted in Burnier: *Les Existentialistes et la Politique* (96) see also *On a raison ... passim*). The party can in fact become that "group in the process of petrification (which),

by its very inertia (can) be an obstacle to the dissolution of seriality in the collective” (*RD* 640)¹⁶

Of course, all these remarks require detailed elaboration. The point that I wish to make here is that Sartre [88] offers us a set of conceptual tools which can be used to analyse the complexity of real historical situations, which can help us to distinguish between historically contingent and ontologically necessary problems of relation between people and, finally, can therefore also help us to think about the problems of a socialist society in which the historically contingent sources of conflict embodied in capitalism have been removed.

4) Sartre’s distinction between constitutive dialectic, anti-dialectic and constituted dialectic enables us to account for both the success and the limitations of a “positivist” method in the social sciences, and in particular in economics. The level of the anti-dialectic, as serial, is in itself regulated by the principle of exteriority, and so can be described using “analytic reason”. However, although analytic reason can *describe* the movement of the prático-inert object, it cannot grasp its nature, and so cannot fully understand the possibility of a change in the object, since the possibility for such a change is based on the object’s ontological dependence on individual praxis. Analytical reason cannot, therefore, understand how and to what extent the anti-dialectic can be dissolved by the constituted dialectic of group praxis. Further, although the level of the anti-dialectic is, considered in itself, subject to principles of exteriority, it is nevertheless, as prático-inert, a system of meanings. As such, it too can be considered by dialectical reason. This resolves the problem, which worries Colletti, as to how Marx can be both a (“scientific”) political economist and also a (“Philosophical”) critic of political economy who shows that political economy deals with an alienated upside-down reality (see Colletti, *NLR* 22, 29).

In general, the utility of Sartre’s approach to the dialectic seems to me to be that, by showing that human meaning systems are mediated by matter and that matter is at the same time mediated by human meaning systems, he is able to provide a foundation for an approach to different societies which can both recognise the specificity of each society, and at the same time root each society within its material context. The alternatives are either a determinism which considers any given society as a variant produced by fixed

16 [fvg] Turner’s Heidegger-moment. This is the point at which he casts in his lot with ‘African socialism’, in which he becomes, like Heidegger, a party-ideologue, from intellectual to identity-politician. That in Europe it’s exactly this enthusiastic partisanship for class-war that motivated the entire generation trying to get out from under Stalinism doesn’t stop Turner from ‘doing a Lukács’. The question is: why does this pass him by? Why does he miss this?

and universal human attitudes (e.g Homo oeconomicus); or an idealism which treats each society as though it were in fact the product of its own [89] legitimating ideology, without attempting to account for the ideology itself.

But the question still remains: what precisely is meant by “dialectics” here? Have we returned to a “weak” definition in terms of an injunction always to look for interconnections? Or is it possible to formulate some stronger definition? We have certainly got away from the idea that dialectics is the insistence that everything is connected with everything else. To this extent it is possible to give a more precise definition of dialectical reason: it involves the search, not for *any* kind of connection, but for certain specific kinds of connection between prático-inert social phenomena, individual praxis, and mediating matter.

This approach to dialectics does not seem to require a whole new Logic along Hegelian lines. But it does operate with a special notion of identity, which in turn would seem to allow for a notion of contradiction distinct both from real opposition and from the essentially self-annulling contradiction of formal logic. Consciousness is what it is not and is not what it is. It contains within itself the tension between its past and its future, and is the perpetual overcoming of this tension. As such it is the basis for the coexistence of contradictory values or injunctions which, instead of simply cancelling one another out, are worked through and perhaps resolved in time. The prático-inert, as an embodied meaning system imposing exigencies on human praxis may therefore similarly contain within it contradictory exigencies which coexist in a state of tension:

The moment of *exigency as inert*, imposed finality makes it possible to conceive of the kind of negativity known as objective contradiction. (CDR 193).

Here one exigency may be logically implied by another, but may be at the same time incompatible with it.

We can take Marx’s account of capitalist crisis as rooted in the separation of the mutually dependent elements commodity and money as an example of such contradiction. In discussing this, Colletti argues that

from Marx’s perspective, contradiction is the *specific* feature of capitalism, the characteristic or quality which singles it out not only with respect to all other forms of society, but with respect to all other cosmic phenomena. (NLR 26-7).

I think it is more accurate to say that contradictions of this kind characterise any prático-inert reality. For example [90] in his study of the domestic mode of production, Meillassoux shows that the system of control over women,

as the means of reproduction, by the elders contains within it a contradiction, in that the successful exercise of this power tends to enlarge the community to such an extent as to threaten to undermine the elders' power. Women are no longer scarce, and are theoretically available within the community. This contradiction sets up tensions which may be resolved by segmentation, or which may be at least partially contained by the existence and further development of an ideology of authority and kinship, which may, under certain circumstances, provide the basis for a dialectical transformation of the node of social organisation, producing a class society dominated by a particular lineage, but still legitimised in terms of mythological kinship (see *Femmes, Greniers et Capitaux* pp.75, 127-30). At the end of the process, at least, the system would seem to be an upside-down reality, a fetishised system of meanings and social relations which is no longer transparent to the members, but dominates them as an external facticity. [91]

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