THE BEING OF THE CONCEPT: A HISTORICAL AND SYSTEMATIC INQUIRY

by

Gregory Scott Moss

(Under the Direction of Richard Dien Winfield)

ABSTRACT

Traditionally, the concept of universality has been governed by four dogmas: the principle of non-contradiction, the finitude of the concept, the separation of the principles of universality and particularity, and the appeal to the given. From these dogmas four paradoxes of self-reference follow: the problem of the missing differentia, the problem of participation, the problem of psychologism, and the problem of onto-theology. In this dissertation I show how these dogmas, as well as the paradoxes that follow from them, first arise in Ancient Greek philosophy, and how they continually re-appear throughout the history of Western philosophy. Hegel, in his Science of Logic, develops a novel concept of universality in which he defines universality as self-differentiation. Following the general historical exposition, I systematically reconstruct Hegel's Logic of the Concept where he defines the concept as self-differentiation. In argue that self-differentiation undermines the classical dogmas of universality, and thereby solves the four paradoxes of self-differentiation.

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Introduction: Motivating the Question

*Mit der Miene des Hofmanns, Die kurz­sichtig, doch lächelnd, des Ernstes Sache verdämmt*¹.

Philosophy, unlike every other science, inquires into *itself*. Any inquiry that inquires into itself may be called a *reflexive* discipline, since it is about itself. By noting the reflexivity of philosophy, we absolutely do not mean to restrict the philosopher’s domain of inquiry to the activity of philosophizing. Indeed, philosophy takes as its object more than just philosophy. Unfortunately, though this little fact is widely acknowledged, it hardly earns our respect. When we, as philosophers, take the reflexivity of philosophy as our object, we discover it to be a source of philosophical problems, the depths of which have rarely been plumbed. Of course, our very inquiry into the reflexivity of philosophy is itself a higher order instantiation of this reflexivity, and empirical proof of the reflexivity of philosophical thought. Still, the aim of this treatise is not to ponder the reflexivity of philosophy *per se*, but to inquire into the *being of universality*. Why the being of universality is one of the central issues to philosophy, as a reflexive discipline, is the topic of this short propaedeutic.

It often seems difficult for philosophers to comment upon the historical development of the sciences outside of philosophy without giving away their prejudice toward their own discipline. On one conception of philosophy, a philosophical discipline becomes a science after it acquires principles. Illustrations of this process range from cosmology to psychology. Such historical illustrations give some hope that in the future disciplines remaining in the philosophical canon, e.g. philosophy of mind and metaphysics,

will be reduced to neuroscience and cosmology respectively. Philosophy progresses when it is on the way to becoming a non-philosophical science.

What such comments reveal is that such a speaker views philosophy as inherently uncertain, a discipline without established principles. If we judge the success of philosophy by the extent to which it establishes principles, and thereby becomes a particular non-philosophical science, then the ultimate success of philosophy would simultaneously be its self-annihilation. When we contemplate the reflexivity of philosophy, we immediately see why progress in philosophy cannot, and should not, be judged, by the extent to which philosophy hands over its content and method to another discipline. Instead, we find that any properly philosophical inquiry ought to be in principle incapable of becoming a particular, non-philosophical science. Strong propositions as these require arguments.

Let us discuss three questions: Why is philosophy reflexive? Why is the being of universality a central concern to philosophy? Why is the question concerning the being of universality incapable of being exported beyond philosophy? Instead of beginning with philosophy per se, let us begin elsewhere, namely with the concept of the non-philosophical science.

In principle, every non-philosophical science, from the empirical sciences, to formal logic and mathematics, begins with two fundamental givens: method and subject matter. Methodology, from μέθοδος, is the way a subject is approached, as its etymology indicates. Since the non-philosophical sciences are concerned with knowing, this approach may be further specified as an inquiry into the subject matter, and as such it is a way of thinking about the subject matter. On the one hand, one reason philosophy inquires into itself is

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2 Hegel, SL, 43.
3 The etymology of ‘methodology’ is formed from ὀδός meaning ‘road’, and μετα, meaning ‘following after’. A method is a road one follows.
exactly because it aims at knowledge of what knowledge is. Indeed, philosophy is the love of wisdom, not just any particular wisdom, but wisdom as such. As such, it must inquire into its own form of knowing. On the other hand, insofar as a science is non-philosophical, the concept of knowing is assumed and applied in the investigation of some content of knowing, but is not itself taken up as the object of inquiry. For this reason, knowing itself cannot be its own subject matter in the non-philosophical sciences. Hence, in the non-philosophical sciences we find that method and subject matter are divorced.

Although method is conceived as separate from subject matter, it is purportedly structured to study the subject matter that has been selected in advance. Since method and subject matter are separate, the method cannot take itself to be its own subject matter. If it could, then the method would not be separate from the subject matter. Thus, scientific method, for example, cannot in principle inquire into itself. Scientific method is not about itself, and for this reason fails to be a reflexive method. Examples of this restriction on the scientific method are not difficult to uncover. Biology inquires into life, and the scientific method is employed for the sake of knowing life. In this pursuit universals are employed in the cognition and differentiation of the subject matter, e.g. ‘life’, ‘matter’, chemical’, ‘entity, etc…. But in biology, the scientific method is not itself an object of knowledge. If the scientific method were the object of its knowledge, it would assume its own legitimacy. Its legitimacy is always already assumed. In order to test whether the scientific method were true

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4 Though I take issue with the definition of philosophy as the inquiry into first principles, this definition may be instructive here. Whether we think about the first principles of Being, knowing, or thinking, namely metaphysics, epistemology, or logic, we necessarily find ourselves under the obligation to account for the being, knowing, and thinking of the activity by which those principles are posited.

5 This theoretical division between the philosophical and non-philosophical science is born out in the actual practice of the other sciences. I should not like to indict poetry in this distinction, for I do not consider it a science in the general sense of ‘knowing’.

6 See Hegel’s *Science of Logic*, Introduction, 43.

7 Though this is not the case in Aristotle’s system of biology, my claim is systematic and is not meant to represent every historical position.
via the scientific method, one would need to set up an experiment that would test whether it were true. Of course, this would beg the question, for to set up an experiment to test the truth of the method is to assume it from the beginning. This is a problem for the scientific method, for its domain is not knowing per se, and this experiment assumes a distinction between itself and its subject matter.

Since method is separate from the subject matter, method cannot itself establish the proper subject matter for the method in advance. If it were its own object, then the method could in principle determine its own subject matter: itself. Instead, the subject matter must be presented as an external given, something that is other to the method itself. Accordingly, the non-philosophical sciences are not themselves responsible for the differentiation of their subject matters from other disciplines. This subject matter is itself given at the outset of the scientific investigation. The psychological effect of this restriction is that scientists are often insensitive to the limits of their subject matter, and encroach upon philosophical subjects to which their methods are not suitably applied. Accordingly, the connections of the subject matter to other disciplines are neither investigated nor are they established by the scientific discipline in question. Indeed, particular universals are posited from without to divide the subject matter by which subject matters are distinguished. Since the particular non-philosophical science is not responsible for its own subject matter, these universals are not themselves objects of inquiry.

What follows immediately from our brief considerations is the following: neither the methodology of non-philosophical science itself nor the universals dividing and positing the subject matter are subject matters for non-philosophical science. As such, we find that the

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8 Stephen Hawking, in his recent book *The Grand Design* states that although traditionally philosophy questions such as “did the universe need a creator” were treated by philosophy, now “philosophy is dead” (Hawking, *The Grand Design*, 5) because it has not kept up with modern science. Hawking, *The Grand Design*, Bantam, 2011.
non-philosophical science either presumes some other form of inquiry more fundamental than itself to establish the differentiation of its contents and method, or it is itself ungrounded. Although these distinctions are instructive, the object of this discourse is not the ground of non-philosophical science.

Philosophy, as its etymology indicates, is the love of wisdom and has as its aim the knowing of the very what-it-is-to-be of wisdom as such. Any investigation into wisdom-as-such must not exclude its own wisdom. For if philosophy excluded the wisdom about wisdom as such, then the inquiry into wisdom would be incomplete, and would exclude itself. If the inquiry into wisdom excludes the wisdom of wisdom, then there would be no wisdom about wisdom in the science of wisdom, which would be quite absurd. Likewise, philosophy, as an inquiry into the what-it-is-to-be of truth as such, cannot exclude the truth about truth discovered in its own investigation. The wisdom about wisdom is a wisdom, the truth about truth a truth. Again, if the truth about truth were excluded from the inquiry into truth, then the philosophical account of truth would not contain any truths about truth itself. If there were no truths about truth, then there would be no wisdom about truth per se at all. Indeed, it seems quite obvious that any successful inquiry into truth per se will contain truths about truth itself. Because philosophy inquires into itself, the method by which philosophy inquires is itself a subject matter for it. For this reason, philosophy is an inquiry which cannot separate the method from the subject matter. Far from self-annihilating, it appears philosophy’s success at establishing its own principles would be the preservation of the discipline.

Because philosophy’s method and subject matter cannot be separated, the method must necessarily be its own object of inquiry. Since inquiry is a way of thinking, philosophical method is necessarily an activity whereby thinking thinks about thinking.
Therefore, philosophy cannot hand over the thinking of thinking to the non-philosophical sciences, since non-philosophical method cannot tolerate the identity of method and subject matter. It is because philosophy is in itself reflexive, namely about itself, that its content cannot be modeled on another kind of discipline in which the subject matter and content are separate. In fact, it appears that this is the fate of any discipline with any claim to independence. As independent, it cannot locate its principles anywhere except from within itself. According to the distinction between philosophical and non-philosophical inquiry, we can make a strong distinction between kinds of sciences: philosophical science and the sciences that are not in themselves philosophical.

One kind of non-philosophical science is empirical science. Because every empirical science applies thinking to a given subject matter, but does not itself investigate the thinking of thinking per se, every empirical science, at least in this minimal respect, relies upon philosophical inquiry for the employment of thinking as such. For this reason, any attempt to render philosophy an empirical science, for example, would in fact undermine the very project of empirical science itself, since the very ground upon which any possible empirical science rests would be undermined. Hence, it is a grave error to suppose that philosophy only makes progress when it is modeled on non-philosophical or empirical sciences. Usually, it is supposed that philosophy depends on the empirical sciences for its premises, and the negation of the latter would therefore negate the former. But as it turns out, it is at least the case that the self-undermining of philosophy would be the simultaneous self-annihilation of science as such. Instead, a proper respect for science and awareness of what science really is implores us not to treat empirical science as independent. The assumption that empirical science is independent seems to be the source of much confusion.

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9 This is not a tautology, because the claim is that if philosophy were to become a natural science, then natural science would be undermined.
When we think about how we ought to think, how we ought to think about the thinking of thinking becomes an issue. In particular, by ‘thinking about thinking’ we do not mean psychology, or the empirical science of thinking. Because psychology or neuroscience, for that matter, is an empirical science of thought, it is just as unsuitable for a philosophical investigation into thinking as any other science, and we need only apply our argument concerning the restrictions of science to the particular case. Historically, since psychology is a science of thought, philosophers, especially those of the empirical tradition, have too often tended to confuse philosophy with psychology.

Our inquiry into the legitimate forms of thinking is an inquiry into how one ought to think. Our inquiry into how thinking ought to proceed, and how one ought to think about thinking and its reflexive character is normative, as any inquiry into an ‘ought’ is normative. Psychology is primarily concerned with how, in fact, people do think. As such, it is inherently descriptive in character, not normative. It may be tempting to confuse a treatise about philosophical method with the philosophy of mind. But again, we are interested in what it is to be a universal, and this is something one can inquire into irrespective of how universals exist in any particular mind. This topic deserves more attention, and we shall return to this topic later in our discussion of psychologism.

To re-iterate, philosophy is inherently reflexive, and those inherently philosophical disciplines such as logic cannot be pawned off on the non-philosophical sciences. When we ask ‘what is thinking?’ we are thinking about thinking. When one thinks about thinking, the subject matter is the same as the method. Since the thinking of thinking is necessarily a thinking in which the subject matter and method are inseparable, thinking about thinking necessarily belongs to the philosophical discipline. We do not mean to claim that it exhausts the activity of philosophy, but only that it is central to the practice of philosophy.
Given that the thinking of thinking belongs to philosophy, we may begin to address the last question of our introduction: why is the being of universality central to philosophy as a reflexive discipline? The answer to this question follows from what we have already said about thinking. When we inquire into ‘what thinking is’ we are not asking about a particular thought such as ‘extension’ or ‘immaterial’, but what it is to be a thought simpliciter. To ask about what it is to be a thought, we are asking about what is universal about each and every thought. To know what thought is in itself, as thought, is not to know what thought is contingently, for if what one posits as thought could be otherwise, then thought could be even without the determination one posits. Hence, what thought is in its contingent aspect appears to be external to thought per se. Thus, we are after what thought is necessarily, that without which thought could not be what it is.

Since we have already noted that the concern of this treatise is the cognition of universality, in discussing the object of thinking, I shall employ the term ‘universal’ or ‘concept’ instead of ‘thought’, in order to limit the scope of discourse to those terms with universal bearing. I shall, in the early portions of the discourse, use ‘universal’ and ‘concept’ interchangeably.

So far we have established that the question ‘what is thinking?’ aims at what is universal. For this reason, to even know what it is we are asking when we ask ‘what is thinking’ we must inquire into what universality is. Although we ought to acknowledge that there may be other types of thinking that are not reducible to thinking what is universal, we shall limit our inquiry to the following question: ‘what is the universal?’ We could also motivate this question from other fundamental philosophical questions, such as ‘what is knowledge?’ or ‘what is Being?’, for in each of these cases we are asking for what is universal, namely what makes every instance of knowledge what it is, or what makes every being what it is.
Having restricted our concern with thought to universals, and not to other it is easy to see the reflexivity of the question concerning the being of universality.

On the face of it, the term ‘universal’ appears to be that which is common. Because we appear to be inquiring into what is common, what is common is common to some plurality of particulars. As that which instantiates the universal, particulars are usually understood as instances of universals. Hence, our inquiry into the universal also requires an inquiry into particularity as such. Indeed, that is what we seem to be after, for we desire to know what every thinking necessarily is, or what every being or knowing is. In the course of our inquiry, this assumption that we make about our inquiry must itself come under scrutiny. Naturally then, our inquiry into the what it is to be of universality aims at what is common to every universal. Since we are asking about what is universal about each and every universal, our inquiry may be formulated reflexively: ‘what is universal about universality?’ Just as the thinking of thinking is reflexive, so is the inquiry into the universal character of universality. Just as we inquire into what thinking is necessarily, we do not mean to inquire into what is contingently universal, but what universality is necessarily. So we might phrase our question again more exactly: what is necessarily universal about universality?

The question, ‘what makes universality be what it is?3 covers up a reflexivity folded within the question. As mentioned above, the ‘what-it-is-to-be’ itself expresses universality. Plato teaches us in his Socratic dialogues that an inquiry searching for the ‘what-it-is-to-be’ always desires the universal. To take an example from Euthyphro, Socrates’ question ‘what is piety?’ desires to know piety qua piety in all pious things.10 Accordingly, by substituting this universality for ‘what it is to be’ we find ourselves asking about the universality of

universality, or, in another parlance, the concept of the concept. Even apart from other philosophical inquiries into knowledge, being, or thinking more generally, the question ‘what is universality?’ is itself a reflexive question. Because it is about itself, it belongs to the class of questions that are properly philosophical. By itself, this would be enough to motivate the connection between the type of activity that is constitutive of philosophy and our main concern regarding what universality is.

I have endeavored to show that our inquiry into the being of universality is an inherently philosophical endeavor, one that is entailed in the notion of philosophy itself. I should also hope to say a few words about the methodology of this inquiry, and simultaneously motivate the historical and systematic investigation of the work. More exactly, I do wish to undermine any attempt to approach this question in a merely formal way. Although I believe that my method will be more thoroughly justified as the inquiry develops, nonetheless, it would help to motivate my historical and systematic approach to this question.

Those detractors of the uniqueness of philosophical method who would insist on the absurdity of our phrase ‘the concept of the concept’ are the same who would insist on an absolute distinction between ‘object-language’ and ‘meta-language’. Those who insist on such a difference would surely claim that ‘concept of the concept’ is a mere equivocation between two different senses of thinking that ought not be identified. If this were the case, my investigation into the concept of the concept would be tantamount to an abuse of language. In what follows I hope to address this concern. Let us address the distinction between the meta-language and object language, and the associated concerns that accompany it regarding our inquiry.
Formal logic, also known as symbolic logic, has found a home in the institution of the academy. What is perhaps most disturbing, though, is the fact that it has a home not in mathematics but in departments of philosophy. As it stands in the early 21st century, most departments of philosophy in the United States require some training in symbolic logic for an undergraduate and graduate degrees in philosophy. Not surprisingly, this requirement seems to have followed a century of great progress in the development of formal systems, mostly in the domain of Analytic Philosophy. By no means do I wish to disparage this progress. Herein, what I mean to argue is only that our question cannot even be approached formally. Accordingly, formal logic does not and cannot make progress on this question. Again, such strong propositions stand in need of arguments.

Because formal logic distinguishes between the method and subject matter of knowing, two different types of languages are needed in order to talk about the subject matter and the method respectively. In order to see why the question cannot be approached formally, let us consider the distinction between object and meta-language that is constitutive of formal logic. In what does the difference between object language and meta-language consist? Object language uses language to speak about a certain domain of entities, such as colors, persons, galaxies, etc. Meta language specifies the structure of the object language. Accordingly, the meta-language takes the object language itself as its object. When we are in the object language, and use the word ‘red’ we are talking about the color red, not the word ‘red’. When we are in the meta-language, we are not talking about the color red, but we are talking about the language itself, in this case the word ‘red’. In formal logic the meta-language defines the terms and principles by which a proof proceeds, while the object language applies these terms to construct proofs. For example, in formal systems the universal quantifier cannot quantify over itself. Though this distinction plays an important role in
formal logic, if we adopt the distinction as *constitutive* for our inquiry into what the universal is, the question itself will fail to have any meaning.

Meta-languages qua meta-languages can themselves be objects of other, more universal, meta-languages. Still, as meta-languages they cannot be used to speak about themselves. They are not *for themselves* object languages, but are only object languages in respect to *different* meta-languages. In this respect, the distinction between the two can be understood as a *relative* distinction, insofar as some meta-languages can be object languages for other meta-languages. If no meta-language were its own object language, then every meta-language would require another meta-language, *ad infinitum*, in order to define the terms of the discourse. Thus, there would be an infinite regress of meta-languages for each meta-language. In order to stop the regress, the meta-language would need to justify its own terms, yet this is exactly what it cannot do.\(^\text{11}\) As long as we stick to the distinction between meta-language and object language, we shall find ourselves without ground for the distinction itself. In order to stop the regress, that about which we speak (the object of discourse) must itself be identified with the speaking itself (the meta-discourse).\(^\text{12}\)

Our inquiry investigates the universal character of universality. Because our inquiry requires that the subject matter and method be identical, and the meta/object language distinction does not allow the method and subject matter to be identified, this distinction is unsuitable for our inquiry. Indeed, as long as this distinction is in place, we cannot ask ‘what is universal about universality?’ without immediately violating the distinction between meta-language and object language. Yet this is not only what is required in our investigation into

\(^{11}\) Of course, the languages may simply define each other. But in this case, the logical circularity of the justification would, on the principles of formal reasoning, be nothing more than begging the question.

\(^{12}\) The question we are considering here is how it is possible for logic to have subject matter.
the concept of the concept, but also into any fundamentally philosophical question in which the subject matter and the method are identified.

Despite what else may be said of formal logic, and much more shall be said in the course of this inquiry, one distinction fundamental to such logic is the explicit rejection of reflexivity. The very progress of formal logic is predicated upon the rejection of reflexivity. Reflexivity is not possible, because there is a difference between meta-language and object-language that cannot be bridged. This distinction reflects the separation of method and subject matter in the non-philosophical sciences. As philosophical method per se it is found wanting.

Indeed, natural languages, such as English or German, provide the necessary resources to approach our question. In natural language we are able to speak about speaking without much effort. We abuse language in our formal systems when we treat language as though it were not reflexive. Reflexivity is built into natural language in the very grammar of our language, and we have no need to invent another language in which to philosophize. Indeed, it is natural language, not a formal system, which enables us to ask ‘what is thinking?’ or ‘what is the universal?’ At this point we need not demonstrate how this is possible; only that we can, in fact, do it. In fact, it seems that inventing an artificial language that separates the meta-language from the object language actually prevents us from engaging the properly reflexive questions, such as the question concerning the being of universality. Thinking about thinking requires that thinking treat both the thinking by which we think and the thinking about which we think. The subject ‘thinking’ and the object

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13 I would also like to note in advance that the rejection of reflexivity will also necessarily entail the rejection of self-reference and existential implication, which we shall discuss shortly. Since what universality is requires us to adopt these concepts, formal logic will also fail for its inability to pose the question concerning universality in a meaningful way.

14 Although he mentions other reasons, Hegel also advances the view that philosophy stands in no need of special terminology. For his comments, see Hegel’s SL, the Preface to the Second Edition, 32.
‘thinking’ are treated in one act of thinking. Both the subject of thought and its object simultaneously find themselves in the “meta” and “object” language. Indeed, upon recognizing that in one act of thinking we must grasp the subject and object of thought all at once, it no longer makes any sense to employ the terms “meta” or “object” language. We cannot think about thinking if we impose an artificial distinction between meta-language and object language. In such a case, we shall never think about thinking. Ironically, it is in logic that such a distinction has been made into a dogma, yet it is exactly in philosophical logic and philosophical method where this distinction cannot be tolerated. Generally, any discipline that purports to be independent, and quite a few philosophical disciplines compete for this designation, cannot tolerate this distinction. For these reasons, our discourse shall proceed in natural language, freed from the fetters imposed by artificial systems. Indeed, any claim that philosophical method is formal immediately undermines itself, for the claim must be about itself. Insofar as it is about itself, it has already admitted that subject matter and method are inseparable. For this reason, any claim that philosophical method is merely formal cannot help but have reflexive form.\textsuperscript{15}

Historically, philosophers have often attempted to model their own discipline not on the empirical sciences but mathematics. For this reason, one might think my comments on the uniqueness of philosophical method are insufficient without some mention of mathematics. Although far from being an expert on the esoteric reaches of mathematics and mathematical method, I will, in the following comments give the reader, especially anyone inclined to model philosophy on mathematics, some pause.

\textsuperscript{15} For us, the significance of the Klopstock line quoted earlier is well expressed in the analogous situation the philosopher finds himself as a pursuer of truth. Hegel quotes this Klopstock line in the Forward to the Doctrine of the Concept in SL, 575. In the course of our investigation we further investigate this contradiction, and work it out in greater detail.
The reflexive being of philosophy brings us to another consideration of great import for our inquiry. Although our inquiry into the being of universality will not proceed in a formal language, one might desire some, albeit brief, comments on why our inquiry into the being of universality should not be modeled on mathematics in particular. First, we should note that theoretical physics, although mathematical, is still indebted to empirical verification and falsification. We may also note that in mathematics we begin with a definition, wherefrom we deduce properties, as we might with geometrical objects. When we ask ‘what is universality’ we do not yet know what universality is. In the question ‘what is universality?’ we seek out the definition. It is not as though we already know what universality is, and our job is to simply deduce the properties that are necessary to it. Unlike in mathematics, our inquiry cannot begin with a definition, but instead we are seeking one out. In our case, we do not begin with definition of universality, but we are seeking it. This is also obvious from philosophy as a reflexive discipline. Insofar as the method and subject matter are unified, philosophical inquiry cannot begin by stipulating the subject matter without stipulating the method and the other way around. Indeed, if we were to proceed as is common in mathematics, we would beg the question from the very beginning by stipulating what we wish to know. More simply put, mathematics treats other universals, but not universality itself.

Moreover, pure mathematics, however esoteric, appears to suffer from the same limitation from which the other sciences suffer, namely that quantitative analysis does not take its very being, ‘quantity’ as its own object. The being of a number, for example, belongs

16 Although Hegel rejects modeling philosophy on the mathematics, Hegel, in SL, at 577, suggests that logic could be modeled on mathematics, and that if this were the case, logic would need to presume the logical element in the system, as is the case in geometry. Collingwood cites Kant’s Critique, A727/B755 on this issue. Collingwood paraphrases Kant: “Philosophy knows no definitions: or rather, their place in philosophy is not at the beginning of the inquiry but at the end; for we can philosophize without them, and if this were not so, we could not philosophize at all. Collingwood, An Essay on Philosophical Method, 22)” Collingwood, An Essay on Philosophical Method, Oxford University Press, 2008.
in the purview of the *philosophy of mathematics*. Although one can treat ‘quantity’ quantitatively, e.g. one can count the concept among others in an ordered series, this does *not* constitute an analysis of quantitative methodology as such. In its quantitative treatment of its own concepts mathematics is actually indifferent to its own *qualitative* treatment of the object, i.e. its ‘way’ of approach. Because, as Collingwood calls them, the *exact* sciences, such as geometry, find themselves in a similar predicament as the empirical sciences in this matter, we shall eschew taking mathematics as a model for philosophical inquiry. By no means do I wish to imply that mathematics is not of interest to philosophy. I only wish to insist on the independence and uniqueness of philosophical method. In fact, the early attempts of Analytic Philosophers such as Russell and Whitehead in their seminal *Principia Mathematica* to ground arithmetic in set theory presume that mathematics does not ground itself. Its subject matter and method is grounded on an anterior discipline: logic.

To review, the question concerning the being of universality is central to philosophical inquiry. This has been made evident by showing that the reflexivity of the question concerning universality belongs to the class of properly philosophical questions, and is endemic to philosophical inquiry. Accordingly, our inquiry will make an effort to eschew modeling itself on any other discipline, such as mathematics, formal logic, or the empirical sciences. Lastly, we shall proceed in our investigation via the medium of natural language, since this is sufficient for our inquiry.

When we think about what the question, ‘what is the universal?’, demands of us, we discover that it calls us to give an answer that, at the very least, contains the following features: *self-reference* and *existential implication*. By ‘self-reference’ I mean that the subject, universality, applies its own universal content to *itself*. By ‘existential implication’ I mean that

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universality, on its own, is that in virtue of which instances of the universal, or more generally, particulars, are given.

When we inquire into the universal character of some particular universal, such as the concept ‘number’, we are interested in to what extent that particular universal, such as ‘number’, exemplifies the characteristic that is definitive of universality. Now, our inquiry aims not at how some particular universal exemplifies the characteristic of universality, but how universality itself exemplifies the characteristic ‘being universal’. Universality, of course, is that in virtue of which any particular universal, such as number or quality for instance, is universal. Naturally then, universality itself must have that very characteristic ‘being universal’ in virtue of which it grants universality to every universal. For this reason, our inquiry ‘what is universal about universality?’ applies the characteristic ‘universal’ to that which is already inherently universal, or that which is universal in virtue of itself. Instead of applying ‘universal’ to a particular universal, we are applying ‘universal’ to that which is ‘the universal’. Thus, our question is self-referential, and calls us to answer the question self-referentially.¹⁹

Upon recognizing that the question calls us to heed the self-referential character of the universal, we can also immediately recognize why existential implication is also implied by the question. Because the concept ‘universal’ applies to universality, universality itself must also have some universal content. Insofar as it has some universal content that is its own, that universal content will constitute the predicate in the following judgment: ‘universality is such and such.’ Because universality must have its own universal content, it cannot be identified with other particular universals, such as ‘number’ or ‘quality’. Given that universality itself is universal, and has its own universal content, universality itself must

¹⁹ Naturally, this raises the following question ‘can something be defined through itself?’ In our systematic discussion in Sections III and IV we address this issue directly.
therefore be a distinct universal that is different from others. As a distinct universal, universality will be its own particular, or its own instance. In conclusion, we can infer that from the very question ‘what is universal about universality?’ we see that the universal itself must imply that there is at least one particular: itself.

In Section III of Division II, Paradoxes of Self-Reference, we motivate Hegel’s principle of self-differentiation by laying bare four dogmas of universality that give rise to four paradoxes of self-reference: the problem of the missing differentia, the problem of participation, the problem ofpsychologism, and the problem ofonto theology. These paradoxes have prevented philosophers in the history of the Western tradition from recognizing and developing the concept as the principle of self-differentiation. In this section we recognize four dogmas: that contradiction entails the total absence of determinacy, the finitude of the concept, the separation of principles of universality and particularity, and the appeal to foundations. As we shall see, the concept of self-differentiation solves the four paradoxes of self-reference by fundamentally undermining the four dogmas of universality.

In the course of our inquiry into the being of universality, we shall also be engaged in an analysis of the concepts of self-reference and existential implication, both historically and systematically. In Section IV of Division II of this work we discover the principle that lives up to the call of the question. Indeed, this principle is that in virtue of which the universal is self-referring and existentially implicative: self-differentiation. Accordingly, our main task in Section IV is to reconstruct Hegel’s concept of self-differentiation in close detail as it shows up in his Logic of the Concept. Central to this exposition will be the reconstruction of the three elements of the self-differentiating concept: the universal, the particular, and the individual.
Though Hegel’s philosophical account offers unique insights into what the universal is, his account is not indifferent to the history of Western philosophy, and it draws on concepts that arise within the history of Western philosophy. For this reason, Sections I and II of Division I explore the ways that the concepts of self-reference and existential implication show up in the history of Western philosophy. Still, though concepts essential to laying bare the character of universality do appear in the history of philosophy, they are constantly in conflict with other principles, such as the dogmas of universality that render the accounts incomplete.

In the history of philosophy, we find two general tendencies regarding the philosophical theory of the concept: the rejection of self-reference and acceptance of self-reference. Though we find these opposing tendencies in ancient and modern thought, the concepts of self-reference and existential implication are connected to different metaphysical, epistemological and logical concepts in these traditions. For example, while for the ancient Greeks the question regarding the possibility of self-reference is inseparable from the concept of Form, in modern philosophy the center of the discourse shifts to the issue of intellectual intuition. Because philosophical heavy weights such as Aristotle, Kant, and Wittgenstein all reject self-reference as an aspect of their theory of categories, motivating Hegel’s account of the universal requires deep historical analysis, as well as philosophical critique.

Because our main goal is to think what universality is and must be, the investigation into the history of philosophy in Sections I and II has as its main goal the historical elucidation of the principles of self-reference and existential implication, the classical dogmas of universality, as well as the way universality itself has been conceived in the dominant

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20 These terms shall be defined as we proceed to discuss each of these traditions in turn.
traditions of Western philosophy. The goal is not to provide a complete account of the
history of Western philosophy, but instead to mine the history for ideas that Hegel himself
will adopt and integrate into his account of universality as self-differentiation as well as those
concepts that he discards as stumbling blocks.

To speak metaphorically, Hegel is quite clear that philosophy itself already contains
the material required for re-building the ancient city (the concept). For Hegel, philosophy is
an occupied wasteland, in need of purging and reformation. Hegel, in his Forward to the Doctrine
of the Concept, in the Science of Logic, introduces a metaphor that may help us elucidate the
problem with which we are here concerned and the way that we shall approach the historical
side of our inquiry. Besides excusing his poor exposition of the concept in his forward to the
Doctrine of the Concept, Hegel notes that unlike other subjects of philosophical logic, there
is no dearth of content or material from which to develop the logic of the concept. Although
there is plenty material, this material is, in Hegel's metaphors, ossified, dead, ready-made,
and solidified. As Hegel writes,

“[…] for the logic of the Notion, a completely ready made and solidified, one may say
ossified material is ready to hand, and the problem is to render this material fluid and to re-
kindle the spontaneity of the Notion in such dead matter. If the building of a new city in a
wasteland is attended with difficulties, yet there is no shortage of materials; but the
abundance of materials presents all the more obstacles of another kind when the task is to
remodel an ancient city, solidly built, and maintained in continuous possession and
occupation.”

As Hegel writes, the goal of his Doctrine of the Concept is not to produce new materials,
but to enliven and ignite dead material. Because formal philosophical methodologies, for

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21 Hegel notes that in the logic of being and logic of essence a fresh start is made with novel contents, whereas
in the logic of the concept the materials for beginning are readily available, despite their lying in disarray.
22 Hegel, Science of Logic, 575. For the logic of the Notion, “ein völlig fertiges und festgewordenes, man kann
sagen verknöchertes Material vorfindet und die Aufgabe darin besteht, dasselbe in Flüssigkeit zu bringen und
den lebendigen Begriff in solchem toten Stoffe wieder zu entzünden.” (WFL, 243) Hegel, Wissenschaft der Logik
II. Frankfurt Am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1986.
example, cannot even approach the question of universality, philosophical logic is a ‘wasteland’. The history of philosophy may assure us that there is not a dearth of content from which to generate a logic. In Sections I and II of Division I we make an effort to enumerate the materials ready to hand in the remodeling of this ancient city\(^\text{23}\), and show how this city has been slowly decimated to the point at which the question concerning universality can no longer even be approached. As we work, we shall note what about this ancient city is worth keeping and what can be discarded. The task of logic is not to build a city out of nothing or from new materials, but to re-construct an ancient city. The materials for philosophy are there, but there is nothing to dwell in. There are bricks, lumber, nails, etc., but they fail to form anything in which one can live.

On the whole then, this treatise is divided into two parts. Division I, consisting of the first two sections, is explicitly historical. The topics of the Division I investigate the various ways in which the Western philosophical tradition has conceived of universality. In the process of our inquiry, we shall also discover and develop some theoretical empathy for the philosophical and systematic reasons for insisting on this separation of method and content, meta-language and object language. In particular, we shall also use the history of Western philosophy in order to exemplify the various systematic ways universality can be conceived. The historical analysis provides us i) a source to illustrate the different forms of universality and ii) a way to trace our own contemporary difficulties in approaching the question.

In Division II we shall uncover some self-referential paradoxes that dog any attempt to make headway on our question. In this division we shall see that these paradoxes,

\(^{23}\) As we shall see, the ancient city that Hegel aims to reconstruct, among other things, is Aristotle’s logic. This is one of the basic theses of the dissertation: that Hegel’s logic is a dialectical rendering of the old Aristotelian system. I argue that this dialectical rendering of Aristotle’s logic appeals to Plato’s Parmenides for inspiration and direction.
explicated in their historical context in the first two chapters, will provide us the guiding thread by which we may approach our question systematically. By working out the problems plaguing the major historical inquiries into our subject, the source of these paradoxes will be excavated, revealing some philosophical dogmas which imperil any philosophical inquiry into the subject. Division II also aims to provide a solution of the problems by reconstructing Hegel’s *Logic of the Concept* in his *Science of Logic*. In order to give the reader some sense of the impending difficulties, we ought to reflect briefly on the more problematic character of our inquiry in its most general form.

Certainly, if philosophy must take itself as an object of thinking, the discipline finds itself at an impasse of impasses. All avenues for proceeding appear impossible, and as Heidegger said, it seems that our only way forward is to wait on a God to save us.\(^\text{24}\) Our investigation into the concept of the concept makes the conceptualizing of the concept itself the content of the conceptualizing. In his *Meno* Plato already raised the problem with which we are here, in one way or another, concerned.\(^\text{25}\) Either we already know that into which we are inquiring, or we are ignorant of the object. If we know what it is into which we are inquiring, then we have no need to inquire. If we do not know what it is we are inquiring into, then we do not know what we are looking for, and will not recognize the object upon finding it.\(^\text{26}\) For this reason, the reflexive character of philosophy necessarily renders it inherently *aporetic*. Every possible path we could take is blocked; this is the meaning of

\(^{24}\) See Heidegger’s 1966 interview with *Der Spiegel*.


\(^{26}\) Hegel puts the problem in more technical terms: “What philosophy begins with must be either mediated or immediate, and it is easy to show that it can be neither the one nor the other; thus either way of beginning is refuted.” (Hegel, *SL*, *With What Must Science Begin*, 67.)
aporia.\textsuperscript{27} We see that the road on which we travel in philosophy, the method, is not a journey we can take, no matter what route we attempt.

Indeed, if we are to take the concept as the object and the method, then we beg the question, for we already possess the concept. Yet, if we do not know what it is to conceive, then how shall we conceive the concept? Either we beg the question concerning universality altogether, or we simply cannot begin. It appears that beginning our inquiry must be arbitrary if it gets underway at all. On the one hand, \textit{prima facia}, this may be the fate of this very discourse. We begin with history, but others may begin elsewhere. On the other hand, the aporetic character of philosophy, as illuminated in the Meno paradox, is inherent in the discipline itself, and seems to be a non-arbitrary starting point, for upon asking the question ‘what is universality?’ we immediately find ourselves in paradox. In this way, the aporetic character of philosophy is what we encounter upon initially asking the question. What a misfortune it must seem for the sciences to depend upon a discipline whose very legitimacy is a question for itself. As we shall see in light of the inquiry, \textit{dialectic}, the quintessential philosophical method, implores us to preserve both the reflexive and aporetic sides.

Since it is unbecoming of philosophers to appeal to God’s saving power, let us take another gander. In Plato’s text, the objection to the reflexive question appears to be an objection to \textit{learning} as such. On the one hand, if the learning is empirical, or one in which the learning itself is distinct from the object learned, the paradox appears sophistical. I know what a book is. In fact, when I misplace a book, I know what it is I am looking for, since I know what a book is, and what particular book I have lost. On the other hand, when it is learning itself one wishes to learn about, how will one begin without already assuming what one wants to know? When the inquiry and the object are identified, no progress seems

\textsuperscript{27} From \textit{Aπορεω}, ‘aporia’ is literally a ‘non-passage’.
possible, and knowledge itself hangs in the balance. Our inquiry into the concept of the concept must be reflexive. Yet it appears that we must beg the question at every point, for that into which we inquire is the same as that by which we inquire. Indeed, to make progress on that question, it appears that it cannot be reflexive. To make progress on this question seems impossible. If we insist on the reflexivity of the question, then we find ourselves begging the question. If we reject reflexivity altogether, then the question ‘what is the universal?’ loses all sense. As we proceed in our inquiry, we shall have this paradox in mind, as it shall be re-formulated in different terms more pointedly related to the particulars of our discourse.
Division I

The History of the Problem of Universality:
Rerecollecting the Universal: A Brief Begriffgeschichte

As a rule, in the following Section, I shall only discuss authors relevant to my excavation of the various types of universality, the problems connected therewith, and I will restrict my discussion only to those aspects of their thought pertaining to universality. The three kinds of universality that we shall systematically explicate in Division II have already been explicitly developed in the history of philosophy. For this reason, I understand our foray into the history of philosophy as a preparation for our much systematic exposition. Although particular interpretations of the history of western thought cannot help but color the reading of the authors I discuss here, it cannot be the aim of this chapter to engage in such a reconstruction, for it would distract from the systematic goals for which I am exerting myself.
Section I

Classical Greek, Hellenistic, and Medieval Philosophy:
Self-Reference and Existential Implication in the Concept of Form

I shall, both for the sake of simplicity and illustration, primarily focus on two works of ancient philosophy: Plato’s *Parmenides* and Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. It is with Socrates and Plato that the tradition’s consciousness of *universality* is brought to the light. To be sure, Plato draws on the pre-Socratics in constructing his theory of Forms, but the pre-Socratics do not really treat universality *per se* or come to terms with the paradoxes at the heart of universality as Plato does. Accordingly, as we develop the account of universality propounded in *Parmenides*, we shall briefly discuss the influence of Parmenidean and Heraclitean arguments in setting up the initial terms of Plato’s thinking about universality. Other pre-Socratics could be consulted, the most conspicuously absent figure being Pythagoras. Nonetheless, Parmenides and Heraclitus should be sufficient to help motivate Plato’s account, as well as motivate problems connected therewith.

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28 We should note that for Plato universality is a thing, not merely a thought. Yet, his discussion of universality is bound up with the discussion of Forms, and cannot be investigated independently thereof. For this reason, we must be careful to cull Plato’s insights regarding universality from his discussion of Forms while being careful not to equivocate.

29 For more on how Plato conceives of his own account in relation to Parmenides and Heraclitus, see Plato’s *Sophist* in which he rejects accepting either account wholesale.
“If then, someone shall try to show that for things such as stones and wood and the like, the same things are many and one, then we will say that he’s demonstrated that some thing is many and one, not that the One is many or the Many’s one. He’s not even said anything wondrous, but only what in fact all of us should readily agree upon. But if someone, as I said, shall first distinguish the forms as separate in themselves, such as Likeness and Unlikeness and Multitude and the One and Rest and Motion and all the like, and then will show that in themselves these things can be mixed together and separated, I’d admire that with wonder, Zeno!”

What does it take to make the young Socrates of Plato’s Parmenides wonder? As the quote indicates, Zeno must not only show the mundane thesis that sensible things are many and one, e.g. a human hand, as Zeno’s treatise demonstrates, but that Likeness itself is Unlike, and Unlikeness itself Like, and likewise for all other Forms. The reason is clear: Young Socrates’ theory of Forms posits that each Form \( \varepsilon \delta \sigma \) is itself by itself, \( \alpha \nu \tau \circ \kappa \sigma \theta \eta \ \alpha \nu \tau \). So, if any Form admitted its opposite, it would cease to be itself. It would be opposed to itself. Socrates challenges Zeno to show him that the Forms admit their opposites. Parmenides takes up the challenge, and through the criticisms of the Forms and the hypotheses constituting the majority of the work systematically brings Socrates to the place of wonder.

Unlike the variegated hierarchy of Forms in Republic, the theory of Forms, as Socrates posits it, is quite simple: there are universals, e.g. ‘Likeness’, and particulars, e.g. a human hand. The things we call ‘many’, the particulars, acquire their determinate character by “partaking” or taking a share in the universal that shares its name. The universal is a

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31 Plato shifts in his usage of the word to partake. See 128e- 129b. Plato first discusses participation as \( \mu \epsilon \tau \alpha \lambda \alpha \mu \beta \alpha \eta \alpha \nu \iota \upsilon \) and shortly thereafter shifts his usage to \( \mu \epsilon \tau \varepsilon \zeta \iota \upsilon \).
‘one over many’, a thing in virtue of which particulars have being. Accordingly, a particular finger is like other fingers through participation in Likeness itself, and unlike other fingers through participation in Unlikeness. As Socrates suggests, there is nothing wondrous about a human hand partaking in opposing qualities, since it is like and unlike via participation in different Forms.

We may best approach Plato’s Forms by briefly considering Parmenides’ *Way of Truth* and a couple of brief aphorisms from the book by Heraclitus the obscure. In the *Way of Truth*, Parmenides states that there are only two roads of inquiry: the way of being and the way of non-being. The way of non-being is not a way of inquiry, because any attempt to inquire into non-being renders non-being some being. Therefore, inquiry cannot help place one on the inquiry into being, as there is no other path that is thinkable. As the argument shows, Parmenides identifies being *[einai]* with thought *[νοεῖν]*. Unlike the inquiry into non-being, the inquiry into being does not transform the object of inquiry into its opposite. What can be thought and can be stays itself, while that which cannot be, non-being, admits what it is not, being. There is no contradiction in ‘Being is’. Being is, and Non-being is not. As Parmenides writes:

[… ] for it can be, and nothing cannot. This I bid you ponder. For from this first road of inquiry <I bar you> and then from the road along which mortals who know nothing wander, two-headed; for impotence in their breasts guides their erring thought. And they are carried along both deaf and blind, bewildered, undiscerning crowds, by whom to be and not

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32 When one asks ‘what is non-being?’ one inquires into the being of non-being. One cannot help but render non-being a being when one asks the question. Likewise, in order to answer, I must state that non-being *is* such and such. But if non-being is not, it cannot be anything. When I think about non-being, it becomes an object of thinking, an object of investigation and ceases to be nothing. The only thing into which one can inquire is what has being.

33 Each of the following translations of the early Greek philosophy is reproduced from Barnes, Jonathan, *Early Greek Philosophy*, Penguin Books, 2001. “For what is approaches what is” [B 8.25] and “it is indifferent to me whence I begin, for there again I shall return.” [B5]

34 “What can be said and be thought of must be; for it can be, and nothing cannot be.” Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, B 6.1-2.
to be are deemed the same and not the same; and the path of all turns back [παλιντροπος⁵⁵] on itself.³⁶

Most notable here is the claim that it is an error to identify being and non-being. This identification happens on the side of Non-being. Non-being is not, but it also is, as our inquiry into Non-being exemplified. The inquiry into ‘what Non-being is’ rendering ‘Non-being’ some being, thereby giving rise to a unity of opposition. Hence, it is both the same as itself and not the same as itself. Non-Being is contrary to itself. Here we find one of our earliest, if not our earliest commitments to the principle of non-contradiction. What turns back on itself [παλιντροπος] is not. Plato adopts this commitment from Parmenides’ Way of Truth. Universals have Being, and are called the things that are [τα οντα] because they are the objects of thought and are thereby non-contradictory. To take an example from Phaedo, while the Form of Equality is never itself unequal, but is always equal to itself, sensible objects, e.g. the human hand, are both equal and unequal to themselves and to others.

Moreover, Being is indivisible. If Being were divisible, it would be divisible into Being and Non-being.³⁷ Yet, there is no Non-Being into which Being could be divided. Thus, there is only Being in Being. Hence, ‘Being is’ shows that Beings is indivisible. Being is Being, and is not Non-being. As such, Being is indivisible from itself. Non-contradiction insures that Being is indivisible. What is indivisible cannot cease to be, whereas what is divisible can be divided, and thereby can cease to be. Plato adopts this measure of Being in his theory of Forms insofar as he establishes the eternal existence of Forms by appealing to the indivisibility of their being. Its influence cannot be overstated.³⁸

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³⁵ Παλιντροπος is from παλιν, back and η τροπη, turn.
³⁶ Barnes, Early Greek Philosophy, B 6.1-3, B 6.4-9.
³⁷ See Plato’s Sophist for a treatment of these categories as motion and rest.
³⁸ As we will see, not only for the history of Metaphysics, but in the consideration of universality itself, the indivisibility of Being functioned as a basic premise for much of ancient and medieval philosophy.
This identification of Non-Being with sensible things can also be traced to Parmenides’ *Way of Opinion*, for Parmenides’ examples of ‘back turning’ are culled from nature.\(^\text{39}\) Indeed, how wondrous it would be, on Parmenides’ assumption, if universals admitted what they were not! Of course, in Plato’s text this would be wondrous exactly because young Socrates assumes universals to be self-identical. To be is to be thinkable, and this requires the mutual exclusion of contraries. Sensible objects are not qua sensible thinkable, as their principles are contraries.\(^\text{40}\)

Plato does not fail to notice the contradiction in Parmenides’ thought. In order to know that non-being is not a road of inquiry, I need to *think* non-being, in order to see how it transforms into what it is not, namely being. Thus, in order to see Parmenides’ argument I need to be able to think what is not thinkable.\(^\text{41}\) The very fact that Parmenides proposes the *Way of Opinion* is a problem, since this has no being.

What for Parmenides is the way of opinion is for Heraclitus the way of truth. According to Heraclitus, “They do not comprehend how, in differing [διαφερομενον], it agrees with itself—a back turning harmony [παλιντροπος] like that of a bow and a lyre.”\(^\text{42}\) Plato states in Cratylus 402A that “Heraclitus says somewhere that everything moves and nothing rests; and comparing what exists to a river, he says that you would not step twice into the same river.” If what exists is like a river, then it is always changing. Since it is always

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\(^\text{39}\) For Parmenides, nature is ruled by contraries: “And since all things have been named light and night and their powers assigned to these things and to those, everything is full of light and invisible night, both equal, since nothing falls to neither.” Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, B9.

\(^\text{40}\) In the first section of the Parmenides Plato is working out how problematic it is to talk about becoming by thematizing the relationship between the universal and the particular.

\(^\text{41}\) In the fifth hypothesis, 1605b-1163b6 he points out that “So it looks, then, that the One that is not, is. For if it’s not to be something that is not, and instead will somehow let go of being in order to give way to not-being, straight away it will be something that is.” (Plato, *Parmenides*, 162a) This contradiction, in an indirect way, supports Parmenides’ point.

\(^\text{42}\) Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, B 51.
changing, the change is constant.\footnote{One could further argue that the constancy of the change is itself changing—and therefore is not constant at all. For after all, the constancy of change is no constancy at all.} Therefore, the change itself is not changing, but is itself constant. The ‘back turning harmony’ is a self-referring harmony: Change, insofar as it is change, is not changing.\footnote{“Combinations-wholes and not wholes, concurring differing, concordant discordant, from all things one and from one all things.” Barnes, \textit{Early Greek Philosophy}, B10.} In virtue of the river’s differing, it agrees with itself, and in its self-agreement it is self-differing. Like Parmenides, Heraclitus’ discussion of the back turning harmony applies to nature: “God is day and dusk, winter and summer, war and peace, satiety and famine”.\footnote{Barnes, \textit{Early Greek Philosophy}, B67.}

The unity of opposition constituting what exists \textit{hides} in thinking, for when we say or think that ‘what exists is changing’ our judgment implies that it is ‘not constant’. If we say that ‘what exists is constant’ then we imply that that is ‘not changing’.\footnote{“For nature, according to Heraclitus, loves to hide itself” [Barnes, \textit{Early Greek Philosophy}, B 123] Themistius’ Speeches V, Barnes, \textit{Early Greek Philosophy}, 69B.} So, as Plutarch states in \textit{Why the Pythia No Longer Proposes in Verse} 404 E, instead of speaking, we indicate: “I think that you know Heraclitus’ remark that the king whose is the oracle at Delphi neither speaks nor conceals but indicates.”\footnote{Barnes, \textit{Early Greek Philosophy}, B93.} Heraclitus’ aphorisms are obscure, not simply because we do not have the context of his writing, but because he violates non-contradiction in his own thought by predicating opposing predicates to the same subject in the same respect.

As we can see, Plato’s thinking about universality is embedded in a contentious metaphysical debate. The earliest thinking about universality is inseparable from the concern with \textit{Being}. Plato is not surprised that the many admit opposites, since he has adopted the Heraclitean view of the many. Plato acknowledges both Parmenides and Heraclitus in his theory of Forms: Universals, the objects of the intellect, have \textit{Being}, since they are one, self-same, and eternal. But the sensibles, being many, are \textit{Becoming}, as they exhibit the self-
referring harmony. While acknowledging both, the theory of Forms seems to take the side of Parmenides, for Forms are eternal, and do not come to be and cease to be. Never changing, they always exist, eternally awaiting the philosopher to contemplate them.

Plato’s *Parmenides* takes its fame as the dialogue in which Plato criticizes his own theory of Forms. To be sure, scholars have long speculated about the function of Plato’s self-criticism. We can learn something about the problem of universality without having to get lost in the minuta of scholarly debate. Nonetheless, I will suggest that Plato’s self-criticism has a pedagogical function to instruct us about how we ought and ought not think about Forms, and to help us mature as budding philosophers. To begin, we shall focus our attention on one criticism of special import for our inquiry: the third man argument. The first instance of this argument is 132a-b. Parmenides questions Socrates about the relation of universal to particular:

“- I think that you think that each form is one because of this: whenever many things seem to you to be great, it seems probable to you, as you look over them all, that there is one and the same idea. From this you conclude that the Great is one.”
“That’s the truth,” I replied.
“But what about the Great itself and the different great things- if, in the same way, you look over them all with your soul, will there not appear, in turn, some great thing that makes all of them, by necessity, appear great?”
“It looks that way.”
“A different form of Greatness, then, will be revealed in addition to what was Greatness itself and the things that partake of it. And above all of these, in turn, another, that makes them all great. As so each of your forms will no longer be one, but will be boundless in multitude.”

Let us reconstruct the argument. For every plurality, there is some one Form over that plurality in virtue of which that plurality is one. So in the case of great things, looking over all great things, we notice that all of them are great, and draw the inference that there is

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some one Form of Greatness over the many great things in virtue of which the many great things are great.\textsuperscript{49} Moreover, we can form another plurality by including the Form of Greatness in the set of great things. Since we have a second plurality, and for every plurality there is some one Form over that plurality, a different and second Form of Greatness must be posited over the second plurality. Since this Form can be counted in the set of great things, a third Form will be a necessary condition for this third plurality, etc. As Parmenides states, “each form will no longer be one, but will be boundless in multitude.” Either we eternally approach the Form of Greatness, yet never reach it, or the Form is not one, but indefinitely many. Since Forms are indivisible in themselves, the Form cannot be many by addition or division. Since this argument applies to any Form that stands over a plurality, the argument indicts all Forms, not just Greatness. Thus, no Form is ever cognized. Indeed, we find ourselves in a dilemma: either Form does not exist, or they exist but cannot be thought.

As Vlastos has noted\textsuperscript{50}, the premise that moves the argument into \textit{aporia} is the assumption of \textit{self-reference}.\textsuperscript{51} What is predicated of Greatness in the proposition ‘Greatness is great’? If we look at the form of attribution, and momentarily shy away from considering the content of the predicate itself, we see that a universal, ‘great’ is predicated of the subject, ‘Greatness’. When we say ‘x is great’ we do not mean that ‘x is Greatness’, but an instance of Greatness. ‘Greatness’, as the subject of the predicate, is necessarily \textit{one instance of Greatness}, a

\textsuperscript{49} This premise illuminates the sense of Form as \textit{eidos}. An \textit{eidos} is a look. As we look over a plurality with our soul, we see that they all have \textit{the same look}, e.g. ‘being great’, etc… \textit{Eidos} is that which is seen, the form or shape of the thing. This look is an image, which can be separated from the objects bearing the image. This argument against participation illuminates the problems with thinking about Form as an image.


\textsuperscript{51} Self-reference is not only a feature of the early parts of \textit{Parmenides}. This pattern of reasoning is also evident in the hypotheses. For example, in the second hypothesis, Parmenides argues that the One Being is both the whole and part of itself. The One Being is a whole of parts, as it has two parts, ‘One’ and ‘Being’. But ‘One’ is, so it has Being, and Being is one of the two parts, and so Being is One. Therefore, each part ‘One’ and ‘Being’ is ‘One Being’. Thus, the One Being includes itself, the whole, as a part. Likewise, the same, as the same, is other to the other, and the other, as other to the same, is the same as itself. Here, in both these examples, we see the self-reference in virtue of which a term, in virtue of being itself is not itself.
great thing, or better, a particular. Among other examples that could be elucidated, consider the following proposition: ‘The Universe is great’. Here ‘the Universe’ is also a particular subsumed under ‘greatness’. But, here’s the problem: Unlike ‘the Universe’, Greatness itself is a universal, since Greatness contains the very ‘what it is to be’ of Greatness. So, since this argument applies to all Forms, each Form is both universal in itself and a particular. Even worse, the what-it-is-to-be of Greatness, the universal, is an instance of itself, the what-it-is-to-be of Greatness. Ironically, Greatness is in fact great, as it is infinite in number.

Apparently, what generates the infinite regress of Form is the assumption that the same Form cannot be both universal and particular. In other words, the Form must be separated from the particular, yet this leaves us with another task: how in principle can the universal be distinguished from the particular? For Greatness to be an instance of itself would mean that Greatness would simultaneously be the universal and the instance. Greatness is either universal or particular. On the one hand, if I grasp it qua particular, it cannot be the one Form over the particulars, since a Form is not itself a participant in a Form. Yet, if I grasp it qua universal, it cannot be particular, since Form is the one over the many, not one of the many. The argument seems to allow self-reference in order to generate a new plurality, and then seems to abdicate it in order to generate a new Form over that plurality. The constant self-reference and abdication thereof generates the infinite re-iterative relation of universal to particular. If the argument holds water, the indivisible Form admits multitude, its contrary. This is one formulation of the problem of participation.

One ought not dismiss the argument because it is obvious that Greatness is not itself great. Although one may legitimately complain that Greatness is not fitting to be a Form, the argument is even more plausible on a more abstract level. Each Form is one in kind and in

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52 Although one must employ a universal to speak of the universe, it itself is not a common term.
number. Each Form is a Form, *one instance* of Form, e.g. ‘One’, ‘Rest’, ‘Motion’, etc. In this sense, to be a Form is to be *this* Form. Yet each Form is also one in kind, since every Form is a universal, the what-it-is-to-be of ‘One’, ‘Rest’, ‘Motion’, etc. It is integral to Forms that they be universal and particular. The key here is to grasp that there are *a plurality of Forms*. Form itself appears to be a Form. If Form is a Form, there is an infinite regress of Forms. Form itself is either not a Form, in which case it is not known, or it is a Form, and there is an infinite regress. For this reason, the argument is not a straw man, but a criticism of the theory of Forms that follows from the very being of Form. Moreover, since to be a Form is to be indivisible, (which is a problem if Form is one in number and in kind) what could be predicated of a Form that would not annihilate its unity? Any act of predication would add a second term to the first, rendering the Form a divisible plurality. Self-reference seems to be the only resource available to the philosopher who treats the universal as ‘itself by itself’.

Looking back to the pre-Socratics, Plato has undermined the naïve attitude towards Form. If the Forms admit self-reference, they are indefinitely many, and thereby cease to be Forms. Plato, through the mouth of his character Parmenides, vindicates Heraclitus and undermines the indivisibility of Being: In virtue of being themselves, or admitting their own essential quality, the Forms cease to be themselves. Being *becomes*, and Becoming *is*. As Aristotle states, “What’s more, the forms will be patterns not only of the perceptible things but also of themselves, such as the form *genus*, since it is a genus of forms, and so the same thing would be a pattern and an image.”

From this argument and others, Parmenides infers that since the participation of the particular in the universal is absurd, universals must be absolutely separate from the particulars. Form has its power [δυνάμεια] in respect to itself, and particulars have their

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power in respect to themselves, but neither interacts with the other.\(^5^4\) Since we are particulars, as particulars, we never cognize universality, since they are absolutely divorced from us. Therefore, the most immediate lesson we may learn from the criticism of theory of the Forms is that Form is transcendent. Indeed, only a “naturally gifted man” could learn that there is a certain kind and beinghood [\(\omegaυ\sigmaιαν\)], in itself, for each thing; […]”.\(^5^5\)

One solution tried by young Socrates is the soul. Since it is by reason that we grasp the universal and the senses by which we grasp the particular, the soul seems to be the region where universal and particular meet. Still, Parmenides refutes this straightaway.\(^5^6\) Although the soul appears to be the meeting ground of both universal and particular, this appears to postpone the problem: what is the unity of the soul by which the particular participates in the universal? We seem to find ourselves laden with two ontological regions with two distinct principles. Since the universal and the particular only have power in respect to themselves, and not to each other, they cannot share the same principles. Thus, Plato advocates an ontological dualism: one principle for universality, another principle for particularity. As we know these principles from Aristotle’s writings, these principles are the One and the Indefinite Dyad.\(^5^7\)

Since Knowledge itself is of Truth itself, and Knowledge itself is inaccessible to us, it follows that Truth in itself cannot be thought. As Plato argues, it is only through Knowledge

\(^{5^4}\) Plato, *Parmenides*, 133d.

\(^{5^5}\) Plato, *Parmenides*, 135b.

\(^{5^6}\) Plato, *Parmenides*, 132b-d.

\(^{5^7}\) "Now since the Forms are the causes of everything else, he [i.e. Plato] supposed that their elements are the elements of all things. Accordingly the material principle is the Great and Small [i.e. the Dyad], and the essence is the One, since the numbers are derived from the Great and Small by participation in the One" (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 987 b). "From this account it is clear that he only employed two causes: that of the essence, and the material cause; for the Forms are the cause of the essence in everything else, and the One is the cause of it in the Forms. He also tells us what the material substrate is of which the Forms are predicated in the case of sensible things, and the One in that of the Forms - that it is this the duality (the Dyad), the Great and Small (Further, he assigned to these two elements respectively the causation of good and of evil" (*Metaphysics*, 988 a).
itself that each of the kinds of knowledge, each Form, is thought.\textsuperscript{58} Indeed, here we are invited to think about the Forms as constituting \textit{one region} in which the Forms reside.

Knowledge of the Form of Knowledge would give us knowledge of each species of knowledge, each Form. Here, we see that Plato conceives of universality in terms of a kind of genus. Still, we must be careful, for since each Form is itself by itself, there is no prior difference that could differentiate a Form. Moreover, since particulars and universals are absolutely separate, there is no way to determine what particulars fall under what universals. Or better: since each particular fails to instantiate the Form, there \textit{are no particulars that fall under any one universal}. Every time we attempt to grasp the genus with its entire species, the realm of Form as such, we fail to grasp Form as such, since this Form itself will be a Form, leading us back down into indefinite multiplicity. What the problem of participation shows is that in Platonic thought the genus-species determination is in conflict with the specification that the Form is indivisible and exists by itself.\textsuperscript{59} Our attempt to grasp the Form as a genus fails. Instead, the Forms fall into an aggregate of self-same universals having no relation to what is other. Indeed, although Forms are not abstracted, the Form appears more similar to the structure of an abstraction, as each Form is a simple ‘one over many’, which fails to distinguish particulars. In a sense, not only do particulars corresponding to the universals but the Forms also fail to be universal, as they cannot be common terms.

Perhaps most illuminating is how the problem of participation undermines the very \textit{being of Truth}. Since our aim is to know the being of universality, we desire to know what concept of universality we possess corresponds to Universality itself. Truth concerning universality or any universal at all, as the correspondence of a concept with its object, seems

\textsuperscript{58} Plato, \textit{Parmenides}, 134a-134c.

\textsuperscript{59} What we shall see in our discussion of Aristotle is that Plato’s method of division reflects this proto-genus of Form.
impossible. What is essential to note here is that our inability to grasp the relation of particular to universal engenders an inability to grasp the content of universality itself. Since no particular can be correlated with universality, since universals are transcendent, the very what it is to be of any universal, including universality itself, escapes us. Therefore, the problem of participation undermines any attempt to discover the truth of universality. Indeed, it appears that there must be some relation of particular to universality in order for the truth of universality to be revealed.

When one says of a friend that he or she is a true friend, one means that the friend lives up to or corresponds with the concept of friendship. A false friend may appear to be a friend, but nonetheless fails to live up to the concept. What we find in the true friend is the indwelling concept of friendship. What the true friend reveals is that truth assumes that the concept corresponding to the particular must also exist on the side of the particular. By ‘on the side of the particular’ I mean that the universal is immanent in the particular. If the universal were not immanent in the particular, the concept would have nothing to which it could correspond. So, what truth as correspondence assumes is that truth is the self-correspondence of the universal with itself.\(^6\)

\(^6\) ‘Self-correspondence’ in this case means that the separate universal ‘friendship’ is correlated with the universal friendship in the particular friend, not merely the friend as a particular. If there were no correspondence of the universal by itself and the universal in the particular, there would be nothing in common between the universal and the particular upon which a correlation could in principle be grounded. But if we maintain an absolute separation of universal from particular, the particular is severed from truth, for truth, as a correlation, requires the universal. Indeed, this Platonic thesis is common knowledge. But what is perhaps not as often noted is what the participation

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\(^6\) This is a particularity Hegelian concept of truth.
problem illuminates, namely that no universal, construed as separate from the particular, lives up to universality itself. Every universal we think fails to be a true universal. We find ourselves indelibly foreign to one side of truth, and therefore to Truth itself. In the same way as Socrates, we have shown an undue disregard for what is ignoble, and therefore failed to understand what is noble. Because no universal lives up to universality itself, even the true entities, Forms, seem untrue.

Plato himself is not satisfied without offering some solution to the problem. As he writes,

“And yet,” said Parmenides, “if someone, in turn, Socrates, after focusing on all these problems and others still, shall deny that there are forms of beings and will not distinguish a certain form of each single thing, wherever he turns he’ll understand nothing, since he does not allow that there is an ever-same idea for each of the beings. And so he will entirely destroy the power of dialogue. [Emphasis Mine] But you seem to me only too aware of this.”

What Plato does offer in the way of a solution to the paradox is a theoretically negative and mystical response. What Socrates lacks is proper training in dialectics. The excursion into the hypotheses, the second and longest part of Parmenides, offers to give Socrates this training. In order to discuss Plato’s solution to the paradox of participation one need not necessarily investigate the hypotheses themselves.

Plato offers a mystical solution to the problem of participation. His mystical solution is relevant because it is one of the fundamental ways of responding to the question of universality that arises time and time again in the Western tradition. To see the theoretically negative and mystical aspect of Plato’s answer to the question of universality, we should

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61 “Well, you are still young, Socrates,” said Parmenides, “and philosophy has not yet grabbed you as it will, in my opinion. Then you will dishonor none of these things; but as for now, you still look to the opinions of men, because of your age.” (Plato, Parmenides, 130e.)

62 Plato, Parmenides, 135b-c.

63 The mystical response to the problem Plato offers is systematically distinct from other mystical responses to the problem we will pursue at the close of the treatise.
momentarily consider the difference between dialectical and mathematical reasoning in Plato. One needs to look not only to the directionality of the reasoning but also to the type of reasoning involved. Socrates has posited the theory of Forms as a *hypothesis*, but he has not thought through what *follows* from the hypothesis. Socrates’ theory of Forms functions as a hypothesis, or *argument to the best explanation*, if you will, for the empirical world of temporal and spatial things. Parmenides teaches that in order to engage in philosophical thinking, one must learn to *follow the argument into absurdity*. By following Socrates’ hypothesis, we see that it leads to a contradiction, and hence cannot be true. In this way, philosophy only gives us a theoretically negative result, in which mediated reasoning from assumption to conclusion brings us to *aporia*. The claim that particulars participate in universals by getting a share of them must be rejected. Each attempt to grasp how this participation works is systematically undermined in virtue of flaws inherent in the hypothesis itself. The very language of ‘participation’ implies that the Forms are divisible, and Young Socrates himself seems to make this blunder.\(^64\) In addition, it is not only Socrates’ hypothesis which undergoes self-contradiction, but as an exemplar, Parmenides destroys his own hypothesis, ‘the One is’, in the deductions. Since mathematical reasoning deduces from hypotheses, how does philosophy differ from mathematical reasoning?\(^65\)

As Aristotle tells us, Plato was in the habit of asking the following question: *Are we on our way to the first principle or from it?*\(^65\) Mathematics does not move to the first principle, since it only reasons from a hypothesis, e.g. ‘that something *is*.’ The ground of the hypothesis is not investigated. Philosophy, on the other hand, aspires to move toward the first principles. By

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\(^64\) For example, Young Socrates initially considers the particulars to participate in universals as sailors standing under a sail. (Plato, *Parmenides*, 131c.)

inferring that the hypothesis is false, *because* it leads to a contradiction, the argument *reveals the true* as that which is *absent in the particular*. The particular’s failure to be universal or contain universality reveals that the universal cannot abide among particulars and must transcend them. We would not be able to separate Form from particular if we had no insight into the Form at all. Our ability to draw a *limit* requires that we can glimpse that which limits our knowledge. To respect the universal is to reject participation as a ‘sharing in the Form’. That the true is indivisible is an assumption we bring to the discourse; however, that the true, the indivisible, transcends the particular is a result. This is the method of Platonic dialectic. It is both reflexive and *aporetic*.

The self-reference of the Form blurs the difference between the Form and the particular, rendering the former an instance of the latter. The universal, in virtue of being universal, is *a* universal. By referring to itself, the Form ceases to be just universal, for it also becomes particular. Plato repeatedly emphasizes that the Forms are principles of Becoming, yet Aristotle complains that the Forms do not account for motion. In a way, the self-reference of a Form does account for some logical ‘motion’, if you will excuse the metaphor, since *self-reference produces an infinite number of particular universals*. This is evident from the third man argument we rehearsed earlier: the Form, in virtue of being Form, is *a particular* form, and for this very reason another Form must be posited, ad infinitum. The paradoxical result is an infinite number of ‘particular’ forms. The self-reference of Forms expresses not only their status as principles of motion, but also their own becoming, for the Form is always ceasing to be Form and coming to be a particular. As a result, we cannot properly delineate the difference between universal and particular. This blurring of universal and particular undermines our cognition of Forms, and points us to the two ontological principles, the One and the indefinite Dyad, both of which transcend our knowing. This moment of mediated
reasoning [dianoia] from assumption to contradiction points us to the transcendent One, the Form beyond all particular Forms, and the Dyad, the principle of particularity beyond all unity. For this reason, Plato’s reductio points us to the absolute separation of the True from the False (or the universal and the particular), as that which transcends our reasoning. According to this line of reasoning, the two principles of universality and particularity, the One and the Indefinite Dyad, may be grasped as principles of the true and the false respectively. Self-reference, a feature absent from mathematical reasoning, in this particular case, has lead us to the contradiction at the heart of Socrates’ theory. Our glimpse of the transcendent being of the indivisible is our moment of contemplation [νωσ] in which we immediately behold the One as if it were an object of vision. This process of learning is inseparably connected with Plato’s response to the Meno paradox, as it is the Platonic moment of Recollection by which we remember the transcendent. Learning is possible only on the assumption of the sensible object, and most notably, through its failure. The universal, as immanent in the particular, is an illusion of the real, the falsehood, which points us to the being of the true, namely their absolute separation. We only recognize the absolute difference between truth and falsehood in the moment of immediate cognition, or contemplation. The moment we attempt to know them discursively, we fail to grasp them, and they collapse into each other. As it turns out, our discursive understanding brings us to

66 Number itself is not a number, for instance, and largeness itself is not large. Interestingly, Plato’s example in the third man argument is mathematical. The irony here is not only that mathematical are not self-referring, but also that the Forms themselves becomes infinitely numerous upon admitting self-reference.

67 One can see this by taking a quick gander at the first two hypotheses. In the first hypothesis, Parmenides deduces what follows for the One if the One is. Parmenides deduces that no predicate can apply to the one, e.g. it is neither the same as itself or another, nor is it different from itself or another. The One violates excluded middle, namely that every subject is either A or not A. One function of this hypothesis is to show that nothing can be said of the One, and that the One transcends being as in Republic. The third hypothesis, in which the Indefinite Dyad, the infinitely great and small, is explicated, Plato investigates what follows from ‘The One is’, if we think about the One insofar as it has Being. Here, the principle of non-contradiction, that no subject can bear opposing predicates, is violated, e.g. the One-being is both the same as itself and other than itself, the same as other things and different from other things. What generates the contradiction in the second hypothesis is the plurality of terms, e.g. ‘One’ and ‘Being’. Since a violation of non-contradiction is also a violation of excluded
a contradiction irrespective of whether we are attempting to grasp the principles of
universality and particularity or whether we attempt to grasp their relationship. This moment
of vision gives the mature Socrates the conviction to pursue knowledge of the Forms, even
though he does not know them. The mature Socrates does not posit hypotheses, but
undermines them. Here it becomes clear why the soul seems to be the unity of universal and
particular. In the discursive apprehension of universality, self-reference generates infinite
particulars. Thus, the philosophical life is not a stasis: it is the constant striving after the
universal, a constant or resting motion toward the first principle. All cognized Form is Form in
motion. Every attempt to grasp the Form as Form leads to a Form, not Form as such. For
this reason, self-reference generates an infinite motion towards the Form as such, a constant
striving toward Form. The life of the mature Socrates is an eternal movement toward the
Form, the eternal becoming entailed by self-reference. So, it is fine to say that the soul
unifies universality and particularity, but with the caveat that this unity exists only in the
paradoxical sense generated by self-reference.

The immediate cognition of the first principle of universality is ineffable, since the
principle transcends the particulars and is inaccessible to language, for language, as sensible
speech, requires [Form] meaning and sensuous terms. Moreover, the immediate cognition of
the principle of particularity also transcends speech, but for the opposite reason, namely that
Form is utterly absent from the particular, so speech has no access to the meaning by which

middle, since the principles can be translated, it becomes clear that neither the One in the first hypothesis nor
the Indefinite Dyad in the second hypothesis can be distinguished. Both principles, the One and the Dyad, are
indefinite. In fact, each hypothesis, including the One is not, leads to a contradiction. As it turns out, positing
the being or the non-being of the one both lead to indeterminacy. For this reason, the principle of the true
becomes indistinguishable from the principle of the false. Though this interpretation is quite speculative, it
explains why the unwritten doctrine is indeed unwritten: the principles of the true and the false cannot be
spoken of without the result being an absurdity. We come to see that we fail to grasp the principles when we
think about them. It is exactly in our failure to distinguish them that we recognize what they are. This grasp of
the principles is not a ‘conceptual’ grasp, as it were, but an immediate non-conceptual insight into the nature of
the principles.
proper speech is measured. Plato’s familiar designation of the particular as an image of Form is here brought into view. The Form is an Eidos, a look or image of unity. What we encounter in thought is an image of what is not an image. Plato’s doctrine of the One and the Indefinite Dyad is an unwritten doctrine for this reason. Accordingly, Plato notes the following:

But this much I can certainly declare concerning all these writers, or prospective writers, who claim to know the subjects which I seriously study, whether as hearers of mine or of other teachers, or from their own discoveries; it is impossible, in my judgment, at least, that these men should understand anything about this subject. There does not exist, nor will there ever exist, any treatise of mine dealing therewith. For it does not at all admit of verbal expression like other studies, but, as a result of continued application to the subject itself and communion therewith, it is brought to birth in the soul on a sudden, as light that is kindled by a leaping spark, and thereafter nourishes itself.68

So when we purview Plato’s discussion of the relation of universal to particular, we are never given a conceptual account. Instead, we are given a narrative or images, such as Plato’s cave analogy, or an image in the divided line in the Republic. Our task is to know the universal, not merely have an image or pictorial representation of it. What we aim to think conceptually we cannot always picture: a ten thousand sided figure can be thought, but cannot be pictured. In Plato, it is this difference that we desire to clarify, but continually fail to achieve. Because we aim at a purely conceptual grasp of the universal, let us proceed to Aristotle, and investigate how Aristotle attempts to solve the problem of participation.

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In strong contrast to Plato, Aristotle offers philosophy a fundamental alternative to thinking about universality. Still, Aristotle identifies Metaphysics as the primary object of philosophical inquiry, and like Plato, assumes, and in some cases argues for, the inherent intelligibility of Being, though this intelligibility is not fully accessible to us. Following Plato, Aristotle is concerned with the problem of participation, since the relation of particular to universal is central to determining what universality itself is. As we will see, although Aristotle is concerned with this same problem, and understands it as central to our inquiry into Being, he raises the problem in his own unique philosophical terminology. For this reason, we shall initially show that Aristotle is concerned with participation. Thereafter I will briefly discuss some terminology and the basic process of Aristotelian logic. Third, we shall discuss how Aristotle contextualizes the problem in his own terminology and his solution thereto. Unlike Plato, Aristotle’s solution depends on a rejection of self-reference, and is not theoretically negative and mystical. Lastly, I will show that it is precisely in virtue of Aristotle’s solution to participation that another paradox is generated: the problem of the differentia.

Consider the following comment on participation from the Metaphysics:

And to say that they [Forms] are patterns and the other things participate in them is to speak without content and in poetic metaphors. For what is the thing that is at work, looking off toward the Forms?

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70 See Halper, “The Origin of Aristotle’s Metaphysical Aporias” Apeiron, 21 (1988), 6. Although “Problem of participation” is not his language, though he does discuss participation by name in various contexts.
71 This is my insertion.
72 Aristotle, Metaphysics, 991a20.
As Aristotle notes, participation is a poetic metaphor. Lacking any conceptual determination of the unity of universal and particular, what participation is has been left for future generations of philosophers. In another passage, Aristotle writes that participation is not helpful for knowing what is responsible for the appearances. Moreover, in Book H 1045b 8-26, Aristotle explicitly responds to the problem of participation, and locates the underlying assumption motivating the problem. Accordingly, one of Aristotle’s central tasks in the *Metaphysics* is the unraveling of this problem. To begin, let us examine *aperia* nine from book Beta:

Further, one might also be at an impasse about the sources in this way: for if it is in kind that they are one, nothing will be one in number, not even one-itself or being-itself. And how will there be knowing, if there is not something that is one in all the particulars? But surely, if it is one in number, and each of the sources is one- and not, as with perceptible things, different ones for different things-if, then, the sources of things are one not in that way but in number, there would not be anything else besides the elements. For what is one in number means nothing different from what is particular; for we speak of the particular in that ways, as one in number, but the universal is what applies to these.

In this passage, Aristotle simultaneously criticizes Plato’s account of Form, and brings some clarity to the issue of participation. On the one hand, to be one in kind is to be one in respect to the universality under which one falls. For example, Socrates and Aristotle are one in kind, since they are both human beings. As human beings no difference obtains between them. On the other hand, each is a human being, and is counted as separate human beings. Socrates and Aristotle are one in number, as each is counted as a separate one. What Aristotle makes explicit here is that *to be particular is to be one in number.*

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This distinction obviously reflects the division Plato introduced between universal and particular. Given this distinction we come to an impasse. Given that the principles (of knowing and being) are one in kind, nothing is one in number. To know ‘human being’ does not give us a difference between Socrates and Aristotle, since qua one in kind they are indistinguishable. Given some universal, I cannot deduce instances, since the universal does not differentiate its own instances. So, if the principles are one in kind, there are no particulars. Clearly, there will be nothing common or universal to know in the particulars since there are no particulars. But the problem is even worse. If there is absolutely nothing that is one in number, or what is the same, if there were absolutely no particulars, there could not even any universals or unities in kind, for no universal would be one in number. In other words, each universal is only a universal if each is a this and can be counted as a separate universal. If there were no unity in number, then no universal would be a this. Accordingly, no universal could be a universal were there no particulars. Thus, there could not be ‘one-itself’ or ‘being-itself’. Likewise, there could be no ‘unity in kind itself’, for ‘itself’ signifies that the kind is one in number. Since Forms are one in kind, apparently they cannot be one in number. Forms, although indivisible, seem to admit two kinds of unity, unity in kind and number, neither of which seem derivable from the other.

Take the other horn of the dilemma. Presume that the principles (of knowing and being) are one in number. If they are merely one in number, then each is a separate one, since each is particular. Since each is separate, each is unique, and there is nothing in common between any particular. If there is nothing in common, then there are no universals, and nothing is one in kind. If there is no unity in kind, then there is no knowing, since knowing is of what is universal, and to know the particulars they could only be

77 In what follows we shall give a brief account of knowing following the *Posterior Analytics.*
enumerated *ad infinitum*. If there is nothing one in kind, there cannot even be ‘being-one-in number’, since this could be treated as a kind of unity. As it appears, from particularity no universality can be inferred, and from universality no particularity can be inferred. Yet, in order to know what the universal is, we need the principles of universality and particularity. Although the criticism does seem aimed at Plato’s Forms, it *re-enforces the need for a duality of principles*. As Sachs argues in his recent translation of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, Aristotle does advocate for his own theory of Forms, albeit distinct from the Platonic account.\(^78\)

Let us proceed to discussing some basic terminology in which Aristotle contextualizes the problem of participation. In order to understand Aristotle’s solution to the problem of participation, we must discuss his concept of the genus. To grasp the concept of the universal *qua* genus, one should momentarily dwell on how Aristotle fundamentally *undermines and reinvents* the Platonic concept of Form.

In the *Sophist*, Plato introduces his method of division. This method takes as its object sensible kinds and divides them into their respective Forms in which they partake. Since Forms themselves are indivisible, a method of division for Forms as such would be absurd, since Forms are not composed of Forms. So, as Aristotle notes, if one were investigating the essence of the human being, the divider may state ‘animal, mortal, footed, biped, wingless’.\(^79\) Aristotle argues that this method of division fails to make any inferences or arguments, for the questioner asks the interlocutor whether subject x is a or b, and assuming that x is a, places x in that category. Each definition is merely assumed from the beginning, for which

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\(^78\) Among others, see footnote 20 of Sachs’ translation of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. Sachs is correct that “Aristotle is among those who posit forms as causes and as beings, and for that reason he is at pain to criticize in detail the technical working out of that doctrine.”

Moreover, since these Forms are aggregated together, one never knows the principle of unity of aggregation of the Forms in the sensible. However, for Plato this is exactly the point: sensibles are inherently aggregates divisible into various Forms.

Moreover, in this dialogue the Eleatic Stranger defines Being as potency [δυναμις], constituted by motion and rest, and makes the Forms causes of motion, life, and soul. The self-reference of the Form exhibited in Parmenides illustrates the unity of motion and rest of the sensible world: the universal, in virtue of its self-same rest, is constantly moving by becoming other to itself, particular. Accordingly, self-reference is a process of self-differentiation. The power of Form to produce a plurality is also its defect, as it brings the Form into community. Since the Forms are together in the sensible kind, they are in community with each other. In other words, division is only possible if Form is not by itself. Yet, since each Form as a Form is by itself, it cannot be grasped as a Form in community. When Form is in community, it is not by itself, and for a Form to be what it is, it must be by itself. For this reason, whenever Form is in relation to others, it is not what it is, or is external to itself. This self-externality of Form is the being and unintelligibility of the sensible world.

Likewise, any attempt to grasp the Being of Forms as members of the realm of Forms poses the same problem, since they are conceived of existing in community. Again, Form is that which is itself by itself, yet community entails that Forms give up their inherent isolation. Being is the self-externality of Form, or what is the same, Being is the Form insofar as it

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80 See Book I, Part Five of Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics*.
82 We are only able to reject contradictions because we can see them as contradictions. We recognize the what it is to be of contradiction. In a similar way, we see the being of Form in community.
does not live up to the measure of being a Form. Form, as one, is beyond Being, thereby rendering Form without any differentiation whatever.\footnote{What is most pertinent here is the independence of Form. If the Form is in community, then it is not by itself or independent. Since the Forms are in community in the sensibles, they are never grasped in themselves when we think them in the sensible. If we wish to define the Forms by separating them from the sensible aggregation, then we fail exactly because what is indivisible seems to escape definition, which requires division. Every attempt to grasp the Form shows the inability to distinguish Form from the One, as both are transcendent.}

As long as the universal is conceived as \textit{itself by itself}, \[\text{auto kai auto}\] there is no hope to grasp the being of universality. Being ‘itself by itself’ renders universality transcendent, and thereby rendering definitions inaccessible to human thought. In light of this, in order to simultaneously make possible knowledge of sensibles and definitions of Forms, Aristotle introduces divisibility and particularity into the being of the universal, as I will explain below. Our description of the genus in the introduction to the three kinds of universality does not go beyond Aristotle. Surely, it is in Aristotle, not in Plato, where the genus acquires its proper exemplification. The genus \[\gamma\nu\sigma\] is an \textit{inherently divisible universal}. A genus is a universal that \textit{contains} other universals, its own species. As such, it is divisible into its differentiations. The universals contained by the genus are called \textit{species} \[\epsiloni\deltao\].

These species share the common feature of the genus, but are not identical as differentiations. Since the genus itself is only a common term, the \textit{difference} \[\deltaia\phiora\] by which the genus is divided into species cannot come from the genus itself. For if it did, then it would not just be a common term. Hence, the difference must have its origin \textit{outside} of the genus in some other genus. This difference is a \textit{prior} difference, since it must already be given for the differentiation of the genus. Since the genus does not provide the difference on its own, one cannot think the species simply by thinking the genus. On the other hand, the
genus is implied by the species, for it is a differentiation of the genus. Accordingly, the difference ought to imply the genus.\textsuperscript{84}

Since a universal can be both contained by more general universals and contain less general universals, the same universal can be both a genus and a species in different respects. For example, although human being is a species of mammal, its genus ‘mammal’, is also a species of the genus ‘animal’. If there were no highest genus or lowest species, the series of genera would be infinite in both directions. Since an infinite regress is impossible, Aristotle must be committed to there only being a finite number of genera and species in between the highest genera and lowest species. The ‘highest’ genera cannot be subsumed under any more general terms.\textsuperscript{85} Collectively, the highest genera are called categories. Although he provides a different number of categories in different places, the usual suspects include thinghood, quality, quantity, relation, position, state, time, space, activity, and passivity. Since no category may be subsumed under any other, each is independent of the other. Likewise, presuming that all individuals fall under some genus, the categories contain all individuals under themselves, since all lower species fall under them as well. The ‘lowest’ species is a universal that cannot be divided into further species. So, the lowest species contains only individuals under itself, e.g. individual human beings fall under the species human being.

Aristotle’s solution to participation is achieved in the context of a metaphysical inquiry into the being of Being.\textsuperscript{86} As Plato assumed before him, Aristotle’s investigates the being of Being on the assumption that Being is indivisible. Given the indivisibility of Being, any inquiry into the being of something, e.g. the human being, could not ultimately be an inquiry

\textsuperscript{84} The difference ought to imply the genus even if not explicitly stated only if the difference is unique to the species. Otherwise, multiple genera could be implied. Though one might dispute the idea that the categories are genera, Aristotle treats them as such.

\textsuperscript{85} Aristotle does not think there is one highest genus (except in a way, namely as a \textit{pros hen} genus).

\textsuperscript{86} I capitalize Being throughout to signify that we are discussing the ‘what it is to be’ of beings as such, and to distinguish it from any particular being or thing.
into the genus of that being, since the genus is *divisible* into species. Not all universals are genera, however, as the lowest species makes evident. Since the lowest species is *not itself divisible* into species, the lowest species is indivisible. Given that being is indivisible, any proper inquiry into the being of something ought to inquire into the species being. The argument is quite simple: Being is indivisible. In respect to universals, the lowest species is indivisible, for it cannot be divided into further universals. Genera, on the other hand, are inherently divisible. Since Metaphysics studies Being as indivisible, Metaphysics primarily aims at knowing the species, not the genus.

When we inquire into Being [τὸ ὄν] we inquire into the thinghood\(^{87}\) (*ousēia*) of something. For example, when I ask ‘*what is the human being?*’ I am not asking about some attribute of the human being, e.g. its state, position, qualities, or any other category. Instead, I am asking about *what it is* that has these attributes. By what measure ought we investigate the thinghood? Conveniently, Aristotle provides us a measure by which our investigation may proceed. Thinghood is *separate* (*χωριστὸν*) and *a this* (*τὸ δὲ τὶ*).\(^{88}\) For the moment, we shall focus on the former and postpone discussion of the latter condition, as the latter will be central to our formulation of participation. Aristotle’s inquiry into Being is an inquiry into the first principle(s) (*ἀρχή*) of what has Being. As the source of what has Being, a first principle is not derived from something else, but is *that in virtue of which* anything has Being. As that in virtue of which anything has Being, Thinghood is what has being *in virtue of itself* not in virtue of something else. Because it has Being in virtue of itself, Thinghood is separate or independent. Given that Being is what is separate, Aristotle argues that Thinghood is

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\(^{87}\) Here I am following Sach’s translation. The standard translation ‘substance’ is translated from the Latin, and as a principle, I think it the best practice to translate directly from the Greek into English. ‘Thinghood’ is the very ‘what it is to be’ of a being or thing, and for this reason, ‘thingood’ is a proper rendering. This term also frees the reader from connotations regarding substance from the way the term is used in modern philosophy.  

what it is for something to be \( \text{πί ην \ εἶναι} \) or what goes by the more familiar term ‘essence’. The ‘what it is for something to be’ is what something is in its own right \( \text{καθ αυτόν} \). In other words, it is what something is in virtue of itself. Clearly, essence or ‘what it is in its own right’ is separate and thereby fulfills the condition for Being as Being.

The ‘what it is to be’ cannot be distinguished from the thing itself. This is evident by *reductio ad absurdum*.\(^{90}\) For assume that ‘Being’ and ‘what it is to be being’ or ‘being-being’ were separate. Then ‘what it is to be being’ would not be, and Being would not be what it is to be. Indeed, this example is taken from Aristotle himself at *Metaphysics* 1031a30-1031b.

Likewise, being-one would not be one. In these cases, what something needs in order to be, the what it is to be, would be absent from Being, and the same would hold for one. But this is absurd, for then the very Form of Being, the what it is to be, would cease to have being. In order to preserve knowledge of Forms, the ‘what it is to be’ must not be separable from the thing itself. Among other things, what these arguments illuminate is that Aristotle has not wrenched himself from the Platonic concept of Form \( \text{veidos} \),\(^{91} \) for here Aristotle identifies the ‘thing’ with the ‘what it is to be’, and the ‘what it is to be’ has a universal articulation.\(^{92} \) The ‘thing’ appears to be ‘universal’, namely a Form. As we stated in the introduction, when we inquire into what something is, e.g. piety, we are inquiring into the ‘what it is to be’ of something. The what it is to be of something is *universal* \( \text{καθόλου} \) - that which makes the pious- pious, being-being, the one -one. Complicating this issue is the fact that asking ‘what is being’ is reflexive, since we are asking about the *being of Being*. The question ‘what is the universal’ is reflexive in the same way, for it asks about the universal character of

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\(^{89}\) Note the connected to Plato’s formulation of Form as ‘by itself’.

\(^{90}\) Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1031a30-1031b.

\(^{91}\) “For this would be sufficient if it were granted, even if there were no forms, and perhaps even more so if there are forms.” See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1031b 14-15.

\(^{92}\) As we will see, Aristotle argues against this in Z13-16, and must work out exactly how the Form can fail to be universal while having a universal articulation.
universality. Therefore, the inquiry into what Being is exhibits the same aporetic structure as the inquiry into what universality is.

Further, what something is in its own right is, in a way, indivisibly one with the thing itself. For example, ‘reason’ is the principle of what the human being is in its own right, and cannot be subtracted from the thing without the subject ceasing to be what it is. I cannot remove ‘reason’ from Socrates without him ceasing to be a man. Accordingly, the proper definition of a thing, the definition, the genus plus the difference, expresses the essence of the thing. If I can remove something from something without its ceasing to be what it is, I have not uncovered its Being. Employing the same example again, although Socrates may be white, I can remove the whiteness from Socrates without him ceasing to be a human being. Such properties are accidental to the being of the thing. Metaphysics is not an inquiry into accidentals. The accidental is not separate or independent. Quite the opposite; the accidental is inseparable from something, e.g. white always inheres in some subject, and is thereby dependent upon that subject for its being. To sum up, metaphysical inquiry is looking for the definition of an entity, that expresses the essence of a thing, its species being, not the accidents belonging to that species. Although the inquiry into the what it is to be searches for the species, the genus-species distinction makes possible what in Plato was not possible, namely definition. If we only have recourse to indivisible universals, then we cannot apply universals to other universals in order to say what they are.

In contrast to accidents, an attribute is something that is unique to one species or convertible with the species, e.g. ‘capable of laughter’ is an attribute of the human being that is not identical to the proper differentia or essence of the thing. Since species have attributes, and these belong to the species in its own right, it appears that one could define a species

simply by stating the attributes that belong to the thing. Aristotle excludes this as a possibility, since defining a subject-attribute compound such as ‘snub nose’ defines by addition. Since an attribute is an attribute of something, e.g. nose, ‘snub’ already implicitly contains ‘nose’. As Aristotle states, “Therefore, that articulation in which something is not itself present, when one is articulating it, is the statement of what it is for each thing to be.”

Thus, any attempt to define a subject-attribute compound such as snub nose results in the infinite proliferation of subjects, e.g. ‘snub nose nose’, etc. So although attributes may belong to a subject in virtue of itself, the attribute is not the essence of the subject. Instead, the attribute assumes the very what it is to be of the subject, but is not that very ‘what it is to be’ and belongs to the subject in virtue of what it is.

Given that our search for the being of the thing terminates in an investigation into the independence of the thing, the attributes of a subject provide the clue to discovering the ‘what it is to be’ of something. The what it is to be ought to be the cause of the unique aspects, or attributes of an entity. Accordingly, since the what it is to be is the cause of the attributes, and what is expressed in a definition, we know we have the specific difference when we have the cause of the attributes. Given these parameters, to investigate the being of something one must discover (i) the attributes and (ii) their cause. Aristotle’s logic, i.e. his syllogistic and theory of demonstrative reasoning, provides a structure reflecting this metaphysical feature.

The per se differentia of some subject is the first differentia at which the attributes of some subject fail to be accounted for. By first differentia, I mean the differentia from which all

95 Although each knowledge studies one genus, since genera are, for the most part, measured by one species, e.g. ‘white’ is the measure of color, each knowledge studies, in this way, one primary species of the genus. This might cause a problem, as it undermines the claim to independence of inferior species. Since one knowledge studies one genus, one cannot take conclusions derived from one genus and apply them to another. Since a proper definition of a species requires, as stated earlier, a genus and a difference, knowing the species is tantamount to knowing the difference, as the genus is implied by the difference.
the attributes of a thing may be deduced. If we desire to know what it is to be of some triangle, in *Euclidean* Geometry, we first investigate some attributes, including ‘the sum of the angles are equal to two right angles.’ Given some isosceles triangle, if you take away isosceles from the triangle, and you only have triangle remaining, you do not thereby destroy the said attribute. If you take away ‘limit’ and ‘figure’ you *do* destroy the attribute. Still, it is not in virtue of limit or figure that the triangle’s angles equal 180 degrees, as limit applies to all other figures, not just triangles. So, although the attributes of the triangle per se are annihilated, so are all other attributes of other figures. The first difference the removal of which annihilates the attributes is being a *three-sided* figure. The three-sided figure is the first difference the removal of which annihilates the attributes, and is thereby the proper definition of the triangle.

Although this work is not primarily concerned with forms of inference, since inference is posterior to concerns about universality, it will be instructive to briefly discuss the syllogism in order to understand the relation of essence to attribute and it shall also provide contrast for our discussion of hypothetical reasoning in modernity. The per se difference is the middle term in virtue of which some subject is connected with its attributes. In the Aristotelian syllogism, consisting of *three terms*, the middle term is the essence or ‘the what it is to be’. As that in virtue of which the conclusion is drawn, middle terms are *not themselves demonstrable*, since to demonstrate a middle term one must presuppose the middle

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96 This example is culled from Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics* Book I part 5. Although Aristotle does not think that mathematical things are things, it nonetheless exemplifies the process of Aristotelian Science. For Aristotle, we may treat the object as though it were a thing, for the sake of demonstration, although it is not. This allows us to treat all accidentals scientifically, and makes the sciences of arithmetic and optics, among others, possible.

97 In order to make an inference one must already assume some universal. The reason for this is simple. An inference is the act of drawing a conclusion from a series of premises. One cannot draw an inference without premises, and premises are judgments of the form ‘S is P’. Since judgments apply concepts, in this case predicates, to subjects, we must already have a concept of the concept before we can deal with inference.
term. How then, does one arrive at the middle term? As we can see with our example, the middle term is revealed in and through the demonstration itself. By seeing that this term, ‘three-sided’ is able to derive the attributes, i.e. by seeing that it does function as a middle term, we see or immediately apprehend that it is the middle term. No separate process of inference involved. Although we know the attributes before and after we demonstrate, we know why a subject necessarily has those attributes only once we have discovered the middle term. As Aristotle points out, it is the first figure that is the paradigmatically scientific form of the syllogism. Consider Barbara: All A is B. All B is C. Hence, All A is C. The Aristotelian definition, as well as the paradigmatic syllogism is universal, categorical, and unlike Platonic dialectic, *not self-referring*. How does one establish the most basic premises and attributes that motivate the syllogism?

Unlike Plato’s account of learning, Aristotle provides an account of the origin of the universal in which it is not the failure of the object of perception which gives insight into Form, but a *psychological* process that brings the universal to the purview of thinking. As usual, Aristotle gives a military metaphor to illuminate this process: “It is like a rout in battle stopped by first one man making a stand and then another, until the original formation has been restored.” Put in terms of universality and particularity, Aristotle elucidates the meaning of the metaphor:

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98 We should note that one cannot deduce one middle term from another, since properly speaking, the middle term is the articulation of the essence of something. To demonstrate one middle term from another would imply that essences are not independent, and would annihilate the essential being of the deduced essence.


101 Aristotle himself appeals to variables in the *Prior Analytics*. Moreover, because there is a generic way in which inferences are drawn in the scientific syllogism, it is not inappropriate to use variables here, for they exemplify the generic process of inference.

102 In what follows I hope to show that Aristotle’s account of being and logic rejects self-reference. For Aristotle, the term ‘Human’ is not ‘A Human’. For Aristotle, this would be mere nonsense.

When one of a number of logically in-discriminable particulars has made a stand, the earliest universal is present in the soul: for though the act of sense-perception is of the particular, its content is universal—is man, for example, not the man Callias. A fresh stand is made among these rudimentary universals, and the process does not cease until the indivisible concepts, the true universals, are established: e.g. such and such a species of animal is a step towards the genus animal, which by the same process is a step toward a further generalization.\footnote{Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, Book II, Ch 19.}

By running through a group of particulars, we infer that there is some common feature.

Since the categories are the ultimate result of this process of induction, the categories are\footnote{We should note that for Aristotle the categories can apply to all beings even though they are collected empirically. There is, as a result, the problem that the universality of the categories appears contingent, and this is a problem Aristotelians must wrestle with. Moreover, although the genus is a universal that contains its own differences, and is not just a common term, the genus cannot be the source of the differences that it contains. We will show this toward the end of our discussion of Aristotle. For this reason, the internality of the differences is itself questionable, for the sources of those differences are not derivable from the genera in principle.} collected empirically\footnote{Although syllogisms ought to be necessary, since the primary assumptions are grounded on induction, and induction is contingent, it is unclear how the assumptions of a syllogism could be necessary as they are proclaimed to be.} This process of discovery cumulates in an act of intuitive induction, and ought not be conflated with the modern sense of empirical induction. In intuitive induction, we do not construct the universal, since we discover it in a flash of insight, or ‘intuition’, in which we see the universal in the particulars. Henceforth, we abstract out that given feature, e.g. ‘man’ and think it separately from the particular, e.g. ‘Callias’. For Aristotle, induction is the process by which distinct subjects and attributes are first identified.\footnote{See pages 46-48.}

Having shown that participation is a problem for Aristotelian Metaphysics\footnote{See pages 46-48.}, and introduced the basic process and terminology of Aristotelian method, we should now proceed to show how Aristotle contextualizes this problem in that terminology and offers a solution. Since Thinghood is separate \[\chiστον\] \[to \, \tauοδε \, \tauι\], Aristotle argues that Thinghood is the underlying subject \[το \, υποκειμενον\]. Let us first discuss why Thinghood must be a this \[τοδε \, \tauι\]. Consider the proposition ‘Socrates is white’. ‘White’ indicates that
Socrates is *such and such* a thing, where ‘white’ is a modification of the subject. Indeed, universals, as predicates and modifications of subjects, belong to subjects, but are not themselves subjects. ‘What is being?’ is an inquiry into what the subject is, and not what belongs to it, for Thinghood is independent and separate, not dependent and inseparable as predicates are. Since the universal, as a predicate, is not itself separate, and dependent on the subject, Thinghood cannot be universal or *such and such*. Aristotle seems to confirm this: “Again, Thinghood is what is not attributed to any underlying thing, but the universal is always attributed to some underlying thing.”\(^{108}\) If the universal were a thing, then a thing would belong to a thing, yet this is impossible, since independent things are not composed of independent things.\(^{109}\)

Instead, Thinghood must be that which is the *subject* of predication, yet not predicated of something else. The subject which itself cannot be a predicate is what all predicates depend on. As a *this*, one cannot predicate ‘Socrates’ of another subject. Unlike ‘white’ Socrates is not a property shared by multifarious particulars. Thus, it is a *this*, or an *individual*, not a such and such. The underlying subject of predication is independent and a *this*. Hence, Aristotle has two candidates for Being: the ‘what it is to be’ and the underlying subject.\(^{110}\)

Given what we have already said, it should already be amply clear what is problematic here: the ‘what it is to be’ is something universal. How should we interpret the proposition ‘Socrates is a rational animal’? Rational animal is the ‘what it is to be’. But the what it is to be appears to be universal and belongs to the subject. Hence, the what it is to be cannot be the Thinghood. But Aristotle argues that the ‘what it is to be’ is the Thinghood of the thing. On the other hand, if Thinghood is the what it is to be, it is not individual, e.g.


\(^{109}\) For further detail, see Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1038b 20-1039a.

‘Socrates’. The Form is one in kind, but the underlying subject one in number. Aristotle clearly opposes universal to particular in an impasse about the principles:

For if they [the sources\(^{111}\)] are universals, they will not be independent things. (For none of the common predicates signifies a this but rather an of-this-sort, while an independent thing is a this; while if the thing predicated in common were a this and were to be set apart, Socrates would be many animals—himself as well as human being and animal—if each of them signifies somehow that is one and a this.) So if the sources are universal, these things follow; but if they are in the same way as particulars, there will be no knowledge, since of all things the knowledge is universal.\(^{112}\)

Here Aristotle is considering the theory of Forms in which the universals are the principles in which particulars such as Socrates participate. Although Aristotle has rejected Platonic Forms, here, we see how the problem of participation is still very much alive for Aristotle. To further elucidate this problem, and ensure ourselves against easy answers, let us briefly discuss how this problem implies an opposition between Form \([\epsilon\iota\delta\omicron\sigma]\) and the composite, and why Form and material \([\upsilon\lambda\eta]\) for Aristotle are un-generated.

The underlying thing, e.g. Socrates, appears to be the material, a technical term first introduced by Aristotle, though present, in some way, in Plato. The material, one of the four causes, is that out of which something is, e.g. the wood of a table. In the syllable ‘ab’ the letters ‘a’ and ‘b’, as constitutive elements, are the material of the syllable. The material is not what is predicated of something else, as the other categories are, but is that which is rendered determinate by the property or predicate attributed. The wood receives the design of the artisan, while the letters receive the ordering of the syllable. The individual receiving some determination cannot merely be material, for if one strips away all the predicates of the subject, and thereby all the determinacy, there is no thing left to receive the predicates. Indeed, there would be

\(^{111}\) The bracket is my insertion.

nothing at all to receive them. Without Form, the what-it-is-to-be, there would not be anything identifiable to which one could point, no ‘this-here’ as in τοδε τι. Clearly, the assumption at work here is that without universality and Form, no determinacy is possible—not even unity in number. As it appears, Aristotle denies that material is separate. ‘Prime matter’, matter without Form, does not exist.  

Indeed, some Form appears necessary in order for the material to be something identifiable. In the term ‘Socrates’ we do not merely mean the indeterminate material substrate, which is indistinguishable from anything else, as Locke’s ‘I know not what’, for we also mean ‘this man’. Aristotle’s term for the unity of Form and material is the composite. Accordingly, the underlying subject is not merely matter, but a composite of Form and material.

Taking up this new opposition, we may formulate the problem of participation in strong, Aristotelian terms. If the Thinghood of all things is one, then every particular would be one being, which cannot be the case. But if the Thinghood is distributed among the particulars, it is no longer one Thinghood, which is also absurd. According to Aristotle:

Will the thinghood of all things, say all human beings, be one? But that’s absurd, for all things of which the thinghood is one are one being. But is the thinghood many and different? This too is illogical. And at the same time, how does the material become each of these things, and how is the composite both of the two?

Thinghood is both universal and particular, since it is both the what it is to be, and the underlying subject, yet Thinghood is a this, and cannot be universal. When Aristotle’s position is caricatured as positing the universal in the particular, and not independent of the particular, what is usually meant is that the universal is neither a this nor independent.

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Moreover, Form itself does not admit contrariety. For example, the essence of human life, ‘rationality’ itself does not admit contrary properties such as white and black. It is, in good Platonic fashion, an indivisible unity, which does not cease to be itself. In contrast to this, the composite particular, e.g. Socrates, admits contraries, e.g. white and black. Because Socrates is material, he is capable of being affected and this allows opposing qualities to exist in the composite at different times. Yet Thinghood is somehow both Form and underlying subject. How can Thinghood both admit and not admit contrariety? At the heart of this issue is the opposition between Form and material. The Form as such is not itself material, yet the composite is both Form and material. How can the Thinghood be a composite of Form and material? As Plato might argue, it is no surprise that particulars admit opposition, but it would be wondrous if Form could.

“And an impasse no lesser than any has been neglected by both present and earlier thinkers, as to whether the sources of destructible and indestructible things are the same or different.”115 Perhaps most disturbing, Thinghood is both generated and un-generated, since separately Form and material cannot be generated or destroyed, yet the composite can be (and is) generated and destroyed. According to Aristotle:

Now since the composite whole and its articulation are different kinds of thinghood (and I mean that one kind of thinghood in this sense is the articulation with the material taken in along with it, while the other is entirely the articulation), there is destruction of all those things that are called independent things in the former sense (since there is also coming into being), but of the articulation there is no destruction […]116

Since the composite is the unity of material and Form, the composite comes to be when Form and material are united. For example, a bronze sphere comes into being when the

material, the bronze, is shaped into a sphere. But neither the Form nor the material brought to the composite can be generated. For, if the Form were generated, then the Form would come to be out of some material. Since every coming to be requires a given Form and given material, the coming to be of the Form would presuppose another Form, *ad infinitum*. Since this is absurd, the Form is not generated. Indeed, a similar argument can be made for the material. As Plato would also have it, Form is eternal and the condition of the particular, and for this reason the proper object of definition and knowledge.

Aristotle goes on to argue that Form is not only the source of things in demonstrations, but, taking the activity of life as a paradigm, Form is also the *generative principle* of particulars. If Thinghood is Form, then it is un-generated. But since the Form in the particular can come to be and cease to be in the material, the Form also *seems* generable. Thus, if Thinghood is both the ‘what it is to be’ and the underlying subject, then Form admits contrary properties. Indeed, Form, it appears, is both the generative principle and the generated. Since they cannot be both, a march to infinity is in order, for every generated Form would suppose another Form, the generating principle, *ad infinitum*. Indeed, Aristotle risks falling into a Third Man argument of his own.

I do not mean to present these problems as though Aristotle were not aware of them. In fact, Aristotle’s solution to participation hinges on the recognition of such aporia, and I have made every effort to cite Aristotle where it seemed helpful. To finish the discussion of Aristotle’s contextualization of the problem, let us consider one last impasse:

But there is an impasse. For if no independent thing can be made out of universals, because the universal signifies an of-this-sort but not a this, and no independent thing admits of being composed of active independent things, every independent thing would not be composed of parts, so that there could not be an articulation in speech of any independent

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thing. But surely it seems to everyone and has been said since the earliest times that a
definition belongs to an independent thing either solely or most of all; but now it seems not
to belong to this either.\footnote{Aristotle, \textit{Metaphysics}, 1039a15-20.}

If an of-this-sort, or a universal, were a constituent of an independent thing, then the of-this-
sort would be more primary than the independent thing, which is absurd, since the of-this-
sort belongs to the independent thing, on which it is dependent. Yet, the independent thing
cannot be composed of independent things either, for in this case the independent thing
would not be independent. Thus, no independent thing can be composed of parts, since
Aristotle assumes that everything is either an independent thing or belongs to an
independent thing. Indeed, this is consistent with our earlier claim that \textit{Being is indivisible}. But
if an independent thing is indivisible, or has no parts, and every definition has a genus and a
difference as its parts, it follows that no independent thing can be defined. Likewise, no
definition ought to count as an independent thing. Although the genus/species distinction
appeared to render definition possible, it actually seems to have foundered on the
assumption of the indivisibility of Being.

Aristotle’s solution to this problem of definition and participation generally is simple
and elegant. Aristotle’s inquiry into the Thinghood of things investigates why one thing
belongs to another, e.g. why 180 degrees belongs to the triangle. He argues that when we ask
‘what is the human being?’ we are asking \textit{why is the material something?} At least for composites,
we know that material cannot be on its own, as material is something only because of Form.
So when we ask ‘why is the material something?’ we are asking for the Form. Of course, this
unity of Form and material is exactly the source of our impasses concerning universality and
particularity. If Form were transcendent, we would not have the obligation to show the
intelligibility of Form in material. Nonetheless, we would be saddled with the problem of
participation, and sensible form would remain *unintelligible*, while universality and truth itself would eternally be beyond articulation.

The composite is *one whole of parts*. If we return to our example of the syllable, we can see that the composite is not merely an aggregate or a *conjunction* of elements as in the formula ‘a’ plus ‘b’. For although the syllable ‘ab’ is composed of ‘a’, and ‘b’, ‘ba’ is also composed of ‘a’ and ‘b’. One can vary the order of the syllables, while keeping the material constituents the same. This shows that the order of the composite is not a mere collection or aggregation of the material elements. Likewise, a human being is not merely the collection of organs, the house not merely a collection of bricks. With any composite, e.g. a house, if you destroy the composite or watch it degenerate, e.g. destroy the house into a heap of bricks, you would still have the material constituents, e.g. the bricks, leftover. Thus, the material constituents are not sufficient for accounting for the Form. The parts are *organized* and structured according to some principle of order, not merely some conjunction. The Form, therefore, must be some *separate organizing source* in virtue of which the material is something.

This argument also shows that the elements are only *potentially* separate from the Form. By ‘potency’ I mean what Aristotle means here: the source of change in something else or the same thing as something else.\(^\text{119}\) For example, the sources of change by which bricks become a house lie in the something other than the bricks. The bricks are potentially a house, and come to be a house when an external source of change initiates the change.\(^\text{120}\)

Since the elements only exist potentially, they are that into which the whole can be divided, and as the material exists as the Form in potentiality. Naturally, the elements are only potentially elements of the Form, for insofar as they are separate from the Form of


\(^{120}\) One of the *aporia* of book Beta concerns the being of material elements: “In the same area as these things is questioning whether the elements have being potentially or in some other way.” (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1002b31-1003a.)
which they are apart, they are not elements or material constituents of that Form. Given that the composite cannot be reduced to the elements, the Form cannot be reduced to any list of elements, e.g. ‘rational’ plus ‘animal’ as Plato’s method of division appears to treat it. Although the Form of the composite is not ontologically separate from the elements, since the Form is inherently the Form of elements, the source by which the elements have Form is not identical to the source by which the elements are material. The Form can be conceived as united with the material if we conceive the Form as the unity of the material.

Indeed, Aristotle thereby retains the duality of Platonic principles, yet in existence material is never separate from Form, and in the composite Form is never separate from material. Still, neither is reducible to the other. The difference here is in the way the principles exist. In a way, since the material exists potentially, the articulation of what the material is may be distinguished from the articulation of Form, as wood can be distinguished from a table or animal from rational. In the definition of something, the difference is the Form, and the genus the material. These are separable in articulation, but in the thing itself, e.g. the human being, the difference is not separate from the genus, for Socrates is not two separate things, ‘animal’ and ‘man’. In the thing, the genus is in the form of the differentia, as in the human being the animal is formed and organized by a rational principle. Further, the genus only is because the difference gives it being. On this account, there is no ‘animal itself’ as a species of animals alongside ‘human being’ and ‘groundhog’. If animal itself were an animal, then ‘animal’ would appear as one of its own species. On Aristotle’s teleological view, we would say that in human beings the animal functions are for the sake of rational functions.

Logically, Aristotle treats the genus as the material which is the Form only potentially. The

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121 The genus is, in principle, the material. As the material, it cannot differentiate itself. Matter is what receives the activity of Form. It does not possess, just as matter, the activity of Form.
principles form one undivided whole, from which neither can be extracted from the other without destruction of the whole.\textsuperscript{122}

Independent things are not essentially divided beings as long as they exist—to divide the thing itself into its genus and difference would be the destruction of the thing. In order for the thing to remain what it is, the genus and the difference must form an indivisible unity. In this way, definition of independent things remains possible.

To further see how Aristotle has solved the participation problem, consider Aristotle’s \textit{reductio} against the claim that the Form is an element of the whole. After all, it seems reasonable to treat Form as an element, since together the Form and the material seem to be parts of the composite. If the Form, F\textsubscript{1}, were an element alongside the material or a plurality of elements, then instead of having a plurality of merely material constituents, ‘a’ and ‘b’, one would have a new plurality of elements, e.g. ‘a’, ‘b’, and ‘ab’. Since the Form is a new element, there would be a new plurality. Since the form is hypothesized as one element among others, it excludes the others, and would require a new source in virtue of which it could be conjoined to them. In other words, the element as an element cannot give the whole order. Since there would be a new plurality of elements, a new Form, F\textsubscript{2}, would be required in order to organize the new plurality of elements. Again, if this is an element, then a new plurality of elements would be generated, of which a new Form, F\textsubscript{3}, would be required, \textit{ad infinitum}. On the face of it, Form and material remain separate principles: the former is the principle by which particulars are \textit{one in kind}, as Aristotle and Socrates are both Human beings, the latter, at least in one sense, is that by which those particulars are \textit{one in number}.

Strikingly, Aristotle’s argument against treating Form as material mirrors the Third Man argument. If we treat Form and material themselves as the elements of the composite

\textsuperscript{122} Of course, this appears only to be true of sensible substances.
whole, then both Form and material would march off into infinity. If the material itself were a
material element, then an infinite regress of material would result. If Form were both the
whole itself, the Form, and a part of the whole, a material element, or the universal structure and
a particular, then Form would march out into infinity. If we accept self-reference, then we
generate the Third Man argument, in which the universal, the Form, becomes a particular,
and the particular a universal. If, for example, we allowed ‘animal’, a genus, to be an animal, a
species of itself, we would have an infinite regress. For another example, consider Plato’s One
Being in the second hypothesis of Parmenides. The One Being exhibits this self-referential
structure, for the One Being is both the whole and a part of itself. Aristotle’s brilliance lies in his
diagnosis that self-reference is the source of the third man argument in his Metaphysics, 1045b 8-
25. By rejecting self-reference, Aristotle finds a suitable treatment, and avoids the infinite
regress.\(^{123}\)

Ironically though, it is in virtue of the separation of the principles, universality and
particularity, that self-reference cannot be true. Their unification in the composite, though,
requires another distinction about which Aristotle writes in the following passage:

On account of this impasse, some people talk about participation, and are at a loss about
what is responsible for participation and what participating is; others talk about co-presence
of knowing and a soul, while still others say life is a composition or conjunction of a soul
with a body. And yet the same formulation applies to everything: for being healthy will be a
co-presence or conjunction or composition of a soul and health, and the bronze’s being a
triangle will be a composition of the bronze and triangle, and white will be a composition of
surface and whiteness. And the reason they say these things is that they are looking for a
formulation that unites potency and complete being at work, plus a difference. But as we
said, at the highest level of material and the form are one and the same thing, the former
potentially, the latter actively, so that looking for what is responsible for their being one is

\(^{123}\) “But the most difficult thing of all to examine, as well as the most necessary for knowing the truth, is
whether being and oneness are the principles of things, […] Aristotle, Metaphysics, 1001a5. In a way, we see why
they cannot be here. ‘Form’ itself is not a separate thing.
like looking for a cause of one thing; for each of them is a certain one, and what is in potency and what is in activity are in a certain way one thing.\textsuperscript{124}

True, we cannot look for the differentia of Form and Matter, since the difference just is the Form, and we would thereby be inquiring into the Form of Form, \textit{ad infinitum}. As is evident, the solution hinges \textit{not only} upon a rejection of self-reference, but also on the distinction between potentiality and being-at-work. The material is the unity of the composite only potentially, the form ‘actively’. Let us briefly discuss these terms so that we may complete our analysis of Aristotle’s solution.

In order to best see the distinction, it is important to employ examples in which one can see the differences \textit{by analogy}. Aristotle argues that Being is being-at-work \textit{\[\varepsilon\nu\pi\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma\varepsilon\iota\alpha\]}\textsuperscript{125}. To be at work, an action must be an \textit{end-in-itself}. An end-in-itself is complete, as the term \textit{[\varepsilon\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma\varepsilon\iota\alpha]} implies. Being at work is Being at work staying itself, or that which is always already at or in its end \textit{[\tau\epsilon\lambda\sigma]} . Seeing, contemplating, and living all exemplify being-at-work. When one begins to see, contemplate, or live, there is \textit{no time interval} interceding between the activity of seeing and the end of seeing. Likewise, if one contemplates one has contemplated, if one lives one has lived. Grammatically, the present tense implies the \textit{perfect} tense in which the past action continues into the present. Why is no time interval present? The means by which one lives, e.g. the process of homeostasis, is also that for the sake of which the activity of living aims. Life processes are not only that for the sake of which living aims, but it is also the process by which life itself is sustained. For this reason, the end is not external to the activity, but internal to it. Hence, the end is not outstanding, and it is complete or perfect and no time intercedes between the means and the end.

\textsuperscript{124} Aristotle, \textit{Metaphysics}, 1045b 8-25.

\textsuperscript{125} I will use being-at-work \textit{[\varepsilon\nu\pi\epsilon\gamma\varepsilon\iota\alpha]} and being-at-work staying itself \textit{[\varepsilon\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma\varepsilon\iota\alpha]} interchangeably, as I interpret the latter as etymologically indicating what is entailed by the former term.
Activities stand in strong contrast to motion \([kinesis]\). Motions are inherently incomplete. For example, consider learning or building. The very process of learning is distinct from the end for the sake of which one learns. One learns in order to know, as one builds for the sake of constructing a house, etc. Unlike activities, the end for the sake of which one acts is external to the activity. Since there is some distinction between means and end, motions have time intervals. Since the end is outstanding, each motion is incomplete.\(^\text{126}\) The incompleteness appears in the fact that the end is external to the means. Once the end is achieved, the means ceases to be. With the case of the house, once the house is built, the house building ceases to be. For activities such as living, the end does not negate the means, but instead the achievement of the end sustains the means, as the end is the means. Unlike motions, activities are self-preserving, whose ends are located within themselves.

For Plato, the unity of Being is a becoming, in which the activity by which the soul searches for the Form is incomplete, and is only complete in the sense that the incompleteness is never outstanding, but always present within the very search itself. On my analysis, for Plato Being is better understood as a motion than a being-at-work staying itself. Aristotle inverts this view, and argues that Being is Being-at-work staying itself. From within Aristotle’s teleological structure, his reasoning is compelling. In the context of activity, Thinghood cannot be incomplete activity, for the being of incomplete activity is in virtue of something other than itself, namely the external end that guides the means. As such, it fails to be independent. Only complete activity is independent, since it is the only activity that is

\(^{126}\) See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1048b20-1048b30 for this distinction between being-at-work and motion. In the *Physics*, Aristotle does treat motion as a kind of thing. Insofar as every motion is incomplete, as long as the motion is, the incompleteness is at hand. Therefore, in any motion, the incompleteness of the act is not outstanding. The incomplete process, as incomplete, is not incomplete. This appears to be a dialectical move on Aristotle’s part.
its own end, depending on itself for its own realization. For this reason, \textit{it is what it is in virtue of itself}. Its activity does not lie outside itself in a separate product.

Form is Being at work staying itself, and it is prior to potency [and material] in articulation, Thinghood, and time.\footnote{When we learn something, we are realizing a potency. This potency is realized through some activity. For example, when one learns to play the flute one learns by playing. For this reason, Aristotle seems to take the \textit{Meno} paradox as sophistry.} What is relevant for us to consider is how the priority of Being-at-work undermines the conflict between the destructible composites and eternal Form. The potency of some thing does not set itself in motion, as it is the capacity to be affected. As such, it is in need of some Being-at-work by which it may be set in motion. Whether the motion is growth, locomotion, qualitative, or quantitative change, Being-at-work is the activity by which potential gets put to work. Form works on potency, and thereby gives it an end for which it can work. The material of a thing, as its potency, is the Form’s means, taken up by the Form for the sake of itself. By analogy with the reproduction of living things, Form generates its own instances, its composites, by working on material with the potential for that Form. Although the soul is not itself the solution, since some beings are not ensouled but still at work, Being is nonetheless modeled on the soul.

Although each composite or particular is generated and destroyed, the Form or the Being-at-work, as the generative principle of each composite, is not destroyed. The Being-at-work is universal across all of its particular composites. As we have already stated, the universal does not ontologically transcend the material, since the Form is \textit{of the material}, as is evident in the fact that one states the genus in the definition. But as long as there are composites \textit{by which and through which} Being at work generates more composites, Form is eternal.\footnote{As is well know, Aristotle holds that species are eternal. If he were to abandon this, Form could not be immanent in particulars without it ceasing to be Eternal, a view to which he would certainly be antagonistic.} Because Aristotle denies self-reference, any specific Form is \textit{not} one of the
composites that Form generates. Of course, this would generate an infinite regress of Forms. Still, although Form is not generated or destroyed, the Form \textit{sustains itself} by sustaining the composites, its particulars. Although Being at work generates the composite, which is its particular, the composite is the existential condition of the Being at work that generates it. \textit{The universal Form exists in and through the particulars it generates.} This subtlety is lost on many, but it is the centerpiece of Aristotle's solution to participation.

Since the Form is the generative principle of its particulars, there are no particulars that do not depend on the Form.\textsuperscript{129} Indeed, it is not Form that is separate and some other underlying subject, which is a \textit{this}. Form \textit{itself} is separate and a \textit{this}.\textsuperscript{130} It is true that when we think the articulation of some Form, the Form \textit{is separated from the individuals} in which they are at work. In this sense, the Form can be treated as an abstraction, a one over many. But Being at work itself, not just in the mind, is separate, and it is a this, for it is not a such and such belonging to a subject. It is the ultimate subject of all predication that cannot be predicated of another subject. Since the composites have material, the material is capable of being determined in contrary ways. But since this is an accidental feature, and the properties could be removed without removing the what it is to be, the capacity of the material subject to take on contraries does not undermine the Form. When we predicate 'grammatical' of Socrates, it is not in virtue of Socrates that Socrates is grammatical, but in virtue of him being human.

When we "predicate" 'rational' to Socrates, Socrates does not stand as a separate subject underlying 'rational'. Instead, it is 'rational' in virtue of which Socrates can be considered a subject at all. If there are predicates one attributes to Socrates in virtue of

\textsuperscript{129} The paradigmatic kind of being we are investigating is the natural being. For these Aristotle is clear that the Formal, Efficient, and Final Causes are identical. For this reason, the efficient cause, or the father, is not to be differentiated from the formal or final cause.

\textsuperscript{130} Aristotle explicitly commits himself to this thesis. See Aristotle, \textit{Metaphysics}, 1017b 24 28, and1072a 25-28 where, as Sachs notes, the separate existence of Forms is deduced.
Socrates, yet not in virtue of being human one has not discovered the Form, the
independent *this*. Instead, one has discovered an accidental subject, or one may even say a
sensible Form, but not the ‘what it is to be’ of Socrates, who is not a true subject in the
Aristotelian sense.

Philosophers may wonder why Aristotle would allow what is called *Existential
Implication* in his logic. According to Existential Implication, one can infer an I proposition
from an A proposition, i.e. the particular case, ‘there is an x, from the universal case, ‘for all
x’. For example, given that *all* humans are rational, one can infer that there is *a* rational
animal. Although one cannot infer which individual it is, one knows that *there is some one
particular*. The material on which the Form works allows us to distinguish the instances of the
particular generated by the activity of the Form on the matter. What allows the use of the
subaltern? Underlying the inference is the metaphysical view we have just uncovered: Form
is a generative principle of particulars. Aristotle’s syllogism expresses ontological structure.
Because universals stand for ontological relations such as essences and attributes, *no empty
terms* are allowed in the system that would render this logic absurd. For example, if you allow
empty terms, from ‘all unicorns are horned’ one could infer that ‘there is a unicorn’. For
Aristotle, one can only analyze Forms with real instances. There are no Forms of what has
no instances, and any content stipulated of them is arbitrary. Logic is *of Being*, not formal-
logical possibilities.

Insofar as Aristotle’s system of logic entails the rejection of self-reference, Being
itself seems also to escape the problems caused by self-reference. It is important to
emphasize that both Plato and Aristotle have systems in which Being is Form, and Form is

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131 Once logic is no longer confined to what is, the problem concerning the being of the possible becomes
explicitly problematic. Footnote on Plato’s Beard here.
the principle of the particular. Plato’s generates the particular\textsuperscript{132} via self-reference, whereas Aristotle generates it via Being-at-work. Aristotle does not eschew the reflexive question or the 
\textit{aporia} associated therewith. Indeed, not only the questions asked, but also the beings themselves exhibit the reflexivity of self-activity, as each being is at work for the sake of itself. Still, Aristotle teaches us that one can have a reflexive account without advocating for self-reference. Such an elegant system deserves the space we have given it. In the following, I will argue that it is exactly \textit{in virtue of Aristotle’s denial of self-reference} that problems systematically arise for his account. These problems, I will argue, are systematic for any denial of self-reference.

As is evident, asking about the ‘being of Being’ is reflexive in the same way as asking about the ‘Form of Form’. Since the ‘Being’ of something signifies the ‘what it is to be’, and the latter signifies universality, ‘Being’ signifies a universal. ‘Being as such’, not just the being of any particular thing, will therefore signify \textit{the most universal universal}, that Form which encompasses the totality of Forms. If we deny self-reference, how can we know the Form of Form or the being of being?

Upon the denial of self-reference two problems endemic to that denial arise: (i) the generic character of Being and (ii) the source of the differentia. These problems arise due to the \textit{externality of the differentia}. On the assumption of self-reference, the universal others itself into its own species. For example, ‘if animal were an animal’, the genus would be sufficient to produce the species belonging to it, since they are the same. For this reason, on the assumption of self-reference we do not need to go beyond the genus in order to determine the species. Unfortunately, the result of self-reference seems to be a void of content altogether. If self-reference is true, the difference is not external. If the difference is not

\textsuperscript{132} In this case I mean the particular Forms generated in the Third Man regress.
external, there is no difference at all, and thus no content to the Form. Thus, Aristotle takes
another route. If there is content, the difference is external. If it is external, then self-
reference cannot be true.

Since each Form is independent, what is it in virtue of which each Form belongs to
the whole of Being? If Form were a genus, then the region of Form would be inherently
divisible into various species. Unfortunately, Form or Being cannot be generic without
violating non-contradiction. In Gamma, Aristotle argues that Being is governed by non-
contradiction.\(^{133}\) Something either is or it is not, but it cannot both be and not be in the same
respect at the same time. Being and non-being are distinct. Since all genera are divisions of
Being, Form would be the most universal genus of all species. Since the genus is not the
source of the differentia that divides its species, the differentia of the genus of Being would
be external to Being as such. Since there is nothing external to Being, Being would have no
differentiations, and thereby no species. If Being were a genus, Being would have the same
significance that Parmenides gives it. It would be one, without division, neither coming to be
nor ceasing to be, etc.\(^{134}\) In other words, if to know the being of something is to know the
species, the species of Being would be a being. Even worse, if being were a genus, it would
be differentiated by Non-being, since only non-being lies outside of Being. Thus, what makes
being ‘Being’ would be non-being. But, since Aristotle is just as indebted to the principle of
non- contradiction as Plato and Parmenides, Being cannot be non-being, and therefore
cannot be a genus.\(^{135}\) If Form were a genus, what would differentiate the various species of

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\(^{134}\) Parmenides argues for these ‘attributes’ by the following argument: if being were generated, it would either
be generated from being or non-being. It cannot be generated from non-being, for non-being is not, so it could
not be generated from non-being. If it is generated from being, it is not generated, since being would precede
its own generation. Arguments positing this disjunction between being and non-being and thereafter denying
the latter are repeated to generate the result that being is indivisible, finite, etc…

\(^{135}\) On the non-generic structure of Being, see Anton Koch’s “Warum ist das Seiende keine Gattung?".
Form? The same problem that applies to Form applies to being, since the latter is the former. Can Form itself be a Form?

Yet Aristotle argues that Form is Being-at-work, a reflexive process that is not self-referential. Indeed, the question, ‘what is the being of Being?’ seems to imply self-reference. If Being were a genus, then Being would be a Being, the universal would be a particular. Why? Every difference must have being, in order to be a difference. So, it appears that the difference of Being must fall within the genus of Being. If the difference of Being were to fall within the genus of Being, then there would be a being (the difference) which would be external to the genus of being. Since the difference would be, the genus of Being would be external to itself, and require another more universal genus, ad infinitum. Being can be a being only if Being can be external to itself, i.e. not-be. Yet, non-contradiction precludes this. Self-reference generates particulars, and exhibits existential implication, but only by violating non-contradiction. Although we desire Form to be a genus, since we desire to know the unity of this unity, if this requires self-reference, the unity of Form eludes us. Indeed, Aristotle must deny self-reference in order to preserve the content of Form. In order to avoid making Forms participate in Forms, and generate his own Third Man problem, Aristotle must deny self-reference. But even so, how could we grasp the Form of Form without self-reference?

Aristotle writes that Being is said in many ways. Being is not meant equivocally or univocally, but like the term ‘health’ all the various meanings of being point toward one meaning (προσ ἔν). This ‘pointing to one’ applies not only to the various meanings of being, namely the ten categories, truth and falsehood, and potency and being-at-work, but also to the beings themselves.

For Aristotle all beings point to a thing (νοος], and this in turn points to a pure intellect, thought thinking itself, who is just Being-at-work and freed from all potency. In
short, the first principle is only an intellect, for potency presumes pure Being at work, and
Being at work is only fully separable from matter in intellect. Moreover, Aristotle, although
employing two principles, Form and material, rejects the unwritten doctrine of the One and
the Indefinite Dyad. Only Form has separate ontological existence; material cannot. As he
states, “Let there be one lord”\textsuperscript{136}. If there were a principle contrary to being, it would be
prime material, i.e. that material utterly devoid of form. Yet there is nothing that is utterly
devoid of Form. All material is material of some kind. Thus, there is nothing contrary to
being as such, no second principle. He explicitly rejects the view that all things come from
contraries\textsuperscript{137}, a view he attributes to most if not all thinkers, who came before him.

Aristotle provides an answer to the question concerning the unity of Being via
another military metaphor. Being is like an army, insofar as the principle of order is both the
whole and the general. Insofar as the general does his own work, the whole does its work. Each
Form, since it is for-itself, is not for the sake of another. Hence, it appears that Forms
cannot be for the sake of pure intellect. But, insofar as each Form does its own work, Form
reveals its being as an independent this. By being-for-itself in its species—specific way, it is
for the sake of pure Being at work. Being at work as such is revealed through the analogous
way each Being is at work. The first principle, in doing its own work, in Thinking, moves the
Forms, as a final end, to do their work.\textsuperscript{138}

In our discussion of Aristotle’s solution to the problem of participation we have
suggested that Aristotle’s solves the problem by rejecting self-reference. On the one hand, it
is clear that Aristotle’s categories, such as ‘thing’, ‘quality’, etc. are not self-referential. On the

\textsuperscript{136} Aristotle, \textit{Metaphysics}, 1076a.
\textsuperscript{137} Aristotle, \textit{Metaphysics}, 1075a20-1075a30. Contraries still play a central role in Aristotelian Metaphysics. Contraries are the greatest difference in a genus. So, when we get to the highest genera, the greatest difference in the genus would appear to be the greatest contraries. There are multiple problems plaguing Aristotle’s account of contrariety, which I will abstain from investigating here.
\textsuperscript{138} In fact, this is how desire works. We desire something because we think it is good. We do not think it is good because we desire it. Thinking is the principle of desire.
other hand, one might object to my reading by arguing that there is a kind of metaphysical self-reference. Each thing acts on itself, and ultimately each thing points to a thing that acts on itself as a pure self-referential unity: thought thinking itself.

To this objection I might make a subtle distinction. In the activity of the Form on material, the thing does act on itself, but not in the same respect. Each Form acts on its own material, but does not act on itself as Form. Form sustains itself by sustaining material. In this way, the forms are reflexive, but not self-referential, insofar as the Form itself is not at work on Form.

Regarding thought thinking itself, we discover a contradiction upon thinking it. Thought thinking itself cannot help but be self-referential, but it is for this reason that it is also contradictory. No category can properly capture the content of thought thinking itself, exactly because the categories are not structured to accommodate self-reference. Indeed, if self-reference were properly part of the metaphysical structure, we should be able to apply the category ‘thing’ to things without thereby losing the self-referential content of the beings. It seems to me that the lack of self-reference at the level of the category reflects a lack of self-reference at the level of beings. Indeed, Aristotle must posit a self-referential being as the principle of the system in order to make the whole coherent, though he has removed self-reference from the realm of what is logically coherent.

Still, when one turns one’s minds eye to pure intellect [φνοσ] itself, one finds a contradiction. Aristotle identifies pure intellect as the first cause of motion, as a being whose being is what it is to be as such. Indeed, scholastics such as Aquinas adopt this stance: God is ‘pure act’. Any mediated knowing, inferential knowing, of pure intellect shows that God, or mere Being at work as such, though immediately one, must be at work on itself, since to be at work is to be at work on something. Since we cannot think of pure Being as a genus, we
cannot think of Being at work as having material, since the genus is the material for the
Form. For all beings with some potency, Being-at-work works on material.\(^{139}\) There is no
material for Being-at-work to work on, for surely God, or pure Being-at-work as such, is not
in a genus. Thus, pure Being-at-work is either not at work at all, which is absurd, or it is at
work on itself. If the latter, then it is also pure potency, or pure material, since it is an
indivisible unity and that which receives the activity. But this is absurd, for Being at work as
such is utterly devoid of potency and material. Hence, it is both Form and potency in the
same respect—for Form is not itself acted on, and potency is not the activity. On the
assumption of the principle of non-contradiction this must be absurd. Likewise, since there
is no genus, species, or difference without potency, pure intellect \([\text{\nu\nu\sigma}]\) cannot be grasped
without collapsing these differences. At the highest level Form and material are
indistinguishable, yet Form is by itself. In forcing Form to be by itself, Aristotle runs into the
same problem Plato faced: the unity to which all beings point fails to be anything at all or is
unknown. We need potency to be present in pure Being at work in order for it to be
intelligible, yet we cannot tolerate it there if it is to be what it is. In other words, we are not
justified in claiming that it is inherently intelligible if thinking it generates a contradiction. To
the contrary—we have all the reason to claim that insofar as Being at Work is independent
of potency it is completely absurd exactly because it fails to be consistent with itself.
Apparently, the first principle is a contradiction when explicated logically. Of what are we
capable of knowing in respect to pure intellect \([\text{\nu\nu\sigma}]\)?

It appears that conceptually, pure intellect cannot be differentiated from pure
potency, or what is worse, mere non-being. As Plato showed before him, we can only

\(^{139}\) We established this earlier on pages 66-72. The Form is the efficient cause of ‘itself’ in the particulars, but
since it is not reducible to any one of the particulars, it fails to be its own cause. In other words, it maintains
itself in the material by working on the material. By doing so, its activity maintains the composite, and is that in
virtue of which composites are produced.
contemplate the first principle, Being-at-work by itself, immediately and in this case through
the work of the Forms that comprise the totality of Being through which Being as such is
revealed. Again, the distinction between mediated and immediate knowing is invoked. We
may think about thinking about thinking, but even in this case our thinking is distinct from
what we are thinking about. Our minds, unlike pure intellect, are essentially a potency to
receive Form. Since our minds, as potencies, are shaped into the Form of what we think,
our minds preclude the grasp of what has no potency. Alas, our attempt to conceptually
determine the Form of Form fails again: the first principle of Form fails to be conceived while at
the same time retaining the content of what is thought. It is only in contrast to other Forms
that Being at work is grasped. The way that the Ancients have construed thinking has
precluded the human mind from grasping Form conceptually.

Just as pertinent to our investigation of the being of the universal is the problem of the
differentia, which arises from the same assumption as the generic character of being: the
externality of the differentia. Indeed, it is upon this assumption that the difference
between Form and material turns. The material receives the difference from outside it, while
the Form is the activity of the difference organizing the material. The problem of the
differentia follows from Aristotle’s account of categories. Categories are the most universal
genera. For this reason, they are not species. As genera, they only give the unity of what falls
under them, but do not provide the difference, since logically the differentia always
differentiate from outside the genus. The most universal genera are exhaustive, in that they
include all beings, and they are logically independent. Each category is a separate one over
many. No category admits self-reference: Quality is not a quality; quantity is not a quantity.

141 In Section III of Division II I argue that the problem of the generic character of Being is just another formulation of the problem of the differentia.
We know that categories do not exist as Platonic Forms, since they are existentially dependent upon the individuals falling under the lowest species.

What is the problem of the differentia?¹⁴² Let us begin with an abstract representation of the problem. Consider the independence of each category. The categories are the highest genera. Each category is independent of the others, and together they encompass all existing things. In order to preserve the independence of the categories, each category must exclude the others. As the highest genera, each stands as an equal. Because no category differentiates itself, the principle of difference for any category must come from outside of the category.¹⁴³ Since the only categories external to any particular category are more categories, only categories can differentiate other categories. As a result, in order to differentiate categories, categories must exist within one another as the differentia of the genera. But this is impossible, for if any category were a differentiation of another category, then it would not be an independent category. Instead, it would be brought under the genus that it differentiates. For this reason, either the categories maintain their independence, and there are no differentiations of categories, or the categories are differentiated, but they are no longer independent.¹⁴⁴ In the former case, the categories cannot be distinguished from each other, in which case there is a contradiction. In the latter case, categories cease to be categories, for they have given up their independence. This problem appears to have its origin in the assumption that universals cannot differentiate themselves. If they could

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¹⁴² In Section III of Division II I give a systematic account of the problem of the difference that is independent of Aristotle’s terminology. For now, I will attempt to work out the problem on his own terms.

¹⁴³ Again, this is the case because the genus is not within itself sufficient to derive its species. For instance, the genus ‘animal’ does not divide itself into the species ‘human being’. If it did, then all animals would be people, which would be absurd.

¹⁴⁴ Collingwood correctly points out that philosophical concepts are inherently overlapping, an example of which is the three transcendentals: being, one, and good Collingwood, *An Essay on Philosophical Method*, 33.
differentiate themselves, the independence of the categories would not be threatened by the principle by which they are differentiated.\footnote{This formulation is taken from Halper’s “Hegel and the Problem of the Differentia” In Form and Reason, 197-208. Albany: State University of New York, 1993. See especially 197-199.}

This is a deep and disturbing problem. The problem of the categories shows that Aristotle cannot derive the differences of the categories \textit{a priori}. For this reason, Aristotle’s only recourse is to posit the contents of categories empirically. Though fitting his method in some respects, this answer generates the following modal problems. Indeed, given that categories cannot differentiate one another, one cannot posit the contents from the side of merely logical cognition, categories necessarily have content \textit{but those contents could be otherwise than they are}. If we could determine the contents of categories non-empirically, we could in principle arrive at some necessary content. Yet, since the contents of the categories are posited empirically, and all empirical knowledge is contingent, it appears that our knowledge of categories must also be contingent. Since categories originally arise empirically, the contents of the categories are discovered empirically. For this reason, the categories and their contents are \textit{contingent}. They could all be otherwise than what they are. But Thinghood and its contents should be necessary, according to Aristotle, as his theory of demonstration requires. Even the ‘what it is to be’ of a genus could be otherwise. If Aristotle could solve the problem logically, this would undermine the central empirical aspects of his method. Our question, ‘What is the being of universality?’ asks for that which makes universality be what it is, not what it could or could not be. Indeed, the question ‘what is universality?’ is concerned with that which is necessary to universality, namely the \textit{necessity} without which universality would not be what it is.\footnote{See page 8 for an account of the necessity of necessity. In principle, if we were merely aiming at the contingency of universality, we would only be getting at what universality may or may not be. But in this case every content would only be contingently related to our discussion, and as such it would only have an external} Because we are aiming at necessity, and Aristotle only
provides a contingent, and empirical answer, Aristotle’s account fails to heed the call of the question, for it only posits an empirical answer.

connection to the discourse. Without necessity, there is no a priori unity that philosophy may investigate. Without necessity there would not be any contingency, for there would be no thing to which anything could be contingent. Any identification of the ‘thing’ would itself be contingent to something contingent. In order to have something be contingent to something else, there must be something necessary to the thing in virtue of which one can contrast contingent properties.
Our independent study of the classical Ancient thinkers of the Western Tradition has revealed some *aporia* at the heart of our question concerning the being of universality. In order to account for universality and particularity, Plato and Aristotle both invoke a *duality of principles*: Form and material in the case of Aristotle, the One and the Indefinite Dyad in the case of Plato. Here Metaphysics occupies the place of *first philosophy*. Anything into which we inquire must *be*, in order for it to be an object of inquiry. Philosophy is an immediate inquiry into Being as Being. In order for the mind to be able to know Being, Being must be intelligible in itself. Universality must dwell within Being—it cannot simply dwell on the side of the thinking subject. Truth lies in grasping the indwelling *Logos* of entities. The identity of thought and Being is expressed in the concept of Form. In the concept of Form the universal is not just an idea in the mind, but it is *reified* into a thing or substance, that is, as an independent entity that has its own characteristic activity.

Any first philosophy has the burden to justify itself, since no other science precedes it by which it could be justified. Ancient philosophers are self-critical, but this self-criticism is paradigmatically on *the side of the object*. What does this mean? Since the self-critical aspect is primarily on the side of the thing, both the problem of participation and differentia here most directly concern an incongruity *within the thing itself*. The universal is a complete thing to which thinking must conform in order to contemplate it. What the mind knows is not a construction of the mind, but something discovered by the mind. That in virtue of which the object has being lies not in some theoretical or psychological construction but is given independently of any mental or theoretical effort. For Aristotle, the intellect is the potential
to receive Forms, and has no separate Form to give to the object it knows. The intellect is suited to transparently receive the universals universality gives. Still, the soul is central to the account of universality. For Plato, it is in the soul that the self-predicative universal appears, and ironically, where the mystical experience of the transcendent principles of Being is intuited. For both thinkers a difference is posited between mediated and immediate thinking: the first principles are grasped via immediate contemplation, which grounds inferential thinking. Moreover, both thinkers model their view of nature on the organism.147

Moreover, universality has the power of existential implication: for Plato Form is a principle of becoming, while Aristotle makes Form a principle of generation and motion generally. The way by which this implication works varies: for Plato, self-reference generates indefinitely expanding pluralities of particulars. Though Aristotle rejects self-reference, Being-at-work is the reflexive power, encompassing material in the case of the composite, by which particulars exist. As my study has indicated, both thinkers struggle with self-reference, as it is central to the problem of participation.

Here I wish briefly to note a difference between the approaches to universality that I will develop in more depth later. Empirical universals, i.e. universals derived from experience, do not appear to be self-predicative. As Nishitani writes in Religion and Nothingness “If the “substance” of fire is recognized in the energeia of combustion, then the fact that fire continues to combust only as something that does not at the same time burn itself can truly be said to point directly to the selfness of fire.”148 Although Nishitani draws different conclusions from this, this passage illustrates that empirical concepts do not admit self-reference. Fire does not burn fire, and water does not wash water. Likewise, for sensible Form, we should claim that Form never ‘forms’ Form. On the assumption of self-reference,

147 For Plato’s view of the universe as an animal see the Timaeus.
Form would ‘form’ Form. For Aristotle, the being-at-work of an empirical Form is not at work on itself, but on its material, even though it is at work for the sake of itself. Yet, there do appear to be concepts that do admit self-reference when we attempt to think them by themselves without respect to any empirical givens. Sameness is the same as itself, since it is other to otherness. Otherness is other to sameness. As such, sameness is an instance of the same, since it is self-same, and otherness is an other to sameness. Indeed, in the Parmenides Socrates is skeptical that empirical concepts such as hair and mud could have forms. These do not appear self-predicative. These questions bring us to the threshold of our inquiry: is the concept itself self-referring or not? Plato appears to use self-reference, while Aristotle rejects it. Since empirical kinds are not self-referring, the question ‘are concepts self-referring?’ has implications for whether we include empirical concepts under our definition. In principle, this also raises a new question: if the concept is self-predicating, can an empirical concept, qua empirical, or any non-self predicating concept, really count as a concept? Take the reverse question: If Form is empirical, or non-self-referring, how do we account for those concepts that appear to be self-referring?

In one sense, the problem of the differentia appears to be an inversion of the participation problem. For it is on the rejection of self-reference that the externality of the difference is posited. In another sense, the problem of differentia turns on the same assumption as the participation problem, since both problems require dual principles of universality and particularity. In the case of Plato, the difference between One and the Indefinite Dyad is a difference intuited in a spark of immediate insight. Difference is not cognized, but mystically intuited. For Aristotle, the difference of Form and material is grasped in the recognition of the differentia. I have argued that even if self-reference is rejected, the principle of difference appears absurd, for either it disappears completely to
philosophical thought or the moment of immediate cognition cannot help but appear as a contradiction to mediated cognition. Why does it appear as a contradiction? No Forms are encountered in immediate thought, yet to think is to think a Form: immediate thinking is the thought that is not a thought at all.

On the one hand, one may read Ancient Philosophy as a development of the concept of the genus. On the other hand, the abstract universal makes its appearance, insofar as universality is grasped as a ‘one over many’. Platonic Forms, though not abstracted, are ‘ones’ over pluralities. Aristotle conceives of the Forms as coming to be in the mind via a process of abstracting out common features in experiences of particulars, a process of universalization bottoming out in the most universal concept ‘Being’. Accordingly, genera are only principles of unity, not principles of difference.

Although the genus and the abstract universal appear early in our tradition, the concept of class membership appears later, at the end of the Middle Ages, in medieval nominalism. In order to introduce this system, which relies heavily on the infinitude of God, we shall briefly discuss Plotinus’ insight into these problems, his categorial innovation, and the problems resulting therefrom.
Remembering that our main objective in this study is the being of universality, modernity becomes of interest to us only insofar as it can shed light on the development of novel forms of universality. In the earlier sections it was more convenient to focus on two thinkers, since the problems with which we shall in later chapters be systematically concerned are developed in their thought. Although I shall proceed in just a conceptually rigorous a way as we have thus far, the concepts of most interest to the theme of universality require a broader treatment of post-Aristotelian thinkers.

In the medieval period, a third form of universality underdeveloped in ancient Greek thought arises: the concept of \textit{class-membership}. Class-membership arises in the context of a cluster of other concepts and objections, such as ‘nominalism’, ‘psychologism’, etc. Class-membership, as a distinct form of universality, first arises as a distinct and competing candidate for universality at the end of the medieval period in Wilhelm von Ockham’s theological nominalism. For modern philosophy, the notion of class membership becomes the form of universality most characteristic of \textit{British empiricism}. As we shall soon discover, class-membership relegates any universal that is not wholly constituted by \textit{particularity} to the dustbin of history. The class, as an aggregate of particulars, excludes any other element besides particulars and in its early modern form at least, has its content derived empirically.\footnote{I wish to note that early Analytic philosophy offers a concept of the concept that appeals to class membership that is \textit{not} empirical.} Unlike the concept of Form, class membership is inherently \textit{generable}, since the mind brings otherwise \textit{un}related given particulars into a relation of aggregation. What the ancient concept of universality precludes, class-membership seems to require. Throughout modernity, the
rise of class membership sparks a contentious debate between realism and nominalism. This debate continues today, and in some respects it defines how we even think about the problems of universality. Indeed, it is within this context that the concept of abstract universality as distinct from the genus arises for the first time. We shall see that this modern debate not only excludes ancient Form and its power as a possibility, and fails to grasp the reflexive problems of universality, but also covers up the common assumptions of class membership and abstract universality. At bottom, the center of discourse in early modern philosophy does not primarily concern the self-referential character of the universal, as it does in the philosophies of Aristotle and Plato. Because the self-referential character of the concept is no longer in central purview, and the question concerning what universality is requires taking up the issue of the self-reference, the novelty of universality in modernity is simultaneously the forgetting of the question of universality.

In contrast to class-membership, another distinct line of thought arises out of the mediaeval period from the thought of St. Augustine. Intellectual Intuition, a term coined by Kant, shows up in Augustine’s theological writings, and is adopted by Continental Rationalism. One understands intuitively when the thinking of the concept is also that in virtue of which the concept exists. Since the universal comes to be, it is also generable. Unlike ancient Form, the universal is not passively received by the working of Form on the mind. Instead, the universal is generated by the very act of the thinking subject alone. Indeed, intellectual intuition will be integrated into Hegel’s concept of universality, which we shall discuss in the last section of the dissertation. Though here we encounter a novel way of thinking about the source of universality, the universal generated is still consigned to an abstract form. For this reason,

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150 ‘Intuition’ means an immediate relation to an object. In the philosophy of Kant, intuitions are those apriori forms of consciousness that give concepts content. Discursive understanding has a mediated relation to its object, since its content is given to it externally from another source. In contrast, ‘intuitive’ understanding gives the contents about which it thinks.
though intellectual intuition gives a novel way of thinking about the source of universality, the universal itself remains abstract.\footnote{For example, although in Descartes the I think is an intellectual intuition, it nonetheless continues to exhibit a separation of universality from particularity.} The ‘rationalism’ of the concept is opposed to the ‘empiricist’ line of thought insofar as the concept is generable from thinking alone, and for that reason need not appeal to any principle external to thinking, such as intuition or the evidence of the senses in order to establish its existence.\footnote{Naturally, there are various senses of ‘intellectual intuition’ that arise in the tradition. We shall investigate some, but not all of these, in order to get a sense of what is novel about the way universality is understood in modernity. Augustine, Descartes, and Kant are among those I shall consider. For Kant, the concept of intellectual intuition is a problematic concept that is connected to the concept of the ‘thing in itself’, whereas with others, such as Descartes, intellectual intuition is primarily the means by which first principles are established. In Augustine the concept also has its own function: to ensure the omnipotence of God. In each case we must be careful to distinguish the way the concept is employed, but in all cases there is one constant: the concept of intellectual intuition is concerned with establishing the content of categories by thinking alone. We shall also have the opportunity to comment on the way earlier German Idealists, such as Fichte and Schelling, take up the concept of intellectual intuition. I should note that their philosophical accounts of intellectual intuition deserve more attention that I can give here.} Whatever can be generated from thinking alone is not empirical, but in the terms of the moderns, \textit{innate} (concepts are in the mind before experience) or \textit{apriori} (concepts are independent of experience).

One cannot over emphasize the fact that for the ancient Greeks, universals are not concepts. A concept is inherently ‘conceived’. The German term for concept, ‘Begriff’ implies that to universalize is to grasp, take hold, or seize something. The English term ‘concept’ stems from the term ‘conceptum’. Originally arising in the sixteenth century, the term implies something belonging to the mind. For these reasons, we have abstained from discussing Form in terms of concepts, since Ancient Form is \textit{not generated from an act of thinking}. As we shall see, the fact that universality comes to primarily dwell in the mind renders problematic the mind-world unity exhibited by universality in the Ancient context.

Immanuel Kant, in his seminal \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, achieves a grand synthesis of Rationalism and Empiricism via his transcendental methodology.
Indeed, it may appear that given the immense changes initiated by modernity, we might expect the ancient problems associated with the notion of Form to dissipate. Instead, we discover that the problems plaguing the ancient account of universality do not leave modern forms unscathed. I shall argue that class-membership, the modern employment of intellectual intuition, and Kant’s Copernican revolution in epistemology all fall victim to either the problem of the differentia, the problem of participation, or both. Since Kant exercised such great influence on philosophical methodology, our critical reflections on transcendental philosophy have far reaching consequences for philosophical movements following him, such as transcendental phenomenology.

In order to bring our historical reflections to our contemporary situation, I shall briefly consider how the problems of universality undermine pivotal assumptions of foundational figures in analytic philosophy. Since class-membership is a foundational concept for formal logic, our critical reflections on class-membership cannot leave modern formal systems untouched. In particular, we shall focus on how the problems of the differentia and participation are related to Russell’s Paradox and undermine Russell’s *Theory of Types*. These reflections shall bring us far enough along to grasp that analytic philosophy, as a tradition, despite all its sophistication and use of complex logical technologies in resolving metaphysical problems, cannot escape the problem of differentia and participation.

Our discussion of universality in modern philosophy would be incomplete without an explication of the intellectual ground upon which class membership and intellectual intuition were originally founded. Though it may be surprising to some, I propose that both class membership and intellectual intuition can be traced back to one principle: *divine omnipotence*. Surely, I am not maintaining that the thinkers responsible for developing these novel concepts make the same use of the principle. Certainly, distinct concepts of divine
omnipotence give rise to distinct forms of universality. Moreover, we must be careful to note that the source I am proposing may not always be acknowledged by the thinkers who were influenced by this principle.

Because Plotinus is the first thinker in the West who posits the omnipotence of God, we shall begin our inquiry into the modern concepts of class membership and intuitive intuition by embarking on an analysis of his concept of God. Since omnipotence is by definition unlimited power, we must embark upon an inquiry into the infinite. As the infinite is traditionally contrasted with the finite, both infinitude and finitude must become central themes of our inquiry. Since Aristotle viewed God as finite, Plotinus’ concept of God as infinite radically departed from his point of view. Though Plotinus radically reforms the ancient concept of God, he does not give us a novel concept of universality based thereon, though he does develop novel solutions to ancient paradoxes. It is only with the Christian doctrine of creation that a new form of universality arises. I shall argue that the Christian doctrine of creation undermines the ancient account of Form and Plotinus’ concept of divine omnipotence. By investigating both the Plotinian and Christian concepts of divine omnipotence we shall bring into relief those assumptions generating the novel concepts of class membership and intellectual intuition in the modern epoch. The significant portion of my argument will be drawn from reflections in the work of Elizabeth Briént’s The Immanence of the Infinite and M.B. Foster’s Christian Theology and the Rise of Modern Science.

Central to the Christian doctrine is the attribution of a contingent will to the divine being, a feature utterly absent from the ancient concepts of soul and God. By attributing both reason and will to God, distinct philosophical perspectives of the relation of will to

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153 The infinite in Aristotle is connected with incompleteness, and potency. God, for Aristotle excludes all potency and is utterly complete. Indeed, as thought thinking itself, God only thinks himself, and excludes every attribute that requires potency for its formulation.
reason in the process of God’s creation arise: Voluntarism and Rationalism. Within a
radicalized concept of the former medieval nominalism arises, while the latter provides the
conditions under which intellectual intuition is generated. Before proceeding, I wish to note
that I do not pretend to be giving a thorough account of the rise of modernity, as my only
focus is the conceptual underpinnings of class-membership and intellectual intuition.
In our systematic exposition of the concept in Division II, in which we shall rely heavily on Hegel’s *Logic of the Concept*, we shall attribute three senses of infinity to the concept: the indeterminate, the quantitative infinite, and perfection. On the one hand, each of these concepts of the infinite arises in the thought of Plotinus, and offers us a first glimpse of the concepts that we shall later apply to the concept of the concept. In Plotinus, these concepts of the infinite are connected with the One in ways that we shall elucidate below. On the other hand, Plotinus continues to insist on the finitude of categories. In Division II, Section three, the first part of the systematic treatment of the concept, we identify four dogmas, one of which is the finitude of the concept. For these reasons, an explication of Plotinus becomes all the more urgent for our project. First, we wish to elucidate the basic concepts of the infinite that are appropriated in Hegel’s *Logic of the Concept*, and second, we wish to show how this appropriation of infinity is designed to overcome the classical assumption of the finitude of the concept.

As our analysis will show, in Plotinus there is a conflict between infinitude and finitude. Most pointedly, this conflict arises in Plotinus’ account of emanation, namely his account of how that which is infinite becomes finite. One of the leading questions of German Idealism was the question: how does the infinite go forth from itself and make itself finite?\(^\text{154}\) Hegel himself integrates both the concept of the infinite and the finite into his concept of the concept, and gives an account of how the finite concept is created by the

infinite concept. In the thought of Plotinus, because the categories are finite, neither can we grasp the infinite by itself, nor the way that the finite comes to be, for we are only ever able to operate at the level of finitude. Hegel, in his *Logic of the Concept*, is clear that the concept is inherently creative. In order to begin to understand what this means, it will be important for us to investigate some traditional ways the process of creation has been understood. Because the concept is finite for Plotinus, he cannot in principle understand the creation of the finite. Hegel recognizes this limitation. Accordingly, in order to be able to think the process of creation itself, an activity that is constitutive of the concept per se, and not just its result, thinking must free the concept from finitude. In what follows it shall be instructive for us to investigate how the finite understanding of the concept undermines our capacity to understand the activity of creation.

For the classical Greeks, the fundamental question of philosophy was the very ‘being of Being’. Since the Greeks had no word for ‘creation’, it is no wonder that they did not ask the question ‘why is there something instead of nothing?’ Since Form is eternal, such a question lacks any philosophical impetus, for the world always was, is, and will be. Indeed, the coming of the Hebrew revelation that *God creates the world* motivates a new question: why is there something instead of nothing? Although Plotinus is not an adherent of Judaism or Christianity, for the first time his metaphysics makes this question meaningful for philosophical inquiry. What this shows, among other things, is that though revelation is instrumental in helping raise new questions, these same questions may even arise independently of such revelation.

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155 We should not confuse ‘making’ with ‘creating’. The former assumes two elements: form and matter, whereas the latter cannot assume either, but must account for both. I will expound upon this distinction in more detail in the following section on Christian Theology.
For Ancient Greek philosophy, the infinite [*apeiron*] is primarily a negative term, signifying either the indeterminate, that which has no form or limit, or that which is always outstanding, such as a numerical series. We may deem the latter the quantitative infinite, since the ‘always outstanding’ is unlimited in number. Plato’s One is beyond all determination, and thus indeterminate, while the Indefinite Dyad, qua indefinite, posits the indeterminate as a principle.156 Ironically enough, each principle is limited by its contrary principle. Moreover, the quantitative infinite reveals itself as a problem in Plato’s Third Man argument.

Aristotle appears mostly to limit the restriction of infinitude to the quantitative infinite. Since one cannot run through an infinite series, the infinite series cannot be grasped by enumerating each member of the series. For this reason, the infinite is not intelligible, and philosophy cannot help but reject the assumption in an argument that leads to an infinite regress.

Nonetheless, we ought not oversimplify Aristotle’s position on the infinite. For Aristotle’s concept of prime material invokes the concept of the infinite as indeterminate. Prime material is not determined by a Form, and is thereby infinite as indeterminate. For this very reason, prime material cannot be. Likewise, his definition of motion, *the being at work of potential qua potential*, implies that motion is complete or a being at work (the end is not outstanding) so long as it is potential or incomplete (the end is still outstanding). So, motion’s determinate being is indeterminate in virtue of being the ‘always outstanding’.157

For both Plato and Aristotle the principles of unity and difference and universality and particularity, are dual. Plotinus, perhaps the most sophisticated exemplar of Neo-

156 I would hesitate to identify the principles of the unwritten doctrine with the quantitative infinite, since quantity is derived from these principles, as the second deduction in *Parmenides* shows.
157 Though there are significant quandaries related to this definition of motion, I leave those questions aside. My only concern here is to work out the sense of the infinite as the indefinite.
Platonism, rejects the duality of principles constitutive of Plato’s unwritten doctrine. Of course, Plato and Plotinus accept the ‘One over many’ principle according to which the One governs all pluralities. Elizabeth Brient notes that what enables Plotinus to propose the infinitude of the One is the fact that for Plotinus the One is beyond Being, or the region of Forms. In one respect this is true, for the One itself is beyond all determination. As such, it is infinite qua indeterminate. But this is not enough to bring us to an understanding of the infinite power of the One, for Plato also posits that the One is beyond Being, yet denies that the One is omnipotent.

Why attribute omnipotence to the One? Omnipotence is unlimited power. As long as there are a duality of principles, One and Indefinite Dyad, the One cannot be the source of plurality per se. Surely, for Plato the One is only the source of unity, not plurality. Thus, if the unwritten doctrine is true, the One cannot be omnipotent. It would appear absurd from a Platonic perspective if the One could be the source of that in virtue of which the many were many or failed to be one. Elizabeth Brient is right to correct a common error made by scholars in this regard: Plato has dual principles, whereas Neo-Platonists such as Plotinus only recognize one. Indeed, for Plato the particular is false or an illusion of the real, insofar as it is particular, i.e. insofar as it fails to measure up to the universal, which is the real, true being. If there is only one principle of both particularity and universality, then the principles of truth and falsehood, or reality and illusion, must also be the same. This reduction of the principles has major ramifications for our considerations of universality.

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158 In the following section I do not directly concern myself with grounding many of Plotinus’ positions, but I do make arguments about what Plotinus must be committed to in virtue of the positions he takes. I employ this tactic in order to illustrate Plotinus’ reflections on universality in the most minimal way possible.
160 Brient notes that Blumenberg makes this mistake in his *Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, by uncritically lumping Plato with Plotinus.
The One cannot be omnipotent if a duality of principles is accepted. Since the One is no longer limited by a contrary principle, the One is no longer limited. Given the Platonic context in which the One is the principle of the many, since the One is the principle of plurality, yet cannot rely on its contrary for the individuation of what falls under it, the One must function not only as the principle of unity, but also the principle of plurality. Since the One is that power by which all unity and plurality is produced, there is nothing left over to limit the power of the One.

As is evident, Plotinus’ theory of *emanation* precludes a duality of principles. Emanation is the flowing of beings from the One as a source. The term is a *metaphor* for the production of beings from the One, for it invokes the *image* of ‘flow’. The One ‘overflows’ out of itself, like the Sun’s production of light. Although the One ‘overflows’, it does not destroy itself or negate its own unity in virtue of its emanation.

Since the One emanates all things, the One is omnipotent. The infinitude of the One, therefore, is a property of *the power* of the One.\(^{161}\) Since the One never exhausts itself, its power is inexhaustible. As an inexhaustible power, the emanation of the world never ceases, and continues without end. Moreover, the infinite power of the One engenders Omnipresence: “Universal power, extending to infinity, and powerful to infinity…‘god is so great that his parts have become infinite. For what place can we speak of where he is not there before us?”\(^{162}\) The power of the One is omnipresent, for all things emanate from God’s power. Since nothing can be divorced from God’s power, all things have one power source. In this sense, all are encompassed by that power. Since this power is without limit, it cannot be limited to a *definite quantity*. It appears that we can say more than ‘the one is

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\(^{161}\) Here I reproduce Brient’s citations from Plotinus: 6.9.6.1-13.

\(^{162}\) Here I reproduce Brient’s citations from Plotinus: 5.8.9.25-28.
indeterminate’, for the One’s indeterminacy is nothing more than the lack of limit inherent in the infinitude of God’s power and the ubiquitous presence of that power.

Since the One emanates all things \textit{from itself}, all generated entities have, in some respect, the same ‘being’ as their generating source. As Plotinus states, “god is so great that his parts have become infinite”. Unlike the process of making in which the maker is not the same kind of thing as her artifact, the process of emanation is modeled on generation, a process in which the generated entity is of the same kind as the principle of generation. By modeling the first principle on the soul, the concept of emanation is in keeping with the ancient account of Form, for the first principle is a living source \textit{that generates particulars}. In this sense, Plotinus’ account of emanation is not unique. The divergence lies in \textit{how} this production of the many from the one proceeds.\textsuperscript{163} Indeed, for Aristotle, Form becomes productive only upon the realization of its potential. For example, the Form of a man only becomes able to reproduce upon the maturation of his potential. Deformed or immature Form cannot produce.\textsuperscript{164} Or, in the spirit of Plotinus, \textit{what is perfect produces}.\textsuperscript{165} Since what is perfect produces, and the One is perfect, it must produce.\textsuperscript{166} Since it is entailed in the perfection of the One to produce, the One’s creation is \textit{necessary}, not contingent. If the One did not produce, it would not be what it is. To hearken back once more to our model of the generation of particulars from the Form\textsuperscript{167}, not only is the Form undiminished by its

\textsuperscript{163} In Plotinus the generation of the world is grounded on one principle, not two. Unlike the ancient account moreover, the process of emanation is one of \textit{degradation}, or process by which unity is lost, so that the lowest rung of being is an utterly indefinite plurality.

\textsuperscript{164} This also explains why, for example, children are not fully human on Aristotle’s account, or why persons whose reason is deformed are not fully human. One can only write a dissertation on universality if one’s rational faculties have come to maturation.

\textsuperscript{165} Here I reproduce Brient’s citations from Plotinus: 5.1.6 37-9.

\textsuperscript{166} Of course, it almost goes without saying that the One is not like the examples I posit in defense of the principle that what is perfect produces, for the One is not many.

\textsuperscript{167} In our discussion of Plato and Aristotle, we went to lengths to show exactly how the Form is productive. The Form, in both Plato and Aristotle, is in some sense, a principle of particularity. For Plato the productivity of Form may lie in self-reference. In Aristotle, it lies in the concept of Being-at-Work. The Form is a cause just to
generation of particulars, but it is also an expression of the perfection of Form that it generates them. Because the One is perfect, it remains what it is despite its emanation of the world.

Later in our systematic exposition of the concept, I shall make the argument, following Hegel, that the universal is the creative principle of the particulars. Although the Ancient Greeks tend to think about the relation of universal to particular more in terms of life than creation, they nonetheless have a concept of the universal as a principle in virtue of which particulars have existence. For this reason, Hegel’s account of the concept appropriates this concept of the universal as power from the Greeks, and integrates it into his concept of the concept, albeit by radically re-thinking the principle in virtue of which the universal creates particulars.

One might wonder how the One could remain one if it had ‘parts’ or ‘infinite parts’. If the One remains itself despite its emanation, it is not rendered plural by its emanation. Yet, the One emanates the multitude from itself, giving rise to the totality of what is. Thus, the first conclusion one should draw from this process must be the following: the One as one is not generated by its own emanation. Otherwise, it would cease to be just one, and would be many. What is emanated is other than the One, for the One is not included in what is emanated. Yet, the others emanate from the One itself, so they cannot be absolutely or unconditionally other to the One, as the One is omnipresent. What emanates from the One is the one, but it is the One as other to the One, as the plurality. In order to express this relation of the others to the One, I shall use the expression ‘self-externalization’, for the others are the One in its self-externality. Accordingly, we may discuss the One in itself or the One in its self-externality as the sensible Form appears in Plato. The One in itself appears to

the extent that the existence of the particular depends upon its activity. My only point here is that Plotinus takes up this assumption about Form, and applies it to the One.
be finite in the ancient sense, for it keeps to itself. Yet, the One in virtue of its emanation does not keep to itself, and qua self-externalized, is infinite. Clearly, we cannot absolutely separate the finitude and infinitude of the one, for it is the very being of the One, and in keeping with itself, to become self-external in the act of emanation. In this sense, the One in itself is infinite.

The One, as the ultimate ‘one over many’ is the measure of the many, in virtue of which the many is known. Since the One is indeterminate, it is not itself measurable. Though the One is the measure of the many, it is not itself one of the many. Thus, it cannot be included in what is measured. Since it measures all things, it is the all-inclusive measure. Since it is not included in what is measured, it is unmeasured. Thus, the immeasurability of the One is another aspect of its indeterminacy. Armstrong says it best: The One is “without limit as being all inclusive and so un-included, immeasurable as having nothing outside it to measure it and as being itself the absolute standard of the measurement.” Since self-reference requires that the particular be predicated of the universal, and the One as one is not a one, it follows that the One in itself is not self-predicative.

Although the One in itself is not self-referential, insofar as the One emanates, it is self-referential. When the One thinks itself, it becomes both the subject and the object of the thinking. Thus, the self-thinking one is not the One, for by thinking itself, the One is not just one, but a plurality. Although the Intellect is many, it is not indefinitely many, for its thinking and the object of its thought are the same. In this respect it is an undifferentiated unity. Intellect, [nous], the second hypostasis, is constituted as self-thinking thought. Plotinus identifies self-thinking thought as the very what-it-is-to-be of the Intellect. Though Intellect is no longer the first principle, as in Aristotle, Plotinus uses the Aristotelian term for Being to describe

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168 Brient, Immanence of the Infinite, 113.
the Intellect: being at work \[\textit{energeia}\].\(^{169}\) Taking Plato as his master, Plotinus identifies ‘Being’ with the realm of Form. Since the One is not a Form, and is beyond the region of Form, Being cannot be said of the One. Moreover, since the Forms are inherently intelligible beings, one can discover the categories of Forms by uncovering the very structure of the Intellect itself. For this reason, we shall embark upon Plotinus’ derivation of the categories of Forms from the Intellect.

Plotinus points out that one cannot have a theory of categories if Being is one, for categories classify groups of entities into different genera. Without a plurality of entities to place into various genera, there would be no categories. Thus, Being must be inherently plural in order for categories to exist.\(^{170}\) Plotinus thinks Plato advocates this view of Being in the \textit{Sophist}. One can only apply Plato’s method of division if what is being divided is plural. For example, since the sophist is constituted by a plurality Forms \(A+B+C\), etc. the philosopher can divide the sophist into the Forms in which the sensible kind participates. It is unclear if Plato means to apply the method of division to Forms themselves. But since Plotinus takes Forms to be the things that are, \textit{categories are of Forms}, not sensible kinds.

Since Plotinus thinks categories apply most directly to Forms, not sensible kinds, he rejects Aristotle’s categories, for Aristotle’s categories apply to sensible kinds, e.g. men, horses, colors, etc…. Moreover, in good Platonic fashion, he insists that there is no common genus to Being and Becoming.\(^{171}\) Not only does he deny that there is one genus of Being\(^{172}\), but he also rejects the assumption that prior and posterior can belong in the same genus.\(^{173}\)

From this premise, he argues that Aristotle commits a category error in his application of


\(^{172}\) Plotinus rejects the genus of Being on the same grounds as Aristotle, namely that there would be no source of difference.

\(^{173}\) The ordering of species within a genus only appears to be horizontal.
categories. For example, since there cannot be a single genus for Being and Becoming, sensible (first substance) and intelligible substance (second substance) cannot share the common genus ‘substance’ as Aristotle insists in the *Categories*. Or take Quantity: though numbers fall under quantity, countable sensibles, e.g. cows, ought not be counted as quantities. In the division of Forms from sensibles, we see Plotinus insisting on the categorial difference between universals and particulars.

The Intellect is the One in the Form of Thought, and as such it is *Being*. Since it is *Being*, we must say that *its very being is to be*. As thought thinking itself, the Intellect is not the One, to which neither being nor non-being can be predicated, but the *One Being*. The ‘Being’ here attributed to the one is not external to the Intellect, but is inseparable from its ‘being Intellect’. As Aristotle argued, from any entity we cannot separate the being of something, the what-it-is-to-be, from the kind of thing it is. So, for example, the ‘being’ in ‘being a stone’ is not separate from ‘being a stone’. It is not as though one has the stone and *in addition* there is being. If this were the case, the stone would simply not exist. There would be nothing to add to ‘being’, such as ‘stone’, in virtue of which one could derive the formula ‘being a stone’. In other words, *being is not a separate predicate*. Even more evident, since something has being in virtue of its intelligibility, the being of Intellect is inseparable from Intellect itself. The very first category of the Intellect, therefore, is *being*.

Plotinus notes that it makes no difference whether you call the primary category of Intellect ‘being’ or ‘one’. Since being is not more nor less than the One Being itself, since Being is the very being of the One Being, and is inseparable from it. Moreover, we noted

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176 The first and second hypostasis seem to at least loosely correspond to the first and second hypotheses of Plato’s *Parmenides*, ‘The One is one’ and ‘The One is’.
that self-thinking thought is an activity. Its only activity is thinking itself. Insofar as it is thinking itself, it exhibits *movement* from itself and back to itself. The activity of thinking is a movement, but this movement is never other to itself. At every stage of the motion the thinking is always only thinking itself. In other words, the thinking never ceases to just think thinking. As such, the thinking is at *rest*. Plotinus notes that rest is the very character of Being, as each of the Forms is at rest with itself, never becoming other to what they are. In sum, it appears that Intellect is determined by three categories: being, motion, and rest.\footnote{Plotinus, *Enneads*, 6.2, 137.}

Plotinus notes that all the categories definitive of Intellect are the same as those identified by Plato in the *Sophist*.

In addition, Plotinus adds two more categories: same and other. Since thought thinking itself is *One Being*, each of the categories is the same as the other. The being of the thinking is its movement. The One Being is at rest only insofar as it is in motion, never ceasing to move away from itself and back to itself. Yet, each category is *other* to one another, for we only list them as separate because motion is not rest, and to be is not to be at rest or to be in motion, but something else. Thus, five categories constitute Intellect: *Being, Movement, Rest, Same*, and *Other*.\footnote{Plotinus, *Enneads*, 6.2, 137.} As categories, they are not themselves Forms, but the principles of Forms. Forms such as ‘Quantity’ and ‘Quality’ take these as their constitutive principles, as that ‘out of which’ Intellect is Intellect, and Form is Form. Categories are highest genera, and as such they are the constitutive principles of universals Aristotle mistook for categories.

In order to better elucidate Plotinus’ account of categories and his solution to the problem of the differentia, we should discuss how the self-predicative aspect of the *One Being* is thoroughly constituted by the five categories Plotinus lays out. I will argue that self-
reference is the key unlocking the door to understanding Plotinus’ categories. Indeed, we might wonder why we should characterize the activity of Intellect as motion, or why Being is listed as one of the most universal predicates when we have gone out of our way to argue that ‘what it is to be’ as such cannot be separate from the ‘what it is to be of x’. By elucidating the categories in virtue of the activity of self-reference, we shall also illuminate the mystical aspect and discursive failure of reason in its attempts to grasp the emanation of the One.

Plotinus does not explicitly represent his account as self-referential. But he clearly indicates that this is his strategy for developing his metaphysics. Concerning the rational forming principles, Plotinus asks and answers the following questions:

Is the plurality the rational forming principles of the things which have come into being? Or is it rather itself one thing and the forming principles different from it? On the contrary, it is a forming principle itself and the sum of the forming principles, [my emphasis] and the principles are its activity when it is active according to its substance; but the substance is the potentiality of the principles.\(^{180}\)

The Intellect must be both a forming principle and the sum of the forming principles. Thought thinking itself takes itself as the object of its thinking. Within this thinking a thought abides. Since this thought is nothing but the thinking itself, thinking is within thinking. Or thinking in term of mereology, thinking would simultaneously be external to thinking, insofar as the whole is simultaneously what is contained by the whole. As I noted earlier, ‘Being’ is listed as one of the categories, but it cannot be treated as a separate category. Why do we find ourselves in this predicament? Treating the problem schematically again, if thinking thinks thinking, then the particular thought that thinking thinks would be the activity of thinking

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\(^{180}\) Plotinus, *Enneads* 6.2, 127. In this passage Plotinus is primarily discussing the soul. But it is clear that here he does not make a very fine distinction between Soul and Intellect. Plotinus states that the soul is ‘from the intelligible place’ (125), and consistently attributes life to Intellect (129 and 133).
So, thinking must be *a thought*, if thinking thinks thinking. If thinking is a thought, thinking is self-referential, since the universal, ‘thought as such’, is a particular thought.

What is most striking about Plotinus’ formulation that it is *a forming principle and the sum of forming principles* is how close it is to Hegel’s formulation of the concept for which I shall advocate later in Section II. Hegel’s formulation is the following: *the concept is both the whole concept and an element of the whole concept.* Self-reference is constitutive of both principles. Moreover, the concept of a principle that is the whole and an element of itself requires that the difference between universality and particularity be overcome.

In Plotinus’ terms, it is the very being of the *One Being* to be. Thus, Being is the whole of Intellect, its very Being. But as the object of thinking, Being must also be a particular category, separate from the whole as such, yet within the whole, since it is what is thought. Thus, we have a solution to our problem. Plotinus is not confused when he argues that Being *is and is not* a separate predicate.\(^{181}\) As Plotinus states:

> But Intellect, since it is being as intelligent and a composite of all [the genera], it is not one of the genera; and the true Intellect is being with all its contents and already all beings, *but being in isolation, taken as a genus, is an element of it.* \(^{182}\) [My emphasis]

We might still be at an impasse concerning the category of movement, since Aristotle treats motion as something, which, because it is incomplete, is not a proper being-at-work.

Concerning the motion of Intellect, Plotinus writes the following:

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\(^{181}\) The question concerning whether Being is a predicate may not have been raised directly by Plotinus, but I have found it both problematic and productive for my own thinking about the question. When we come to Hegel, we will see that Hegel’s answer to Kant’s criticism of the Ontological Argument hinges on the employment of self-reference to show that Being is a predicate for Infinite Being.

\(^{182}\) *Plotinus, Enneads*, 6.2, 163.
[...] but makes itself many by what we may call its movement; and it is one whole, but when it undertakes, one might say, to contemplate itself, it is many: as if it cannot bear its being to be one when it is capable of being all the things that it is. And its contemplation is the cause of its appearing many, that it may think: for if it appears as one, it did not think, but is that One.¹⁸³

Since thinking (T1) as such is a particular thought (t1), the particular thought itself (t1) must contain thinking as such (T2) as a part (t2). This new part (t2), as the whole thought thinking itself, (T2), must contain itself as a part (t3), *ad infinitum*. Thus, from the self-predicating process of thinking, an infinite plurality of particulars is generated. Of course, we expect this from any self-referential process, so finding it here is no surprise. Let's apply the infinite regress to Plotinus’ account of categories. Self-referential thought thinking itself is its own particular. For this reason, thought thinking itself is counted as a particular category, ‘being’. Thought thinking itself is a motion, since it is always moving beyond itself from particular to particular. This process never ends, and there is no particular at which the process terminates. In this sense, the being at work is a motion since there is *always an outstanding particular and/or universal* lying beyond whatever particular/universal is posited. The motion is at rest in itself, for it never moves beyond this process, in its eternal self-repetition. Thus, we see how self-reference illuminates why Plotinus uses the term ‘motion’ to describe the activity of Intellect. Moreover, Thought Thinking itself is other to itself, since it is simultaneously the whole and the part. Yet, it is the same as itself in its process of self-othering, since this is its very activity.

Succinct as it may appear, Plotinus’ account of categories is inherently problematic, yet instructive for our inquiry into universality. As Aristotle before him, Plotinus rejects the notion that there is one genus of Being for the same reason Aristotle rejects it: in the epistemic aspect, *the principles of unity and difference are separate*. When we give an account of a

¹⁸³ Plotinus, *Ennead* 6, 129.
species, we cannot rely on the genus alone for the difference, but we must appeal to an external difference.\textsuperscript{184} For this reason, we must reject the concept that there is one genus of Being. If there were one genus over all genera, the prior difference of that genus would require a prior genus. Since there would be a prior difference and a prior genus, there would already be a plurality of genera prior to the differentiation of the single genus into genera. Hence, if there were one genus of being, being would already be divided into genera before the division of being into genera. This conclusion is absurd, for it begs the question. In order to ensure that we do not beg the question in our account, we must reject the concept that there is one genus of being.\textsuperscript{185}

The principle that postulates the separation of the principles of unity and difference is integral to Plotinus’ account of the categories, for instead of positing one category, as the Stoics do, he gives five instead. Moreover, like Aristotle before him, the separation of unity and difference gives us an account of genera in which individuals per se at the lowest rung of the genus structure cannot be grasped.\textsuperscript{186} Particulars, what is one in number, as such cannot be grasped, since they preclude all Form. As Plato says, they ‘march off into infinity’.\textsuperscript{187} This is matter, the lowest level of the structure of being. Unlike the One, its infinity is not due to its unity, but its lack of unity. For the One, nothing of itself is outstanding. But for the material, the residue of divine emanation, the negative quantitative infinite arises. The lack of unity engenders an infinitude of differences, impossible to enumerate, in which at every point in the enumeration, there is always some difference still outstanding. For later

\textsuperscript{184} See, for example, Plotinus, \textit{Enneads} 6.2, 117: “[…] for how could the one become many, so as to generate species, unless there were something else besides itself? For it could not by its own means become many […]” and 163: “Does being, for instance, already divide by itself without the others? No: since it must take its differentiations from outside the genus […]”.

\textsuperscript{185} Plotinus, \textit{Enneads}, VI, II, 117.

\textsuperscript{186} Plotinus, \textit{Enneads}, VI, II, 175.

\textsuperscript{187} Plato, \textit{Parmenides}, 144B4-C1.
Christian thinkers, this difference in the Divine and material infinity becomes central to Christian dogma.

Perhaps at this point in the argument the problem is obvious, but it is important to state anyway. As I stated at the very beginning, the metaphysical position that the One emanates the totality of beings presumes that the principles of unity and difference are not separate, for the One is the source of the unity and plurality of all beings. Since every account always presumes a duality of principles, there cannot be any account of how the One emanates. Because we cannot provide any conceptual determination of the emanation of the One, we are forced to employ metaphors such as ‘emanation’ in order to elucidate the generation of particulars and universals. One should immediately recognize that if it is in the very being of the One to be One, and eschew all plurality, there can be no knowledge of the One.\(^{188}\)

Earlier we noted that Hegel and Plotinus appear to share an understanding of what is required for emanation to work, namely self-reference. Yet, this requirement appears inconsistent with Plotinus’ assumption that for conceptual determinacy the principles of universality and particularity are separate principles. For this reason, Plotinus must appeal to metaphor. In section III we shall show that the move to metaphor systematically follows from the separation of the principles of universality and particularity. One might go so far as to say that Hegel recognizes what is needed in order to grasp the process of emanation. What is needed is nothing more than the rejection of the separation of the principles of

\(^{188}\) Here I reproduce another Plotinus citation from Brient: “We in our travail do not know what we ought to say, and are speaking of what cannot be spoken, and give it a name because we want to indicate it to ourselves as best we can. But perhaps this name “One” contains only a denial of multiplicity...But if the One-name and reality expressed- was to be taken positively it would be less clear than if we did not give it a name at all: for perhaps this name [One] was given it in order that the seeker beginning from this which is completely indicative of simplicity, may finally negate this as well, because, though it was given as well as possible by its giver, not even this is worthy to manifest its nature.” Plotinus, *Enneads*, 5.5.6.26-35.
universality and particularity. By rejecting the separation of these principles, Hegel thinks that he can also avoid the move to metaphor.

Moreover, since it is necessary to the very being of the One to emanate, the inability to grasp emanation necessitates the inherent unintelligibility of the One itself, and, what is the same, the intelligibility of the One as the infinite and ubiquitous, world producing power.

Since the process of emanation only works on the assumption of self-reference, yet self-reference necessitates the rejection of dual principles of unity and difference, it follows that self-reference violates the conditions for giving an account. Thus, though Plotinus writes as though self-reference were the case, he cannot accept it if he also holds to the duality of principles. Moreover, since self-reference is the means by which we could see the self-derivation of the categories from the Intellect, as their source of generation, by relying on thought alone, it also follows that we shall not be able to grasp the categories by relying on thought alone. Instead, we shall require metaphor and analogy in our thinking about Intellect as well. For sure, Plotinus himself admits as much, as it is central to the mystical aspects of Neo-Platonism.

Of course, none of this on its own should be surprising to Plotinus scholars or Neo-Platonists. One might first complain that there is a conflict between the metaphysical postulates and epistemic structure. The metaphysical claims cannot be justified on the epistemic assumptions, and the epistemic assumptions cannot be true if the metaphysical claims are true. Still, one might point out that Plotinus recognizes this objection via his employment of metaphor. But even so, we cannot but help to notice that Plotinus invokes the principle in order to reject the metaphysical position that there is one genus of being, yet allows it in again in the metaphysical emanation of Intellect from the One.
In light of this conflict, Plotinus points out that we cannot grasp the One Being as a whole. Plotinus writes:

But in general, perhaps not even the one should be asserted to be the cause of the others, but they are something like parts of it, and something like elements of it, and all one nature divided into parts by our conceptions, [emphasis mine] but [this one] itself is by a wonderful power one into all, both appearing all and becoming all, as if when it is in motion, and by its nature’s fullness of intelligence, it makes the one be not one, and we bring forward as it were parts of it and posit these, each of them as one and call it a genus, being unaware that we do not know the whole all at once, but bring forward piece by piece and join them up again, being unable to hold them back for long as they hasten to themselves. [Emphasis Mine]

Earlier in the Enneads, Plotinus argues that we should not identify the One Being as a genus of the categories because it generates them. For example, if a person generates walking, it does not follow that the person is the genus of walking. But Plotinus quickly corrects himself, stating that one should not assert that the One Being is the cause of the categories. I have attempted to motivate this reasoning, since the process by which the One Being generates the categories would violate the conditions for giving an account. The power by which the one is divided into the all is a ‘wonderful power’ [δύναμεως θαυμαστης] that exceeds our grasp. Since we cannot grasp the internal self-differentiation, we can only think the One Being externally, namely by thinking about thought thinking itself. The One Being is thereby divided into the categories or elements of the whole by our conceptions. What are our conceptions? Plotinus states that we know the categories in the One Being by knowing them in ourselves by analogy:

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So all things are being, rest, and motion; these are all-pervading genera, and each subsequent thing is a particular being, a particular rest, and a particular motion. Now when anyone sees these three, having come into intuitive contact with the nature of being, he sees being by the being in himself and the others, motion and rest, by motion and rest in himself, and fits his own being motion and rest to those in Intellect [...].

As Plotinus makes clear, one must first see the category in oneself before one may see it in Intellect. When we grasp the category with discursive reason, we grasp it in accordance with its governing principles. One basic assumption entailed by the commitment to separating principles of unity and difference is the principle of non-contradiction. In section III we shall identify the principle of non-contradiction as the most pernicious and most basic dogma of the tradition, from which the other dogmas follow. For this reason, in order to begin to make progress on the question on the being of the universal, we must make an effort to begin anew without this principle.

Since we cannot grasp how one, as one, becomes many, we can only grasp the self-abiding of a universal, not its self-externality. In accordance with this principle, we grasp each category as a category only when we think each as a separate, independent genus. Indeed, independence is one necessary condition of categorial being. Motion is motion, not rest, and rest is rest, not motion. Unfortunately for us, in Intellect motion is rest, and rest is motion. Accordingly, when we attempt to think the categories, we fail, for they fall back into each other, or in the words of Plotinus, ‘hasten to themselves’. Appearing for us as a contradiction, we cannot grasp them insofar as each is the whole. We only grasp them as separate elements. Thus, we fail to grasp how each category is the whole, and for this

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192 As Brient points out, the intellect and the Soul are complete and simultaneous unities, infinite in the sense of *adiastaton*. In the sense of *adiastaton* they are continuous with themselves, not discrete.
193 For example, see Plotinus, *Enneads*, 6.2, 131,133, and 135.
reason, we fail to grasp the whole as such, since the elements constitute the whole. Or what is the same, we grasp the whole Intellect as a contradiction.

In itself, Intellect is an undivided whole, since no category may be separated from any other. Since the division in the Intellect is due to our external conceptions, the distinctions in Intellect themselves look to be illusory. The One Being appears many. Since the very independence of the categories is what cannot be true of them, the categories disappear from discursive reason. Herein we have happened upon Plotinus' solution to the category problem: ontologically, the categories are not distinct. Logically, we can only grasp them separately, and thereby only as external to Intellect. Though this shows that Plotinus has a critical grasp of the problem, it may leave us unsettled still. By simply letting the categories fall into each other, we have not solved the problem, but only admitted that it is absurd to ‘solve’ it. The categorial nature of Being eludes us because Being violates the conditions of intelligibility prescribed by discursive reason. Ironically, it is Intellect that fails to be intelligible.

Let us briefly consider the categories in relation to species that fall under them. Plotinus points out that the species of a category cannot come to be from any one category, since the difference is external, but it also cannot come from non-being. If the categories exist, the species must come from a mingling of the categories, since the highest genera are the only source of differences from which to form species. Hence, it is by allowing the highest genera to mix that one may derive the lower species.\footnote{Plotinus, \textit{Enneads} 6.2, 165.} For example, Plotinus states that “number consists altogether of a mixture of movement and rest.”\footnote{Plotinus, \textit{Enneads}, 6.2, 153.} Of course, this is a problem, for the categories cannot be intelligible on their own if we acquire the content of the lower species by mixing the highest genera.
Plotinus suggests that we can grasp how the lower species fall under the highest genera by employing the notions of potentiality and being at work. The lower species are potentially the whole genus, yet in respect to itself each is actual. Likewise, the whole genus is only potentially the species, but in respect to itself it is actual. Unfortunately, this fails to say how the potential becomes actual. For this one requires some robust metaphors. Plotinus provides a host of metaphors to describe how the categories give rise to all things posterior to it. Consider the following:

Then when you see existing in it in the way proper to Intellect this greatness, along with the beauty that there is in it of its substance and the glory and the light around it, you see quality also, already in flower on it; and with continuity of its activity you see magnitude, quietly at rest, appearing to your gaze; […]

‘Glory’, ‘light’, ‘in flower’, ‘quietly at rest’ all substitute for the reason that is not present.

Unfortunately, at each step in the process emanation seems to fall subject to question begging. We are only able to make the initial distinction between One and Intellect after we have admitted the distinction. Because the One just is one, it cannot produce any plurality from itself. On its own the One is not a one. By insisting that ‘the One produces’ we fail to even ask how it is possible that the One produce plurality. Plotinus tells us that it is in virtue of the One thinking itself that the One produces a plurality, and becomes the One Being. Since the One itself does not think, it is not the self-thinking thought in virtue of which there is a plurality. Surely, the One cannot think, for if it could, it would cease to be the One. Still, somehow it is the One that is the source of all plurality, since it is the source of Emanation. Indeed, the One itself cannot begin to think without ceasing to be the One.

196 Plotinus, Enneads, 6.2, 166-167.
197 Plotinus, Enneads, 6.2, 169.
Thus, in order to achieve a plurality via thought thinking itself, there must already be a plurality in the beginning. In fact, even on Plotinus’ terms, to give an account of plurality requires a plurality. In order to achieve a plurality in the One Being the plurality must already be given before it can be postulated, for it must already be present in the One. Since it cannot be given in the One, the plurality of being is not properly philosophically motivated, but simply posited.° Emanation seems to be a picture we insert between the various hypostases of One, One Being and Soul in order to provide our reasoning with the continuity it sorely lacks.

The criticism that the ‘Plotinian’ account begs the question may be extended to each stage of the emanating process. Since we require metaphor to grasp the categories of Intellect, we must assume the sensuous image in order to grasp what has no sensuous content. Since the former follows the latter, we must presuppose what is derived in order to derive it. Moreover, since Forms such as ‘Quality’ rest upon the categories, and the categories are our conceptions of Intellect, our conceptions become conditions of Forms, not the Forms conditions of our conceptions. Indeed, it appears that the metaphorical appeal makes any account of emanation question begging.

The only recourse we possess is the same employed by the ancients when they encountered first principles that appeared contradictory to discursive reason: intuition. By now, perhaps the reader has had it with ‘intuition’. Plato’s intuition knows nothing of emanation, yet Plotinus’ intuition runs over with it. Still, one could attempt to make the case that, like Plato, one can only have a mystical encounter with the One and the Intellect. By attempting to grasp the categories, one has insight into the unity of the Intellect through the failure of discursive reason. Still, one might be at an impasse concerning whether Intellect

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° Put more simply, if one asks ‘why is there Intellect?’ one cannot be given an answer without begging the question. Plato requires no account of emanation, so I do not think this particular objection applies to him.
exists, and not a mere nothing given that one only encounters contradictions when one attempts to think it.

For the Ancient Greeks, the intelligible is inherently finite, as their expressions for Form, ‘being-at-work-staying-itself’ and ‘itself by itself’, clearly demonstrate. What is ‘itself by itself’ only contains itself and excludes what it is not. Insofar as it excludes what it is not, it is finite. Each Form, as itself by itself, excludes the other Forms. Likewise, it is the infinite that is never grasped, as the infinite regress of the Third Man demonstrates. In the third man, the self-reference of the Form generates an innumerable number of particular Forms, such that we never arrive at knowledge of the one true Form. Yet, for them it is the very finitude of universality and the divine that undermines their intelligibility to discursive cognition. For Aristotle, Thought Thinking Itself is inherently finite, and is not potentially infinite. As long as Form is conceived as inherently finite, namely inherently independent and a this, or ‘itself by itself’ no difference can be discovered, thereby undermining the very finitude and intelligibility of universality. Indeed, it appears that the most finite being, that in which nothing is outstanding, the finite ceases to be finite in the contradictory grasp of discursive reason.\(^{199}\) Indeed, any attempt to grasp thought thinking itself, the most finite entity, leads to the contradiction that potency and form are indistinguishable. At the extreme points of finitude a new concept of infinity arises. The Aristotelian finitude, ‘that in which nothing is outstanding’ becomes a sense of infinity: ‘that in which nothing is absent’.

The point at which all differences vanish is the moment of intensive infinity. The intensive infinite is opposed to the quantitative infinite or indeterminate, insofar as it does not signify the lack of something, e.g. the absence of Form or a number in a series, but the

\(^{199}\) As we noted in our discussion of Aristotle, one cannot distinguish pure potentiality from pure being-at-work in Intelect.
absence of any lack at all. What lacks nothing is complete.\textsuperscript{200} The infinite as the complete is not a mere lack, but has positive connotations.\textsuperscript{201}

One could interpret the meaning of ‘absence of all lack’ in two senses: absolutely or relatively. Relative to some being, ‘x’, ‘x’ lacks nothing it needs in order to be what it is. Clearly any ‘relative absence of lack’ is not infinite, since the relative is ‘relative to something’ and this implies a limit. In the absolute sense, what is intensively infinite must not lack anything simpliciter. On the face of it, if we do not make the distinction between relative and absolute, there seems to be only a nominal difference between what Aristotle calls ‘finite’ and what we are calling the ‘intensive infinite’. But, if by the term ‘intensive infinity’ we only mean that which lacks nothing simpliciter, or absolutely, the difference between the intensive infinite and Aristotle’s sense of finitude becomes more evident.

Of course, the absence of any lack appears dialectical. Really, what we mean by this phrase is something like ‘the absence of any absence’, since a lack is a kind of absence. If absence is absent, then ought the ‘absence of absence’ also disappear? The absence of absence is no absence. I take it that what is meant by this higher order ‘absence’ is not an absence at all, but a ‘fully’ abiding presence. Still, this dialectical aspect of the intensive infinity shall surface again in coming chapters, so we would do well to remember it.

The emanating One implies a new sense of infinity: the intensive infinite. Since the One in respect to its emanation is omnipresent and all encompassing, there is nothing outside the One. Nothing comparable to this all encompassing unity shows up in Aristotle, and no properly

\textsuperscript{200} Brient notes that the negative infinite [indeterminate] is associated with transcendence, while the intensive infinite is associated with immanence. In what follows I attempt to show why the latter association holds.

\textsuperscript{201} This concept of ‘completion’ is best elucidated by the German word ‘vollkommen’. ‘Vollkommen’ means ‘perfect’, but etymologically it indicates what has come fully. Interpreting it in connection with ‘ankommen’, one might even interpret it as what has fully arrived.
philosophical term is invented for it.\textsuperscript{202} The One is absolutely complete, for there is nothing at all external to the One. The \textit{totality} of what is must, in this respect, be contained by the One. Yet, though the One is absolutely infinite, the One is other to all that emanates from it, as it is one and not many. Thus, in respect to itself it appears to lack intensive infinity, and appears finite. This seems to constrain the One, and negate its infinity. On closer inspection, this is not the case. For in respect to itself the One lacks nothing in order for it to be, since \textit{its very being is to emanate}. Thus, it is also perfect in respect to itself. Since its very being is to emanate, the One, in respect to itself \textit{as One}, must be absolutely infinite. This infinity is no longer understood as the absence of Being or Form, but the very condition for any Being at all, since it is entailed in the very concept of God’s divine emanation.

The absolute intensive infinity of God requires that God be different from itself, since the One necessarily entails that the One be other to the One. In the intensive infinite we cannot distinguish the One from what is not the One. Insofar as this is not thinkable, for us all universality and difference vanishes, and we only grasp God’s perfection as that which exceeds all differences and our conceptions. Since difference requires negation, e.g. ‘x’ as ‘x’ is not ‘y’, one could also say that the One is that which excludes all negation.

Since we cannot consistently hold that the absolutely finite has any difference, we arrive at a contradiction: the finite cannot be finite.\textsuperscript{203} Instead, what appeared absolutely finite is that which has no difference at all, or that which does not have any difference. What has no difference has nothing outside of it, for it relies on nothing external to differentiate it. To have a difference would require some potential (genus) and some external specific

\textsuperscript{202} Although the term ‘cosmos’ implies totality and completion, it does not imply a totality in which there is one principle responsible for all differences. It is this latter principle from which the intensive infinite is derived.

\textsuperscript{203} Hegel makes this exact move in the \textit{Science of Logic} when he shows how the finite as finite negates itself and gives rise to the infinite. See Hegel, \textit{Science of Logic}, 129-137.
difference. Thus, *what has no difference has no limit, and is therefore infinite.*\(^{204}\) God’s infinity here cannot signify that something is always outstanding, but the opposite: that which has nothing outstanding. God’s being at work, his completion and perfection, no longer signifies the absolute limit of finitude, but the intensive infinite.

From these considerations it is clear that *the intensive infinite is inconsistent with the conditions governing universality.* The principle by which universals can be grasped undermines the very principle by which they exist. While Plotinus clings to a conception of universality in which *the universal is finite*, his transformation of the concept of God’s infinitude radically undermines his account of universality. As long as the principles of universality, i.e. the principle of non-contradiction and the duality of principles of unity and plurality, are inconsistent with the principle by which the universal exists [emanation], our metaphysical nightmare shall not end. Indeed, it appears that we shall have no shelter from the metaphysical horror generated by the problem of the categories. Our only refuge to contemplate universality lies in the metaphor of the ‘overflow’, a metaphor that, unfortunately, only reminds us that we are still laden with the ancient problems we set out to solve. In section IV of Division II, we shall aim to put this metaphysical horror show to bed by following Hegel’s lead in the *Logic of the Concept*. We shall argue that universality per se can only be grasped by rejecting the separation of the principles of universality and particularity and the principle of non-contradiction. In other words, by integrating key features of Plotinus’ metaphysical account of emanation into the structure of the concept, more can be known than Plotinus himself realized.

\(^{204}\) Aquinas also makes this point clear: since God has no potency, and to have potency is to have a limit, God is without all limits, and is therefore infinite.
Earlier in this chapter I made the argument that divine omnipotence has historically functioned as a principle for deriving class membership and intellectual intuition. Though Plotinus’ philosophy contains a commitment to divine omnipotence, he does not offer a novel way of conceiving universality. In this section I hope to show why this is the case, by showing how the Christian doctrine of creation informed the modern concepts of class-membership and intellectual intuition. The modern period is predicated upon the overcoming of Greek assumptions for others more compatible with the Christian doctrine of creation. Class membership and intellectual intuition themselves reflect the results of this struggle.

At this point in our inquiry, certain themes, which have heretofore been content to remain undercurrents, come to the fore. Though the thought of Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus are highly diverse, we discover patterns of thinking common to their philosophies: animism, paganism, and the eternality of Being. Animism is the view that Being is ensouled, or more minimally, grasped on the model of the life. Since in these accounts ‘Being’ and ‘universality’ are inseparable, universality is also modeled on the same principle. For example, The Soul is the middle term that connects Being and Becoming.\textsuperscript{205} For Aristotle, though not all beings are living, natural objects are analogous to living beings since they are defined as having an ‘internal principle of motion’. Indeed, for Aristotle, God is living, and the source of Being. Moreover, the beings most clearly exhibiting the features of Form are living beings. The biological process of reproduction and homeostasis provide the ontological foundations

\textsuperscript{205} Some commentators, such as Cornford, have gone so far as to claim that for Plato the Forms are souls.
for grounding the universal as a system of existential implication.\textsuperscript{206} In Plotinus, though the Soul constitutes one hypostasis, or level of being, Being is nonetheless ‘overrun’ with life. As Hans Jonas points out, life is the principle of Being, not the exception in the ancient account of Being.\textsuperscript{207}

Clearly, though Plotinus views God as omnipotent, he is still nonetheless committed to animism. If we follow the logic of animism through in an abstract manner, we will uncover some logical entailments quite incompatible with the Christian doctrine of creation. The organism is a self-sustaining system, which maintains its existence as a species in virtue of the generation of individuals. So long as Being is grasped on the model of life, Being will also be grasped as a self-sustaining totality. Strictly speaking, this analogy has its limits, for the living thing depends upon what is not organic. If Being sustains itself, it follows that Being is not sustained by a principle external to itself. As a self-contained totality in which no principle external to Being is the source of Being, no absolute separation between the natural and the Divine can be maintained. Paganism is the view that God is not separate from nature. On the assumption of animism, no God external to nature is required. Indeed, Being itself contains the principle whereby Being is maintained. For this reason, the Divine, as the principle or source of Being, is inseparable from Being itself. Thus, animism entails paganism.

Further, let us consider what follows from a commitment to animism and paganism. If nature itself either is the principle of its own Being, or it contains the principle by which it is, nature cannot be created by a God that transcends it. But, would it still be possible for nature to create itself? Of course, on its face, this is an inherent problematic claim, for if

\textsuperscript{206} The Form in the living individual is that power in virtue of which living individuals come to be. Logically represented, the universal implies the existence of the particular.
\textsuperscript{207} Hans Jonas in his \textit{Phenomenon of Life} thematizes this issue in the first chapter.
nature creates itself, then it appears that nature must have already been in order for it to come to be. Of course, such a possibility may be rejected only on the assumption that coming to be always presupposes some determinate Being, a foundational principle of ancient thought. If Paganism is true, it appears that nature must be eternal. If we take a gander at the ancient view of animism, we can get the same result. Given that the organic process in an organism always requires the presupposition of another instance of itself, unless life can come to be from what is not alive, animism will entail the eternality of Being. Note that if we deny the emergence of life from nonorganic nature, then we must be committed to an infinite regress in regards to the particular. Still, even on this assumption the universal does not find itself subject to such a regress. Note that the modern evolutionary theory is here precluded as a possibility, and would compromise the inference from animism to the eternality of Being. Contemporary evolutionary theory would compromise this inference, because on this theory life in principle has its origin in what is not alive. So although life itself is a self-sustaining process, it is just one process in an otherwise inorganic universe. Life is no longer conceived as the principle but the exception.

Despite any lingering worries about the logical connections between animism, paganism, and the eternality of Being, it is clear that historically they are connected in the thought of those whom we have considered here. Insofar as the universal is conceived as ‘Form’, it cannot come to be nor pass away, a claim explicitly defended by Plato and Aristotle. Being as Form entails the eternality of Being. The doctrine of emanation is the closest we come to creation in Hellenistic philosophy, yet even here there is no creation Ex Nihilo, but an eternal emanation from the One. Likewise, material, the complementary principle to Form, is not created. In Plato’s middle dialogues, material is that which fails to be a Form.

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208 For the purposes of explicating the origins of modern concepts of universality, here I shall refrain from developing any views on this question.
or in the unwritten doctrine, the separate ontological principle that makes plurality possible.

In Aristotle, material does not have the status as a positive ontological principle, as it appears in the unwritten doctrine, but is an epistemic and ontological principle relative to and inseparable from Form. Likewise, in Aristotle material is not created, for this would undermine Aristotle’s claim on the eternality of motion.\(^{209}\) Whether we contemplate Form or Matter, in either case we cannot escape the eternality of Being and universality. In Plotinus, not only is Form eternal, but material is also \textit{eternally} emanating from the One, itself infused with the divine being from which it originates.

In short, animism implies paganism, and paganism implies the eternity of the world.\(^{210}\) The Christian doctrine of creation undermines these theses. If nature is created, then nature must come to be. Indeed, the orthodox interpretation of creation \textit{Ex Nihilo} radicalizes this commitment: \textit{nature must come to be from nothing}. If nature comes to be from nothing, then it cannot be eternal. If it is not eternal, by \textit{modus tollens}, paganism and animism cannot be true.

It will do us some good to briefly explicate this argument in regards to its content, as it will illuminate the problems we have been grappling with in a new light. The Christian doctrine of creation implies a difference between creator and created. God is eternal, and creates the world from nothing. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”\(^{211}\) As a creator of a distinct creation, God is not identified with his creation. If he

\(^{209}\) If we remember, matter is the potency for Form, and motion is the coming into being of the Form out of the matter, or the activity out of the potency. If matter were created, then motion would have a beginning, which Aristotle thinks is absurd.


\(^{211}\) See Genesis 1.
were, he would be created. Since God is not created, God must transcend his creation. Since
God transcends his creation, he cannot be identified with his creation. Paganism must be
false. Moreover, since the creation can no longer be explained by a principle internal to itself,
we must also reject animism. On the whole, the doctrine of creation implies that the world is
not eternal (for there is a beginning), God cannot be identified with the creation (for God is
not created), and the world is not ensouled (for the principle of explanation is external to
nature). Though Aristotle conceived of God as immaterial, for him God is still one being
among beings in the totality of Being. Here God must be conceived as that which transcends
nature. In this light, the Christian doctrine of creation looks closer to Plato and Plotinus’
commitment that God is beyond Being.

Despite the similarities, the orthodox doctrine of creation stands in stark contrast to
the eternality of the world. Though there are other problems plaguing the attempt to unify
Greek thought with Christian revelation, this problem concerns us directly, since it gives rise
to new ways of thinking about thought. Since the Christian doctrine of creation entails a
negation of paganism, the Christian doctrine of creation rejects the notion that God
generates the world. Generation is the process by which individual living beings reproduce.
As a rule, what is generated is of the same kind as that which generates, if God generated
nature, nature would be divine. Since the doctrine of creation rejects the divinity of the
world in virtue of its rejection of paganism, God’s relation to creation cannot be that of
generation. Indeed, the difference between generation and making is rendered explicit in
the orthodox statement of faith immortalized in the Nicene Creed of 325AD:

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We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, \textit{begotten, not made}, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son], who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Likewise, if God were to generate the world, a new form of animism would supplant the ancient form thereof. Insofar as generation is not the proper way to think about creation, the Christian doctrine of creation diverges from Platonic and Neo-platonic thought. In Plato’s \textit{Timaeus}, the world is \textit{generated} by the Demiurge, and for Plotinus, besides the Neo-platonic insistence on the divine nature of Being, it appears that the life process is the closest model we have to understanding the process of emanation.

In order to maintain the difference between the creator and the created, \textit{making} replaces generation as the relation between God and nature. Since the maker is not the same thing as what he makes, e.g. the artificer is not a table, if God makes the world, the world itself will not be divine.\footnote{\textit{The emphasis is mine.}}\footnote{\textit{There is, I believe, nonetheless a conflation of terms in the usual way in which creation is understood. Creation proper cannot be an act of making, since it assumes an eternal form that is imposed upon material. For a complete notion of creation, the creator must give the Form and matter existence \textit{from nothing}.}} In this respect, Christian theology makes a distinction that ancient Greek thought fails to make. Although God generates the Son (Christ), he does not generate...
the creation; he makes it. 215 Though Plato invokes a divine designer (Demiurge) in the
*Timaeus*, we will see that restrictions placed on this designer are incompatible with Christian
theology. One question, which arises in connection with this transformation, is whether it
will even be proper to think about an Omnipotent being as a designer. Central to our
investigation of class-membership and intellectual intuition are the transformations Christian
theology demands of the divine artificer.

Though orthodox Christian theology cleanly distinguishes generation from making,
Greek thought, of both ancient attic and Hellenistic strains, fails to make a proper distinction
between the two. In fact, one could argue that the problems of participation and differentia
stem from the conflation of these two modes of coming-to-be in Greek thought.

In *Timaeus*, Plato describes the production of the world in terms of both making and
generation. The Demiurge is both maker and father to the world. Moreover, in the
*Metaphysics*, Aristotle treats artifacts similarly to living things, as he states that ‘a house comes
from a house’. 216 In addition, in the Physics he uses the analogy of a doctor healing himself
as a way of explaining the self-relation of natural beings. More generally, we find that all the
thinkers we have heretofore considered treat knowing in terms similar to making. In any act
of making, the form is separate from the matter. The product is the result of the informing
of the matter with some pre-given form. In order to discover what the artifact is, one need
only ask the maker ‘what have you made?’ The maker is not the same kind of thing as what
is made. As the reader knows, the ancient Attic and Hellenistic notions of knowing assume,
each in his own terms, a difference between form and matter. For Plato, these appear as

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215 This account of orthodoxy, would, I believe, undermine Christian Neo-Platonic accounts of God’s relation
to his creation.

216 Naturally, a house does not come from a house the same way that a living thing is generated by other living
things. Instead, the design of the house in the mind of the artificer is, in some sense, the cause of the
composite itself.
separate ontological principles, which contribute to the problem of participation whereas in Aristotle and Plotinus they are epistemic principles reflected in the difference between genus (matter) and the specific difference. (Form). Though ontologically Form and matter are treated as a unity, their epistemic separation generates the category problem. Interestingly, Socrates’ main examples in the Socratic dialogues are taken from crafts. Perhaps it is not insignificant to note that before Socrates was a philosopher he was, as far as we know, a craftsman. Moreover, the model of making undermines the relevance of material for knowing. To know an artifact one must cognize the Form. The material is only useful as a means to know the Form. In Plato, this appears as dialectic, whereby one grasps the Form by seeing how the material fails to represent it; in Aristotle, though one must enumerate the attributes of a thing in order to discover the middle term, it is from knowledge of the middle term, the Form, not the material, that attributes are deduced. In these schemas, if material has any epistemic value, it is only as a springboard to know something that is not material, but wholly intelligible: Form. For this reason, earlier I employed the term ‘intuitive induction’, following Foster, to distinguish it from its modern correlate, ‘empirical induction’, which we shall discuss shortly.

Though knowledge appears to be indebted to the structure of making, at the same time there is a conflicting strain of thought that undermines the strict separation of Form and matter. Most obviously, the most problematic features in the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions are self-reference, emanation, and existential implication, none of which seem compatible with treating knowing as a form of making. What is important to note here is the fact that life is also employed as the model for grasping being and knowing. For example, Socrates is a midwife who gives birth to knowledge. I have already briefly noted the ways in which life is assumed as a model in these accounts. Very much unlike making, in life the
form and matter are never separated. The form and matter are always already realized in the same individual. For example, the structures of my existence as an animal, namely my capacity to move myself and sense is not divorced from the material of my body. Moreover, thought is unnecessary for generating another instance of the same form. For example, creatures without the capacity for artificing, such as cockroaches, reproduce. Another important feature of life is the fact that life exists for the sake of itself. As an organic system, each part is for the sake of the whole, and the whole for the sake of the parts. For example, the functioning organs of the body make it possible for the heart to fulfill its function, while the organs of the body cannot function without the heart’s activity in virtue of which they are supplied with blood. As such, the system in the individual and the species is a given self-organizing and self-sustaining whole. For example, life processes such as homeostasis are both the end and the means for the sake of which the life process occurs. Insofar as they are self-organizing, they do not necessarily require another source other than themselves for their being, such as a maker. Not only do artifacts necessarily require an external principle, but in artifacts the material employed for the sake of some artificial end is not inherently for the sake that use. For example, though wood may be used as material for a table, it is not by nature a table, or for holding things. To be a bit anthropomorphic, one might say that the matter is indifferent to the form. This indifference provides greater variability in which materials may be employed in the realization of the form. Unlike the artifact, the material of the organism as a whole cannot be simply swapped with any another kind of material, as it is specifically suited for the form in which it is realized. In the artifact, the whole form is built via the aggregation and organization of distinct individuals whereas any member or

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217 Of course this is not to say that some material and bodily parts will be less essential than others. For example, gray matter will be more important than a limb. Though I think drawing strong distinctions between making and generation has interesting and perhaps unsettling consequences for AI, I will refrain from discussing these consequences here, since they are not relevant to the main goal of this work.
organ of the organism is only alive within the given structure of the organic whole. In this respect, one may distinguish life from artifact by the order of the whole and parts dependency. Consider Hans Jonas’ example: a car engine’s parts are not fundamentally altered by the fluid that makes the car run, whereas the nutrition taken in by the organism re-constitutes the very material of the members of the organism itself. The life process itself, the form of the whole, constitutes its own parts via its own activity, whereas the activity of the artifact leaves its own material constituents unaffected. Though I have only given some cursory differences between making and generation here, I have done so merely to emphasis that it is of no small significance to draw fine distinctions between them.

In proceeding further, we shall discover that life and generation more or less disappear from the account of universality in the modern era, whereas making becomes the activity by which we understand the activity of knowing. For example, despite the rejection of teleology as an ‘anthropomorphism’, even the organism becomes subject to making. In theories of design, a divine artificer makes living things. In evolutionary theory, prominent philosophers such as Daniel Dennett identify organisms as robots. Unlike the ancient accounts, the latter takes what the ancients called ‘Form’ as something essentially ‘made’ by ‘mother nature’. By working through the transformation of the divine Demiurge undergone in Christian theology, we shall discover that the predominance of making in the modern era shall en-frame the way universality is conceived in the modern era. Since the problems of the differentia and participation are generated from assumptions reflected in the activity of making, these problems shall persist throughout modern philosophy, albeit unnoticed by many.

218 This is a basic assumption and tenet of Dennett’s *Kinds of Minds.*
In the thought of St. Augustine\textsuperscript{219}, we find the concept of Intellectual intuition developed. If God is conceived as a maker, then his activity consists in the realization of a pre-given Form in some pre-given material, as a maker realizes a round shape in some bronze material. But, if God’s activity of making is limited by a ready made Form, then he cannot be omnipotent. Thus, God is either omnipotent and not a maker, or he is a maker, and is not omnipotent. Neither option seems desirable. Accordingly, the concept of intellectual intuition is developed in order to remedy this misfortune.

In the activity of making, the composite comes to be, yet the Form does not. In order to account for God’s omnipotence, the Christian doctrine of creation cannot tolerate the existence of a Form independent of God’s activity. If God thinks a universal that exists independently of his thinking, then his thinking is limited. Yet, if the universal God thinks cannot exist without God’s thinking it, then the universal is no longer a limitation on God’s omnipotence. Since the existence of the universal must depend on God in order for God’s power to remain in tact, Augustine introduces intellectual intuition: the universal God thinks come to be in the very act of God’s contemplation of the universal. If the universal comes to be in virtue of God’s thinking it, God can realize his Form in a material without being limited by a pre-given Form. Intellectual Intuition, though it does not give us a new form of universality, transforms the concept of the divine artificer in order to account for God’s omnipotence. The universal now comes to be in virtue of the act of thinking itself.\textsuperscript{220}

Since material is also a condition for the activity of making, God’s activity cannot be limited by a given material. Material itself must be created in order for God to remain omnipotent.

\textsuperscript{219} See, for example, paragraphs 18 and 20 of Augustine’s \textit{On the Trinity}. Though here there is an advance to Intellectual intuition, here Augustine, in his attempt to unify Christian theology with Platonism, identifies the Divine Word with the Second Person of the trinity, and thereby confuses the difference between the generation of the Son and the creation of the world. For a detailed analysis of this, see Foster, “Christian Theology and Modern Science of Nature II”, 8.

\textsuperscript{220} Foster, “Christian Theology and the Modern Science of Nature II”, 8-10.
omnipotent. In this respect, material cannot be viewed as the mere absence of Form, since it must come to be as another condition for the possibility of an omnipotent creator.\textsuperscript{221} After all, if material were nothing, nothing would come to be.

Let us continue our investigation into how the Christian doctrine of creation transformed the concept of the divine demiurge. The \textit{ideal} of Reason in pre-Christian accounts entails existential implication, under which the particular instance of the universal follows from the universal on its own. Given the \textit{ideal} of existential implication, it appears that there stands no need for a mediating power by which the universal realizes the particulars that fall under it. In the thought of St. Augustine, most notably in \textit{The Free Choice of the Will}\textsuperscript{222}, Augustine argues that there must be a mediating power which mediates between universal and particular: the will. The will, as a faculty of affirmation and denial, is that faculty by which the human mind realizes the ideas it thinks. The universals, on their own, do not realize themselves. Augustine introduces this faculty in order to account for evil, and intentional wrongdoing in particular.\textsuperscript{223} What is important for our purposes is not the original reason why Augustine introduces this faculty, but how the attribution of will to the divine radically changes the concept of the universal in modern thought.

As we have already argued, if God is understood as an omnipotent artificer, he must be the source both of the Form and material of what he creates. Let us consider what also follows on the attribution of divine will. Following Foster\textsuperscript{224}, I designate the Christian doctrine of Creation ‘rationalist’ if the creation is willed in accordance with \textit{an antecedent principle of order}. The maker informs his material in order that his form may be realized in that

\textsuperscript{223} Though Aristotle does attempt to account for intentional wrongdoing by appealing to desire, I am skeptical that he is successful in doing this.
\textsuperscript{224} See “Christian Theology and Modern Science of Nature (II), 4. Rationalism means that “the activity of God is the activity of Reason”.

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material. *As a creator,* the form and matter have their origin in God’s creative activity, but that does not preclude God from engaging in an act of design after he has created the principles necessary for design. *As a maker,* the will of the maker is subject to the realization of the design. Insofar as the design *necessitates* particular formations of the material, the will may be *contingent* only to the extent to which the formations of the material are not subject to the antecedent order. \(^{225}\) Accordingly, his will, insofar as it exceeds what is determined by the principle of order, may be deemed a failure, since its sole task is the realization of the order. In this respect, the contingent features of the process are either irrelevant, e.g. ‘accidents’, to the activity and subject, or deformities of the realization of the universal, e.g. a three-legged table. The best maker adheres to what is necessitated by the order. Clearly, if God is omnipotent, the material in which he realizes the principle of order cannot resist his realization of the plan of creation. Hence, the order God creates must be perfectly realized in the material. We should note that on the principle of God’s omnipotence, the universal would be perfectly realized both *intensively* and *extensively.* Each numerical division of the material, *qua* one in number, would exhibit the universal, and each would exhibit the universal perfectly in respect to its unity in kind, its ‘what it is’, or quality. Unlike the Platonic relation of appearance to reality, in which universals, such as ‘triangle’, cannot be fully realized in the material, God’s omnipotence assures the inquirer that whatever God creates will be perfectly realized. For this reason, no need would exist for the inquirer to use the material simply to get beyond it, for the particular would fully exhibit the universal. Instead, the material would itself be the proper subject of inquiry. In sum, the perfection of God’s will insures that the universals governing creation are perfectly realized and that the material of creation is a proper subject of inquiry. That nature is governed by uniform laws, a basic

proposition of modern science for which no empirical account may prove sufficient, is
grounded by this theology. Unlike the ancient view, the material is not merely a springboard
for its own abandonment, but the proper object of knowing.\textsuperscript{226}

With the attribution of will to the omnipotent creator, it becomes immediately
evident that the Rationalist ideal of creation cannot help but integrate elements of
‘voluntarism’. An account is ‘voluntarist’ insofar as will exceeds reason. Though God gives
universals existence by thinking them, from intellectual intuition it does not follow that God
instantiates any of the universals that come to be in virtue of his thinking. Indeed, one could
argue that God must instantiate any universal that God thinks because the universal is self-
instantiating. The problem, of course, is the following: if God were coerced to instantiate
any particular universal or set of universals, then he would be limited by the universals which
he thinks. If he were coerced, the objects of his thinking would challenge his omnipotence.
For example, on this view it would not be possible for God to instantiate universals that
would be logically inconsistent with the universals he would be forced to instantiate. Thus, if
God is omnipotent, God cannot be coerced to realize any particular universal or set of
universals. God must be free to affirm or deny the instantiation of any universal that God
could contemplate. As the preceding shows, God’s omnipotence entails that \textit{thinking a concept
does not entail its instantiation}. For example, the concept ‘unicorn’ does not entail the existence
of unicorns. By existence here we mean ‘instantiated in nature’. The universal is only a
possible ‘one over many’. In this respect, the universal has the form of an abstraction utterly
disconnected in itself from its particulars. As such, \textit{thinking is no longer a principle of existence, but
merely a principle of intelligibility}. The will, on the other hand, is a principle by which we are able
to \textit{realize} the possibilities that are thought. Thus, the principle of divine omnipotence strips

the universal of its power of existential implication. Since self-reference implies existential implication, the rejection of existential implication also necessarily entails the negation of self-reference. Modern thought takes up the impossibility of self-reference as a more or less obvious assumption that we can trace back to the rejection of existential implication in Christian theology. In what follows we discuss in more detail the relation between will and existence.

Instead of attributing the power of self-realization to the universal, the power by which the universal is realized must belong to God himself. God must possess the freedom to realize what he wishes. By positing that God has will, and thereby the capacity of affirmation and denial that comes therewith, God has the capacity to affirm or deny, without coercion, whatever universal God wishes to instantiate. In this respect, God has usurped the power of the universal, now centrally located in his will. If God’s omnipotence entails that God must be free to choose what he realizes, even on the Rationalist interpretation of creation, the activity of creation must contain some contingent elements.

Though existential implication has been stripped from the universal, it re-appears two different places: in God’s intellectual intuition and Anselm’s ontological proof for God’s existence. Insofar as God creates universals simply by thinking them, God’s thinking is sufficient for the existence of universals as particular thoughts. In virtue of thinking, God does give existence to particular concepts as concepts, even if these concepts do not yet have any natural instantiation. Insofar as particular concepts as concepts have existence in virtue of God’s thinking them, existential implication is re-instated at the most fundamental level,

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227 Though I have been following Foster’s article as a guiding thread throughout this section, the argument I have given here that omnipotence entails the rejection of existential implication is my own. Moreover, I think this argument gives support to Foster’s claim that God’s thinking of the universal does not entail the existence of the universal.

228 We developed this principle earlier in our discussion of Plato’s Third Man argument. When the universal is attributed to itself, it becomes a particular instance of itself. Given that self-reference entails existential implication, any rejection of the latter shall entail the negation of the former.
and appears necessary to ensure God’s omnipotence. Behind the rejection of existential implication at the level of concepts and their instances, there is an affirmation of it at the level of concepts themselves.

Let us now briefly discuss Anselm’s argument. If God is that than which no greater can be conceived, then God must exist. For, if God did not exist, then I could conceive of a being greater than God’s existence, namely one that does exist. Therefore, a God that does not exist is not that than which none greater can be conceived, and thereby is not God. Thus, if God is that than which none greater can be conceived, i.e. if God is omnipotent, then God must exist. Put more succintly, since God is God there is a God. Here I do not wish to discuss the virtues and problems concerned with this argument. Instead, I merely wish to point out that in the ontological argument, the concept of God is sufficient for his existence. Accordingly, the concept of omnipotence ensures the existence of an individual, nay the individual that is God. Though existential implication may disappear from the universal, it is preserved in the particular concept of omnipotence itself.

Given the exclusion of existential implication from the universal more generally, we can quickly enumerate the various elements of Voluntarism in the Rationalist doctrine of creation. First, since thinking does not entail the instantiation of what is thought, (i) that God creates anything at all is not necessitated by God’s thinking. God must will that there is a creation. Since God could just as well not will the creation, the existence of creation and correlatively, the instantiation of any universal, is utterly contingent. This contingency expresses the limitation of reason. Moreover, since thinking does not entail the existence of the instantiation of what is thought, (ii) which universals God creates is also contingent. Third, since the instances of the universals, the particulars, are not necessitated by the existence of

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229 At this stage of the argument we are not considering the concept ‘God’, for as I pointed out earlier, that concept is arguably self-referential and existentially implicative.
the universal, it is not the universal which is necessarily contingent, but the various particulars. Since each particular must be differentiated from each other particular, each particular qua differentiated, will also be contingent. Not only the existence, but also the being, or ‘what it is to be’ of each individual, is something external to the thinking of the universal. Thus, on the whole, it is evident that the Rationalist perspective on creation seems to entail elements of Voluntarism. Important to note here is the connection between intellectual intuition and the abstract universal. Though the universal comes to be in virtue of the thinking of the universal, the universal itself is abstract, or at least has the form of abstraction, since it is a one over many. As a common term, it is both unable to differentiate amongst the particulars that instantiate it, and determine the number of its instances.230

Clearly, since the will can only realize what has already been conceived by reason in the Rationalist doctrine of Creation, nature is inherently intelligible and the unity of Being and universal, handed down from antiquity, is preserved. From this Rationalist view of creation, we can understand Kepler when he says of the natural scientist that he ‘thinks God’s thoughts after him’. Since the universals governing God’s creation are not derived from observation of the creation, and make possible any creation at all, the universals guiding creation are ‘a priori’. Since the a priori concept is established, Immanuel Kant’s question ‘how are synthetic a priori concepts possible?’ becomes a live possibility and concern for modern thought. Though one neither requires observation to think the possible universals that God could have instantiated, nor their interrelations, observation shall be required to verify and falsify one’s hypotheses about what is in fact realized. What the rationalist view of

230 For a fuller discussion of these features, see Foster, “Christian Theology and the Modern Science of Nature (II)”, 18-20.
creation captures is this dual facet of modern science, namely that relies on empirical confirmation of merely theoretically accessible possibilities.\textsuperscript{231}

Though we shall endeavor to argue that the Modern Rationalism employs intellectual intuition, we shall also have the opportunity to show that secular Modern Empiricism, and its various reincarnations throughout modernity, is also pre-dated by theological arguments. Specifically, we find that the assumptions generating Modern Empiricism may be traced to the radicalized Voluntarism, exhibited in the thought of Ockham. Unlike the Rationalist theology that establishes \textit{a priori} universals, and thereby makes possible the question, ‘how is synthetic a priori cognition possible?’, under Volunteerism \textit{a priori} concepts are abolished, and the problem of induction becomes the center of epistemic discourse.

Brient points out Blumenberg’s insight in his \textit{Legitimacy of the Modern Age}, namely that the condemnation of 1277 by the Bishop of Paris marks the point in time when the omnipotence of God takes precedence over reason. Among the condemned propositions is the following: proposition seventeen states that God cannot bring about what is absolutely impossible.\textsuperscript{232} The condemnation of this proposition implies that God’s creation cannot be limited by any particular rational schema, e.g. Aristotelian philosophy of nature. Proposition twenty was condemned because it stated that God of necessity makes what comes from him.\textsuperscript{233} Clearly, this proposition limits God’s capacity to change the natural order.\textsuperscript{234} If the condemnation of this proposition is accepted, then any orthodox theology must reject Neo-Platonism, since it states that the One of necessity emanates the many. Proposition sixty-nine

\textsuperscript{231} See Foster, “Christian Theology and Modern Science of Nature (II)”, 22-23. I do not mean to imply that a priori theory always guides empirical research in modern science. Experimental research may undermine particular theories, and provide new data for which theory must give an account. In this respect, the dual aspects of \textit{a priori} theory and experiment are interrelated and lead each other.

\textsuperscript{232} Brient, \textit{The Immanence of the Infinite}, 131.

\textsuperscript{233} Brient, \textit{The Immanence of the Infinite} 131.

\textsuperscript{234} Brient, \textit{The Immanence of the Infinite} 131.
was condemned because it stated that God could not produce a certain effect except through the mediation of secondary causes.235 Here God’s omnipotence implies that he should be able to bi-pass these mediating causes. Historically, these condemnations motivated the contingent elements of the Christian Doctrine of Creation and the radical theological Nominalism of Ockham.236

Though the Rationalist doctrine of creation ought to contain elements of Voluntarism, it nonetheless holds to the proposition that God’s will is governed by God’s reason. Medieval Nominalism goes one step further towards absolute contingency and rejects this assumption. If God were truly omnipotent, his will would not be restricted by reason or any set of universals. Insofar as God’s will is not restricted by reason, God’s creation is not guided by any antecedent principle of order. Since no antecedent principle of order guides the creation itself, it would be a mistake to think about God’s act of creation as ‘making’. Since no antecedent principle of order guides the creation, there are no a priori concepts to think ‘after God thinks them’ in Kepler’s sense. Everything that is created could have been otherwise than how it is; beings are unconditionally contingent. Thus, in order to know what is created, human beings have nothing on which to rely except for their observation of creation. In other words, since no a priori knowledge of creation can be had, one can only have a posteriori knowledge, i.e. knowledge based on experience. Since everything could be otherwise than as it is, nothing in creation is necessary. For this reason, universality loses any necessity it possessed in the Aristotelian paradigm. Indeed, in order to know some being in creation, one must experience that created being.237 This experience is not a springboard to contemplate the universal, since there is no universal beyond the individual.

236 Brient, The Immanence of the Infinite 132.
Indeed, it is the radical individuality of created being that renders experience essential. For Ockham, this radical Voluntarism not only generates a novel epistemology, but also a very peculiar Metaphysics.

If God’s willing is not guided by any universal, and God is perfect, the fact that God’s willing does not conform to some antecedent principle of order ought not imply that his creation is defective. Perhaps the case is quite the opposite in fact: God’s willing is more perfect since it is closer in line with his omnipotence. Since all concepts are empirical, it stands for us to determine what empirical concepts there are. If no universal governs God’s creation, no universal mediates between God and the individuals God creates. Hence, the creation consists wholly of individuals who are immediately dependent upon God. If there are any mediating causes, these are unnecessary. Indeed, ‘Ockham’s razor’, the famed principle that the simplest explanation is best, seems to follow from this radicalized Voluntarism, for God is the simple immediate cause of every being. Moreover, the immediate dependency on God creates a world situation in which a totality of individuals exist yet have no relation to each other, for each is immediately dependent on God. Since no principle of order is employed in the creation of beings, there is no universal immanent in beings for human minds to cognize. The loss of the mediating universal also shows that the essence, or what it is to be of any individual object cannot be in any way separated from its contingent individuality. Thus, no definition of things by genus and species is possible. For sure, though universals are empirical, they cannot be discovered in the individuals, since they would necessarily already be in them if they were discovered. Instead, since knowing requires

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238 I do not mean to claim that Ockham’s Razor is not a result of his nominalism. The theory that there are no intermediary universals in nature is a key aspect of nominalism, namely that all universals are, in some sense, constructions of the subject and not inherent in nature itself. For this reason, the principle is a matter of convenience, but I would like to say that it is not merely so, for it hangs together with certain theological concepts.
the universal, and we do possess them in thought, universals must be *constructed* from the bare individuals encountered in experience. Universals, as constructions of the mind, *exist in the mind*, and do not denote common terms in entities themselves. With the rejection of definition as genus and species, we must also reject the deduction of unique properties from the middle term. Clearly, the rejection of Aristotelian definitions undermines the whole of classical logic, and therefore the whole of the classical science founded thereon.\(^{239}\) Though the Aristotelian logic is undermined on these assumptions, for Ockham that does not entail that they are utterly incomprehensible, for he postulates that the only limit on God’s omnipotence is the principle of non-contradiction.

With the banishment of universals from the individuals encountered in experience, what kind of universal could be constructed from individuals bearing no universality?\(^{240}\) It is here, at this juncture, that the concept of ‘class membership’ finds some metaphysical and epistemic motivation. In the following, I cease from giving a historical description of Ockham’s notion of universality, and instead focus solely on how the principle of divine omnipotence may be used to motivate a certain systematic view of the universal. Since all beings are individuals, if the universal is grasped as an aggregate of individuals, universals can be constructed. Since individuals can be aggregated together, aggregates of individuals may be formed. Indeed, since the universals are banished from the individuals, the aggregation itself does not appear to be a function of the individuals that are aggregated. For this reason,

\(^{239}\) Here I have merely intimated some of the metaphysical features of Ockham’s system. Brient, in *Immanence of the Infinite*, 64-65, provides a fuller overview of the main theses of Ockham’s metaphysics in his *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum Ordinatio* 1, d.2, q.7., which I have reproduced in briefer form here: 1) God’s will is only bound by the principle of non-contradiction, 2) God can do anything a secondary cause can do, 3) Essence and existence cannot be separated, 4) each entity exists independently of each other entity, and 5) there are no universals existing in the individuals.

\(^{240}\) At this point in the argument I leave undetermined the way that the class may be constructed. In modern philosophy different theories of class construction are posited. In principle, though, since we are motivating class membership along nominalist lines, I tend to think of construction as a psychological activity that is to be distinguished from geometrical construction.
they must have their origin in some external principle, such as a psychological subject who aggregates them together. In modern philosophy, which we shall discuss shortly, thinkers usually appeal to resemblance or analogy as the method by which the classes are constructed. One can aggregate individuals of any kind: colors, houses, horses, amoebas, etc. into groups. As is evident, insofar as the universal is an aggregation of individuals, in the aggregate the individuals stand in relation to one another. What is it in virtue of which these individuals belong in one class? On the one hand, since there is no universal identity in the objects themselves by which the individuals may be distinguished from each other, their relation to one another in the class appears to lack any inherent principle of universal identity. On the other hand, each individual is an individual, and for this reason there is the universal ‘individuality’ that all of them share. But this is like saying that each has ‘being unique in common’. That each is one in number does in fact allow each of them to be aggregated in the first place, and in this sense, there is some universality that is already built into the individuals from the outset. What this implies is that although nominalism attempts to derive all universals from individuals, some universal must be assumed from the outset in order for any universal to be derived. Given these considerations, the true nominalist must argue that either the individuality of the members is not a true universal, or that even the individuality of each is a product of the aggregate of individuals. On the one hand, because one can only aggregate if there are already individuals to aggregate, the aggregation cannot in fact account for the individuality of each. On the other hand, though one ought to distinguish ‘one in number’ from ‘one in kind’, ‘one in number’ is already nonetheless a kind of universality, for it appeals to ‘being countable’ as a criterion for inclusion in the class.

Though the relation of individual to individual is supposed to be merely external to the individuals, since universality is banished from their individuality, their very being is indifferent to
Thus, class-membership appears to be inherent in the being of individuals, for there is not a principle of identity, a universal, in these individuals to which the quantitative analysis could be indifferent. In this respect, it is the very being of the individual to be taken up into quantitative analysis and ‘organized’ into classes, and we are treating them in a way that is consistent with their being. Indeed, each is a member of the totality of the class of individuals, which altogether constitutes what exists. Yet, because the individuals are distinct, the very difference between each member becomes indiscernible. So, though it is their being to be aggregated, it is also inherent in the individuals that they be distinct, otherwise they could not be gathered into one class. On the one hand, since the common term is missing, the individuals are each simply unique, and their difference is given. Thus, it is only their identity with one another that is absent. But on the other hand, since their being is to be aggregated into one, it is the difference between each individual that fails to appear. As mere aggregates without universality, they are simultaneously distinct and identical to one another as that which is ‘one in number’.

Insofar as the individuals are brought together by an external agent into an aggregation of whatever combination desired by the collector there is no inherent qualitative standard that could differentiate what belongs or does not belong in any group. Thus, set-membership is a wholly quantitative determination of universality. This is the assumption of modern deductive systems, in which the universal is a quantifier signifying ‘for all x’. What is the identifying mark of ‘x’? It is not specified in the quantifier itself. Instead, it must be stipulated. The correlate term for particulars is ‘for some x’. In the quantitative determination

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241 I have gathered this concept of law from various sources: the laying bare of Mechanism in Hegel’s *Science of Logic* (711-720) and Foster’s *Christian Theology and Modern Science of Nature* (I), 450.

242 Here I am assuming that for individuals to become discernable we must in principle be able to formulate those attributes by which they are discerned in terms of universals. If I cannot formulate the differences in terms of what is universal, or ‘such and such’, then each difference is individual. If each difference is individual, then there would be no way for any one to think the difference between them.
of universality, the relation of one member to the other is wholly indifferent to any qualitative content the individuals may possess. Still, we ought to qualify this claim. Surely, the assembler probably has some qualitative standard by which she assembles the class. But there is no inherent criterion she could invoke by which she would be justified in criticizing another who employed a different standard.

Quite obviously, if the universal just is the class, class membership is not divorced from the particular as the abstract ‘one over many’, since the universal is constituted by the particulars. What is the universal ‘horse’? On the assumption that the universal just is the class, ‘horse’ simply denotes the collection of individual horses, since there is no common term ‘horse’. What the nominalist cannot properly account for is the qualitative determinations that set classes apart from one another. In order to achieve that, they must introduce features that they cannot account for in the derivation of the class. Obviously, a horse is not just an aggregation, but also a type of aggregation. Usually nominalists appeal to similarities and resemblances among individuals in order to account for the qualitative criterion for membership, but note that these are not universals proper, for they are not common terms. Indeed, ordering by resemblance is already dubious without common terms. For if there is no common term, there is nothing in respect to which any individual could in principle be like any other.

Since the relation is external to the qualitative content of the individuals, the relation is merely external, for it does not touch on their content. Since the particulars constitute the universal, the universal is formed via a process of empirical induction. Unlike intuitive induction, the move to the universal is not an abandonment of the particular, but instead it
remains with the particular, for it is nothing other than the totality of them.\footnote{We discussed intuitive induction in our discussion of Aristotle. Intuitive induction is the process by which one arrives at a separate universal from looking over a plurality of particulars. In this case, the universal itself is not just the class of particulars, but something above and beyond that determination. In intuitive induction one has an immediate insight of the universal in virtue of which they exist as particulars. ‘Intuitive’ signifies this act of seeing the cause of the particulars.} Now, since class membership is constructed, the definition of any term signifying a universal must be nominal, i.e. the thinker defines the class however the thinker wishes. Regarding the extensional side of the universal, definitions appear ostensive, for one defines a universal by referring to ‘this’ or ‘these’ particulars. If one desires knowledge of why one classes an entity in one class, and another entity in another class, the thinker is free to stipulate the criterion and thereby the meaning of one’s terms, for no universal exists ‘out there’ in things, by which one could judge the normativity of a definition. Indeed, the very qualitative criterion may be taken up from a resembling relation, but there is no necessity to class particulars in any particular order in any particular way. Hence, one arrives at the positivist prejudice that one may define terms ‘however one wishes’. Universals are no longer said of things, but are constructed significations of our language. Insofar as universality is necessary for any formulation of truth, truth is no longer a being, or said of beings, but becomes a property of language. Insofar as Being is inherently individual, the description of beings and their relations becomes the main task of science, not their definition, for descriptions function as ways to individuate particulars. Take, for example, the famous example from Russell’s \textit{On Denoting} when I describe Scott by the proposition ‘Scott is the author of \textit{Waverly}’ I am individuating the particular ‘Scott’. The description of some individual is most obviously derived from one’s experience of the contingent thing.

The inability to use beings as a measure of the truth of some definition shows that truth cannot be the disclosure of universals immanent in their particulars, for universals have
been banished from the particulars. Moreover, ‘truth’ cannot be the correspondence of a concept with an object, since there is no concept in the object with which the concept could correspond. In other words, because the object eschews conceptual form, one cannot grasp the object conceptually, and this is a necessary condition for truth, or the correspondence between concept and object. For this reason, on this model of universality truth cannot be the correspondence of the concept with the object. Indeed, on these definition of truth, it appears that radical Voluntarism would reject the being of truth altogether.\(^{244}\)

Nominalism imposes challenges for scientific theories to be verified or falsified by raw, un-interpreted data. Given nominalism, no measure exists \textit{a priori} in the phenomena itself by which we may measure our theories. For this reason, we can neither verify nor falsify our theories based on some antecedent structure. Any verification or falsification of a hypothesis would be measure based on a different theory we have already constructed. In one sense, we always already have verification of any universal we posit, for our universals just consist of sets of particulars. This seems to be the case as long as the particulars can be directly encountered or reduced to particulars that can be directly encountered.

Any account of the development of the concept of class-membership requires an understanding of the kind of explanation foisted upon Being by modern thinkers. Though the main purpose of this treatise is not the development of modern science, we can see that the order of Being cannot be identified with Thinghood (Substance) in the Aristotelian sense. Since animism is rejected, the kind of explanation for some being will no longer be

\(^{244}\) Given this problematic, the rise of \textit{Coherentism} only makes sense. If truth cannot be measured by an independent ‘truth maker’, then perhaps the truth of some proposition should only be measured by whether it ‘coheres’ with other beliefs. ‘Cohere’ signifies consistency. Of course, this only leads to a further question: if there are multiple coherent accounts, which coherent set of beliefs is true? Either one appeals to their coherence to find their truth, and one has a contradiction, i.e. a falsehood, or one appeals to some other measure of truth besides coherence, which undermines the initial claim that truth is coherence. Some, such as Donald Davidson, have gone so far as to suggest that Coherence ensures correspondence. But I do not see how this resolves the problem. As Kant would argue, formal principles such as non-contradiction are not intended to function as principles of truth, but merely for the \textit{candidates for truth}.\)
internal to the thing (understood in terms of an ‘end’) that it is. Instead, Being will be known by some principle external to the kind of thing the Being is. In other words, the structure of Being will be indifferent to the kind of thing that is explained. Since the Thinghood of something was identified in terms of its ‘end’, indifference to Thingood is simultaneously indifference towards an ‘end’.

Going further, because all universals have been stripped from individuals, the individuals can no longer be distinguished from each other based on differentiating features internal to them as they are in the Aristotelian framework. Instead, they necessarily fall into one class of entities: the class of individuals, or what is just one in number. As what is one in number, the class of individuals as such can only be inherently grasped quantitatively. Naturally, this radically undermines classical Aristotelian science, for Aristotelian science does not recognize one class of individuals that can be grasped by quantitative means alone. For classical Aristotelian science, each thing or Form is a quality, and a principle of its own properties.

As I have already indicated, it is clear to me that at the ground of the totality of particulars, an a priori universal is lurking which undermines the radically nominalist inferences made by Ockham and those who follow him. Indeed, I have already implicitly criticized this doctrine: the indifference of individuality to universality is itself the common feature of all individuals that contribute to class of individuals. More simply, all individuals exist in the class of individuality, namely the totality of given individuals. On this basis, a quantitative universal, namely ‘for all x’, is immanent in individuals. That a kind of rationalism
makes nominalism possible will not fully be drawn out until Kant develops it in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.\(^{245}\)

Unfortunately, omnipotence is a very poor principle, for it seems to justify too much. Though Ockham limits what God can think and create to the principle of non-contradiction, this restriction seems unfitting. For God is omnipotent, thus no limit whatsoever should be place on God. Indeed, God’s omnipotence should free him from all limits: even the principles of formal reasoning as such, including the principle of non-contradiction, excluded middle, and identity cannot govern his will. For this reason, we have no assurance that God does not think contradictions, or that what God creates is not contradictory in itself. If for God ‘all things are possible’, it would likewise appear that contradictions are possible. But, since everything and nothing follows from a contradiction, it must also follow that not all things are possible. If everything is and is not possible, everything and nothing is justified all at once.\(^{246}\)

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\(^{245}\) Since class-membership is an external relationship of individuals, i.e. a relation that does not specify what kind of thing is related, and a law is a *universal relation that does not specify the kind of thing that is related*, we have a *way to begin* to motivate the concept of *universal law*. A law, such as the law of inertia or gravity, developed from Descartes to Newton, is not a kind of thing, nor is it a property of a kind of thing, but it signifies a universal *relation* of things. In this case, the universal relation is a universal relation of individuals that are only intelligible *as particulars*, or beings that are *mathematically* cognizable as ‘one in number’.

\(^{246}\) Upon closing our discussion of medieval philosophy, the absence of Avicenna, St. Aquinas, and Duns Scotus may appear as somewhat conspicuous. Here I wish only to note that on the one hand, my main concern in this section is to give an account of the origins of novel ways of conceiving universality, such as intellectual intuition and class membership, and this can be indicated without a thoroughgoing analysis of the subtleties in these important thinkers. On the other hand, the main focus of my inquiry is not the classical issue of universals, namely the question whether the universals have their own being or only have being in the individuals that fall under them. Instead, my question concerns what the individuality of universality as such is, namely the question concerning the very logical content of universality itself, and how it is even possible. Of course this question overlaps with the traditional question, but it is separate from it. This inquiry can in principle be separated from the metaphysical debate about the being and unity of the common nature that is central to the debate between Aquinas and Scotus. Still, I think that the subtleties and arguments in these thinkers to be worth pursuing, and it is unfortunate that I do not have the space to discuss them here. For a precise, yet brief analysis of the differences between these thinkers in the Aristotelian tradition, see Owens, Joseph. “Common Nature: A Point of Comparison Between Thomistic and Scotistic Metaphysics”, *Medieval Studies* 19 (1957) pp.1-14.
Section II

Modern Philosophy: The Rise of Nominalism and Intellectual Intuition

Ch. 7  British Empiricism

It is important to remember our foray into the history of philosophy primarily aims at elucidating the problems that systematically affect the various ways universality has been conceived historically. By elucidating these problems, we hope to acquire some direction concerning where we may look historically for a systematic solution.

Though Theological Nominalism provides the initial conditions on which class membership may be grounded, British Empiricism abandons the theological conditions, which are fraught with perplexities, and begins from the basic premise that all knowledge comes from experience. At bottom, ‘experience’ here signifies something quite foreign to what it meant in the Aristotelian context. On the Aristotelian model, the objects of the senses are things, not sensory data. In the modern context, instead of taking on the Forms of external things, the senses have individuals internal to the mind as their object. Following Hume, there are two basic forms of experience: impressions and ideas. Each impression is a vivid experience of some sensory content, e.g. colors, sounds, etc. Ideas are copies of and synthetic combinations of our impressions. Our ideas may be reproductions of impressions, or they may involve a creative combination of impressions that are not immediately given in experience, e.g. a ‘gold mountain’. As is obvious, in this analysis ideas are identified with products of psychological processes, in particular the imagination. Notably, we have a similar assumption in Medieval Nominalism, namely that experience is ultimately of what is

247 See Section II (Of the Origin of Ideas) of Hume’s An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Hacket Pub., 1993.
individual, and all ideas are the result of some cognitive activity performed on these individuals. Hume’s proof that all ideas, either simple or complex, are grounded in our impressions, is quite simple: every idea can have its constituent parts resolved into more basic constituents that ultimately correspond with some psychological presentation. Though Hume does not analyze every idea into its constituent parts, he challenges his critic to find one idea that cannot ultimately be reduced to a presentation or some combination of impressions.\textsuperscript{248} Since all ideas are from experience, ideas are associated with one another only via the following processes: contiguity, resemblance, and cause and effect.\textsuperscript{249}

As scholars know, Hume shows that if all knowledge is from experience, then all knowledge is contingent. Since it is all contingent, no necessary connection between one impression and another can be established from the play of impressions themselves. In the concept of the cause I cannot find the concept of the effect, and vice versa. Accordingly, Hume infers that our attributes of cause and effect are really only the product of custom. Because an impression of one sort tends to follow impressions of another sort, i.e. they exhibit a certain contiguity in time, we tend to associate one with the cause and the other with the effect, though we have no ground for establishing necessary connection. In this way, upon entertaining certain impressions we expect others to follow, given that the future will be like the past, an assumption for which we have no certain ground.\textsuperscript{250}

How do we know that the relations of contiguity, resemblance and cause and effect (custom) are the only possible ways of associating ideas? Hume’s argument is inductive: we find these to be the historical modes of association and the psychological process of

\textsuperscript{248} In what follows I hope to offer more than one counter example. See Hume, \textit{An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding}, Section II, Of the Origin of Ideas.
\textsuperscript{249} See Hume’s chapter \textit{Of the Association of Ideas}, Section III of the \textit{Enquiry}. Though Hume lists cause and effect as a separate mode of association, he reduces claims of cause and effect to other forms of association, such as custom and contiguity.
\textsuperscript{250} See Hume’s \textit{Enquiry}, Section IV, \textit{Skeptical Doubts Concerning the Operations of the Understanding}.
developing concepts. Again, in order to dispute Hume’s claim one must find concepts that are associated in some other way than the psychological processes he enumerates. Surely, rejecting divine omnipotence as a principle of knowledge appears to be a necessary condition for making progress in knowledge. Still, an undesirable consequence follows from the rejection of the theological ground which Hume himself recognizes. What possible proof could there be for the proposition that ‘all knowledge is from experience?’ in the sense in which the modern empiricist means it? Since the claim concerns ‘all’ knowledge, and all claims about ‘allness’ must ultimately appeal to the individual impressions, this claim must be inductively grounded. Thus, the claim that all knowledge comes from experience is either circular or it is merely dogmatically stated. Indeed, Hume’s proof pushes the burden of proof on to the reader for her to find the counter example that undermines this inductive claim concerning the whole of knowledge. Until we discover knowledge that cannot be reduced to experience (in Hume’s sense), Hume thinks that we can rest assured in the adoption of his principles.

Hume borrows much from Berkeley, whose account of the origin of concepts may prove instructive for our inquiry. In order to provide more detail concerning the empirical, psychological deduction of the concept, I will re-construct Ernst Cassirer’s description of Berkeley’s psychological deduction of the concept in *Substance and Function*\(^{251}\), in order to express the psychological production of the concept in the most efficient terms. I shall give special focus to the function of resemblance in the development of concepts.

Taking the stream of consciousness as a given, what resources stand available for concept formation? Each presentation of consciousness is a distinct, unique content,
temporally ordered in relation to the others. Since every presentation that appears in the present immediately ceases to appear into the past, no constant presentation is given from which a concept may be derived. In fact, the unique quality of every psychological appearance bars us from identifying common features of any of the sensuous qualities that are given to consciousness. Instead, some particular content must be selected and removed from the whole process of contents by an act of memory. Though each sensuous content is in itself irretrievable, it may be withheld in memory. Here it may be important to note that attention is required in order to select out a part of the whole. As new contents are experienced, we may begin to identify resemblances and dissimilarities between the selected content stored in memory and the novel contents being given in our inner and outer perception. Having assimilated the novel content to the past content, a class is formed. In this way, the resemblance of particulars to some selected content forms the foundation of concepts. Since some particular functions as the measure of the class of particulars, the classes which are formed may be said to possess some qualitative measure, unlike the bare quantitative concept that constitutes the meaning of the class concept.

In one respect, both the Aristotelian and British Empiricist traditions are quite similar, for the mind, in order to know the universal, must select out some part of a given sensuous manifold, and therewith represent a plurality of diverse contents. In this respect, abstraction is the primary mode by which we know the concept as such in each of these accounts. On the one hand, in both accounts some common aspect or resemblance is identified in various particulars. On the other hand, as I argue below, on the modern empiricist paradigm no universal is really discovered in the particulars, but is instead constructed out of them. In this respect, the act of selection and abstraction is not merely moved to a different region of being as Cassirer claims. Instead, a novel treatment of
universality is underway in Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. What is perhaps most striking is rejection of classical ontology: classes replace forms and thereby negate the power of existential implication that is characteristic of the ancient ontology. The replacement of forms by classes does not just undermine an ontology, but also affects the logical structure of cognition, for form, as the universal, is the principle of the particular, whereas in the perspective of modern empiricism the particular becomes the principle of the universal.

If we tarry a while with the psychological derivation of the concept, we discover that the process by which we produce universals leads us in the opposite direction in which we intend to travel. Ultimately, knowledge should illuminate experience, which is radically individual. Yet, we find that the further we pursue the universal, the further we proceed from the individual. Since no individual shares a common feature with another, any resemblance we identify is not a common feature. Instead, in order to build the concept, we must forget or at least ignore the differences in the particulars. Only in virtue of forgetting their uniqueness can we identify one presentation with another. Moreover, the act of identification by which we connect unrelated presentations forms a new presentation in which the originally independent presentations are unified. This act of identification requires that one judge that the various contents are identical. This newfound identity is not itself a member of the original stream of contents given to the theorizer. Instead, it is a creation of the mind to which nothing in the original flux of consciousness corresponds. Accordingly, what consciousness knows in the judgment of identification is something it has produced for itself, not a description of the original contents themselves. For this reason, the universality of the concept is a principle by which the thinker becomes more distanced from the original manifold she set out to know.
If it is a requirement of knowledge that the vehicle of knowledge be universal, then insofar as the universal fails to grasp the individual, no knowledge of the individual contents is possible. Indeed, skepticism about the empiricist paradigm itself must necessarily arise, since knowledge claims concerning empiricism must also come under scrutiny. The global skepticism engendered by Hume’s account is the most fitting conclusion to the tabula rasa tradition in modern philosophy.

My description of the empiricist-psychological view of the concept has closely followed Cassirer’s own account of that perspective. Still, I wish to stray a bit from Cassirer’s analysis at this point, although it shall be pertinent to refer to it at another stage in the argument. Since admitting anything other than the particular generates a radical skepticism about the empirical-psychological paradigm itself, what is demanded of psychological-empiricist account is an account of inference that never abandons the particular. For an account of the concept that reduces the concept and all logical inference to the particular, we should briefly investigate how J.S. Mill attempts to re-vitalize the empiricist concept of logic in the nineteenth century. Here, in J.S. Mill’s *Logic: Ratiocinative and Inductive*, we arrive at a concept of the concept that illuminates what logic must be on the assumptions of psychological-empiricism.

As I have noted above, what is of special import for us here is the way Mill conceives of inference. In order to contextualize this move, we shall briefly touch on the understanding of logic in which this view of inference is embedded. For Mill, logic investigates the actual mental processes at work in making inferences. At the outset, Mill distinguishes two fundamental types of knowledge: immediate and mediated. For example, one can know that one feels hot immediately, whereas knowledge of mathematical and

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historical truths are mediated, i.e. one cannot know them with direct reference to some inner or outer perceptual content. All mediated knowledge, in the tradition of British Empiricism, may be ultimately reduced to some knowledge of immediate truths.\textsuperscript{253} For example, we know that $2+3=5$ because we have repeatedly experienced the objects in spatial intuition to be capable of such relations. We may find five pebbles in the dirt, and separate them into groups of two and three, which we later re-combine into a group of five. Repeated encounters with such experience brings us to knowledge of the proposition that $2+3=5$. Accordingly, all our mathematical knowledge, like all knowledge, is contingent. Though Hume separates matters of fact from relations of ideas, the latter must ultimately owe their content to the impressions of experience, or they have no source at all, even if they are hypothesized.

Regarding definition, Mill claims that definitions are not of things, but of names only.\textsuperscript{254} Since all knowledge is derived from a given plurality of individuals, no universal or definition could exist in the individuals \textit{a priori}. Moreover, definitions are not composed of a genus and a difference, for this logical structure undermines itself.\textsuperscript{255} Mill points out what we have already said: if we continue in the logical progression from genus to genus we discover that Being cannot be a genus.\textsuperscript{256} Either the system of genera is absurd at its ground, or there is no logical ground of the system. Given this criticism of the structure of generic categories, Mill offers his own set of categories.\textsuperscript{257}

\textsuperscript{253} See Mill’s Introduction to his \textit{A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive}, 1-7.
\textsuperscript{254} See Ch. VIII, \textit{Of Definition} in Mill’s \textit{A System of Logic}, 91-103.
\textsuperscript{255} Mill, \textit{A System of Logic}, 89.
\textsuperscript{256} I will make the argument that there is no way to avoid this problem on the assumption of class membership. For this reason, we will see that Mill cannot avoid the same criticism with which he indicts the system of genera. I should like to note that Mill makes no effort to engage Aristotle’s ontology. It appears that Mill takes it for granted that Aristotle’s ontology is bankrupt.
\textsuperscript{257} Unfortunately, Mill pays no heed to the problem of differentiating categories. I will make the argument that any system of class membership must necessarily fall victim to the problem of the categories.
Within this empiricist paradigm, Mill criticizes Aristotle’s account of the syllogism, and the theory of the syllogism that was handed down via the tradition. Taking the following syllogism as paradigmatic, Mill shows why the theory of the syllogism gives no new knowledge: (i) all men are mortal and (ii) Socrates is a man. Thus, Socrates is mortal.

But what grounds the universal proposition that ‘all men are mortal’? If all knowledge of universals must be grounded on particulars, then one must have already run through all the particular men in order to establish the proposition concerning all men. If this is the case, we must already know that Socrates is mortal in order to establish the universal proposition concerning the mortality of all men. But, since ‘Socrates is mortal’ is the conclusion of the syllogism, it follows that the syllogism must assume what it intend to prove.\textsuperscript{258}

Like Berkeley, Mill also relies on resemblance to arrive at classes, his claim about the process of inference clarifies how thought dwells in the paradigm of class membership. If the universal expressed in ‘all men are mortal’ already presupposes the inference that ‘Socrates is mortal’, what is the logic underlying the syllogism? According to Mill, all inference is \textit{from particular to particular}. The most primitive instances of reasoning we perform seems to correspond to this formula. For instance, when the child burns his hand on the stove, he need not perform a syllogism or cognize any universal to know not to burn his hand on the stove again. He makes the inference without having to appeal to a universal. Still, we should be skeptical that all inferences work this way. If we return to our sample syllogism concerning mortality, we can, via a process of resemblance, build a class. Initially, prior to the development of the class, I may observe that a particular person dies. On closer inspection, I note that others have died, and continue to die. From this process I infer that each person whom I have considered is similar in respect to his or her mortality. Upon

\textsuperscript{258} See Functions and Value of the Syllogism in Mill’s A System of Logic, 122-136.
consideration of persons in general, I collect these particulars into the class of mortals.\textsuperscript{259} For sure, in every day practice I do not enumerate each person, nor could I. If I do not consider each person, what justifies the inference that all men are mortal? By ‘all’ here we need only mean the persons thus far enumerated, or perhaps better, something comparative such as ‘to the best of our knowledge’ or ‘as far as I know’. Since all knowledge is contingent, at any point our classes may be reformed according to novel observations. To sum up we may bluntly claim that the universal is nothing other than the totality of particulars gathered together into a class.

The universal is no longer an essential element of inferential reasoning. Though Mill continues to rely on resemblance, insofar as inference is from particular to particular, the process of knowledge does not bring us farther away from the sensuous manifold as we reason; to the contrary, the process of reasoning never abandons the particular. Instead, the classes formed by the mind appear to introduce no other quality than what is present in the sensuous manifold. Accordingly, the universal only functions as an \textit{abbreviation} of an inferential process already performed. Because it is more efficient to say ‘all men’ than to enumerate each man considered in making the inference, we invent terms such as ‘men’ to signify the group of particulars we mean to express. Once the abbreviation is established, one can make inferences \textit{from and to the abbreviation}. Inferring to and from the abbreviation is important, but only as a means of organizing one’s own mental notes. As long as the judgment of identity implicit in the formation of classes only produces abbreviations, the empiricist paradigm may not undermine itself, for the abbreviation only supplants the particular in regards to its efficient use, but fails to introduce a new content. On the one hand, since all knowledge of what is the case is had via inductive logic, i.e. the inference

\textsuperscript{259} Mill, \textit{A System of Logic}, 133.
from particular to particular, inductive logic is the only truth logic. Truth, it appears, lies in the domain of the empirical sciences. On the other hand, the system of the syllogism is nothing more than a way of checking one’s own thoughts for consistency.

Still, it is unclear whether the appeal to resemblance can be made without the assumption that particulars share some common feature in virtue of which they are similar. Without the identical feature, each particular would fail to share anything. This makes it appear that even if the generation of the classes may escape our criticism of Berkeley, it seems to evade this only by risking relativism. In other words, if we identify particulars with one another on account of our recognition of resemblance, yet this resemblance cannot have its ground in the identity of particulars, particulars seem only to resemble each other because of our stipulation that they do. Without any ability to appeal to the particulars themselves in order to determine what classes we should and should not form, it appears that which classes one adopts is relative to whatever particulars the thinker decides to place into relation. The diversity of universals in natural language appears to confirm this account of universals, since no two languages contain exactly the same classes.\footnote{Take, for example, the various different color concepts in different languages. How the color spectrum is divided up is a matter of relativity.} Unfortunately though, if universals are themselves relative, then the claim that the concept of the concept, ‘class-membership’, is also a merely relative determination, and ought not be privileged over any other conception of the universal. Indeed, by limiting class membership to an empirical concept, we run into the same problem we encountered in Hume—either our justification for identifying the concept of the concept with the empirical class begs the question or it is merely stipulated without argument.\footnote{For example how could one form the universal ‘class membership’ except by enumerating all classes?}
Now, one might reasonably object to Mill's criticism of Aristotle that a syllogism which merely applies the universal to the particular is not a properly scientific syllogism, for the scientific syllogism in Aristotle connects universal to universal, not a universal to a particular. Still, as long as the universal is only cognized by enumerating all the particulars, neither the premises nor the conclusion shall inform us of any new knowledge, for what is known in the conclusion concerning the ‘all’ shall have already been established by running through the particulars. What Mill’s criticism illuminates is how the new concept of universality radically empties the classical logic of any significance for truth. For Aristotle, the syllogistic is a truth logic, i.e. a logical process by which what is true is discovered, not a process that occurs only after all the discovery of truth is already accomplished.

True, the division between a logic of mere possibility and that of actuality (or being) was already firmly in place by the time of Kant. Still, it shall be instructive for us to dwell on how Mill draws the distinction in order to better illuminate the logic of class membership. Inductive logic constitutes the whole space of truth logic, while the deductive system of the syllogism constitutes the whole space of formal logic, i.e. logic that has no bearing on what is true, but only consistency.

Mill points out that if we accept the Aristotle’s interpretation of his own logic of inference, we shall be lead to absurd conclusions. Since Aristotle’s universal exhibits existential implication, if we posit some logically possible universal for which there is no corresponding individual, e.g. the concept of the dragon, then we must admit that there is some dragon. Yet, this is absurd.

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262 For example, a scientific syllogism in Aristotle follows this pattern: All A is B, all B is C, thus, All A is C. The syllogism shows how an essential attribute follows from the essence, or the middle term. Not only is the ancient logic indebted to the claim that thinking is primarily a connecting of universal-to-universal, but even some contemporary accounts of law, such as David Armstrong’s, make this claim.
One essential development in the formalization of logic is the rejection of existential implication. The emptying of the square of opposition of the logical relations constitutive of Aristotelian logic can be traced back to the conceptual determinations central to class membership. As we argued in the Introduction, existential implication is a key feature that must play a role in any determination of the universal that takes the question of universality seriously. For this reason, it will be relevant and important for us to consider why the concept of existential implication is removed from the logical cannon in the transition to modernity. The discussion turns on the issue of empty terms. Let us further pursue the difference between formal logic (logic of possibility) and the logic of truth (actuality) that is implied in Mill’s criticism of Aristotle. In the early middle ages, Boethius (484-524/25) first introduced the square of opposition, as a way of illustrating the basic logical relations constitutive of Aristotelian predicate logic:

![Square of Opposition Diagram](image)

FIGURE 1
The building blocks of the ancient square are given in Aristotle’s *De Interpretatione* 6-7:

I call an affirmation and a negation contradictory opposites when what one signifies universally the other signifies not universally, e.g. every man is white—*not every man is white*\(^{263}\), no man is white—some man is white. But I call the universal affirmation and the universal negation contrary opposites, e.g. every man is just—no man is just. So these cannot be true together, but their opposites may both be true with respect to the same thing, e.g. not every man is white—some man is white.

Accordingly, Aristotle provides us with the following fragment of the square:

![Figure 2](image.png)

**FIGURE 2**

From this fragment of the square and the definitions of the contrary, subaltern, and contradiction, one can complete the square. On the one hand, sub-contraries are defined as a

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\(^{263}\) The emphasis is mine.
form of opposition in which both opposites can be true, but they cannot both be false. Contraries, on the other hand, cannot both be true, though they can both be false. For subalterns, every bivalent relation of truth and falsehood is allowed except that under which the universal (A or E) is true, and the particular (I and O) is false. The following proof shows that I and O are subcontraries: If I is false, then E must be true. If E is true, then A must be false. If A is false, then O must be true. Thus, if I is false, then O cannot be false, and I and O are subcontraries. Moreover, we can also derive the subalterns: If A is true, then E must be false. If E is false, then I must be true. Thus, if A is true, then I cannot be false, thereby proving that A and I are subalterns. A similar proof could be given for E and O.

But the ancient square is not without its difficulties. If we allow for empty terms, terms that fail to refer, then we may construct the following proof: if ‘S’ is an empty term, then it refers to nothing. Thus, ‘Some S is P’ cannot be true, since there are no Ss. But if ‘Some S is P’ is false, then E, ‘No S is P’, must be true. If E is true, then O, ‘Some S are not P’, must be true, since it cannot be false. O, ‘Some S are not p’, cannot be false, because from the rule governing the Subalterns in the ancient Square of opposition the particular cannot be false if the universal is true. But O is not true, since there are no Ss. Thus, if there are empty terms, the square of opposition generates a contradiction. Since Aristotelian logic holds that there are no empty terms in a scientific syllogism, the problem is easily avoided. Still, any logical system in which we wish to represent logical relations concerning what is possible we cannot be satisfied with an ad hoc ban on empty terms. One can, of course, speculate about what would be the

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264 Note that the truth conditions of the subaltern are identical to the truth conditions for the conditional in the modern “square” of opposition. Contraposition and Obversion were introduced in the middle ages and maintained by some logicians well into the nineteenth century, but both principles were proven invalid long before by medieval authors such as Buridan.

265 See Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* book Gamma. ‘Human Being’, ‘Human Being is’ and ‘One Human Being’ are all equivalent phrases. ‘Is’ and ‘one’ are redundant terms which add nothing to the term ‘Human Being’. Note that Aristotle makes it explicit that terms are not empty, but this argument is made in the context of his discussion of scientific terms. Scientifics syllogisms, for Aristotle, are constructed from affirmative terms.
case given certain conditions, even if those conditions were false. If we allow empty terms into our system of logic, there appears to be no absurdity in allowing the O form, ‘Some S are not P’, to be true, so long as we reject the logical relations which generate the contradiction in the first place.

The wording of the O form, when properly translated, should read ‘not every S is P’, instead of ‘some S is not P’.²⁶⁶ If the O form is true on the former translation, the contradiction will be avoided, since it does not commit us to the existence of a non-existent subject. Instead, the O form may be vacuously true if the E form is true. Thus, we may have a sub-alternate relation without existential implication.²⁶⁷ The assumption that the affirmative universal exhibits existential implication, but the negative does not, appears to have been held as a principle, by many medieval philosophers.²⁶⁸ For ancient and medieval logicians, it appears that only the affirmative universal exhibits existential implication, whereas the negative universal does not.

Still, Mill reminds us that the problem concerns not only E and I statements, but A and I as well. On Aristotelian principles, since no affirmative term can be empty, every affirmative term must imply the existence of its subject.²⁶⁹ Since non-existent empirical species, e.g. extinct species such as the dodo bird, and imaginary beings, e.g. ‘dragons’, can function as affirmative subjects of categorical propositions, and all affirmative subjects in categorical propositions imply the existence of their subjects, existential implication along the affirmative subaltern implies the existence of what does not exist. Thus, the traditional

²⁶⁶ See Acker’s translation in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy’s entry on “The Square of Opposition”.
²⁶⁷ What is of interest here is the notion that the subaltern need not imply existential implication.
²⁶⁸ The Standard Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry on “The Square of Opposition” cites a pertinent quote from Ockham on this matter. See Ockham, (SL I.72): “In affirmative propositions a term is always asserted to supposit for something. Thus, if it supposits for nothing the proposition is false. However, in negative propositions the assertion is either that the term does not supposit for something or that it supposits for something of which the predicate is truly denied. Thus a negative proposition has two causes of truth.”
²⁶⁹ Again, this is obvious given Aristotle’s belief in the eternal existence of empirical species.
square of opposition is at least problematic exactly to the extent that it preserves existential implication on the side of the affirmative subaltern.

For logical systems of possibility, in which the actual existence of the particular is no longer a requirement of the system, it is clear that the ancient square of opposition is no longer a viable system of logical relations. If empty, affirmative, terms are countenanced, then the universal can no longer imply existence.\textsuperscript{270} Thus, the subaltern must be rejected. If the subaltern is deduced on the assumption of contrariety, then contrariety must be rejected. If contrariety is rejected, sub-contraries must also disappear, since they also follow from that principle. Upon countenancing empty terms, what is left is a system of logical possibility that has one principle: the principle of non-contradiction. If existential implication is rejected, this obviously affects what syllogisms are valid.\textsuperscript{271}

The ancient square of opposition contains relations absent in the modern “square”: the contrary, subaltern, and the subcontrary. See the modern “square” of opposition below:

\begin{itemize}
\item This does not mean that there are no determinate universals, only that the particular instance cannot be derived from the universal itself.
\item For example, which system of Venn Diagrams one employs is determined by whether subalters one accepts.
\end{itemize}
I have placed “square” in scare quotes since the modern square of opposition is an ‘X’, though for continuity’s sake we will continue to refer to the diagram as a square. Though there are many more important themes we could cover in our discussion of the square, I will give special attention to one theme pertinent to our analysis: the interpretation of the universal propositions (A and E). The ancient square treats the universal as a categorical statement: All A are B, e.g. ‘all men are rational animals’ or ‘no men are immortal’. The modern square of opposition no longer treats the universal statement as a categorical statement. Instead, it is expressed as a conditional, employing the usual quantifiers: ‘for all x, if x is P, then x is Q’, i.e. (for all x)(if Px then Qx). ‘X’ is some particular, instantiated as ‘a’ or ‘Socrates’. On the terms of class membership, if the particular is a member of the class ‘P’, then it is a member of the class ‘Q’. As is evident, the conditional signifies the relation
between two classes ‘P’ and ‘Q’. Kant, for example, interprets the ‘if then’ in this way, namely as a universal relation of classes.

What about class membership undermines existential implication? For class membership, the universal is an aggregate, a quantitative relation, ‘for all x’. As an aggregate, it is not itself a member of the class, since this would generate an infinite regress. Accordingly, class membership is not self-referential, since any universal with that character is an instance of itself. Moreover, according to class membership, no universal as a sense, or intensional unity, exists, since universals are simply collections. Because no intensional unities exist, the predication of ‘P’ to ‘x’ is ultimately reducible to the placement of ‘x’ in some class, not the attribution of a common term to a subject. So, neither is the universal a particular member of the set, nor is it a separate kind of thing to be grasped alongside the particular members of the set.

Since universal terms do not denote anything, the universal is banished from the place of the subject. In the categorical proposition, the universal is treated as a subject, and as such it denotes the existence of an individual thing. As Aristotle taught us, since the subject is a ‘this’, and ‘this’ means that to which it refers, ‘Humanity is mortal’ implies that there is some this, a subject that corresponds with the concept ‘Humanity’ which bears the predicate ‘mortal’. In the modern square of opposition, a variable standing for some particular takes the place of the universal in the subject position. Instead of making a claim about what predicates a universal has, we make a claim about what class, ‘Q’ a particular ‘x’ must belong to if it falls in class ‘P’. ‘Q’ is not predicated of ‘P’. If we allowed the universal to remain a this, we would not only treat the universal as a particular thing, but we would also allow second order universals. Second order universals are universals that are predicated of each other universals, or better, universals that have other universals as their differentiations or
particulars. Second order universals are not only predicates, but also subjects for predicates. Genera exemplify second order universals. For example, ‘animal’ is a genus of ‘human being’ but also a species of ‘living thing’. Both ‘living thing’ and ‘animal’ are higher order universals, for they are determinations of universals, not just particulars. The concept of class membership undermines the groundwork for genera by negating the ground for the second order universal. On the concept of class membership, it appears that the only universals are of the first order. First order universals do not apply to other universals, but only to particulars. Naturally, that there are only first order universals does not imply that classes cannot contain one another, for we can construct classes of varying magnitudes by relaxing or narrowing the constraints on the identity conditions for membership. The ‘if then’ reports a relation of classes while avoiding the predication of one universal to another.

Most important in our considerations of class membership is the assumption that the indexical ‘this’ as expressed by the grammatical subject has its meaning in what it denotes. If ‘this’ means only that to which it refers, then whenever we talk about some ‘this’ it appears that we are implying the existence of what it is ‘this ‘refers’ to. Since universals do not denote anything, universals do not imply the existence of any entities. Thus, merely from the assumption of the universal, one cannot deduce an existential proposition, namely that ‘there is some x’ determined in such and such a way. Thus, it follows that on the assumption of class membership, the extensional logic of reference ought to reject the logical relation of existential implication along the affirmative and negative lines of sub-alternation, and thereby the logical relations which engender that relation. Since it is possible to have the universal proposition be true, ‘for all x if x is P then x is Q’, and the particular proposition false, e.g. ‘there is some x such that x is P’, it is possible for both A (All S is P) and E (No S is P) to be true and I (Some S is P) and O (Some S is not P) to be false. Yet, contraries cannot both be
true and sub-contraries cannot both be false, for if they were, then the rule governing subalterns would be violated, namely that the universal (A or E) cannot be true and the particular (I OR O) false. Thus, the modern square of opposition, grounded in the concept of class membership, necessitates the rejection of contrariety and sub-contrariety, since it necessitates the rejection of the subalterns.272

Since self-reference implies existential implication, the rejection of the latter requires the rejection of the former.273 Naturally then, we should expect class membership to eschew any form of self-reference. Concerning the rejection of self-reference let us consider the type of universality that figures in class membership. Universals are predicates, not subjects, and particulars are subjects, not predicates. Moreover, for class membership what it is to be a universal is not itself a universal. If it were, an infinite regress would ensue. Instead, the quantifier, ‘for all x’, is the universal as such. If the universal as such could be quantified over, then the universal quantifier could quantify over itself, which is impossible. ‘For all x’, like ‘for some x’ only quantifies over particulars, ‘x’, ‘y’, ‘z’. ‘What it is to be a universal’, the aggregate relation as such, is not itself a predicate, or class ‘P’, but quantifies over classes of particulars. Indeed, if universality itself is modeled on class membership, it is difficult to conceive how there could be such as thing as ‘universality’ itself. If there could be universality itself, it would be possible for the universal to be a particularization of itself, yet class-membership excludes this as a possibility.

272 Though I noted earlier that the subalterns have the same truth conditions as the conditional, this does not mean that the truth conditions for conditional statements are undermined with the rejection of the subaltern. The subalterns concern the relation of the universal to the particular, whereas the truth conditions for the conditional concern the relation of the antecedent to the conditional in the conditional, and this is a different logical relation.
273 We developed this principle earlier in our discussion of Plato’s Third Man argument. When the universal is attributed to itself, it becomes a particular instance of itself. Given that self-reference entails existential implication, any rejection of the latter shall entail the negation of the former.
Whether there is some subject cannot be a function of the universal. Because the universal can be without a corresponding particular, e.g. a horse with a horn, *we may have the identity conditions of the class without any members fulfilling the conditions.*\(^{274}\) From ‘P’ it does not follow that ‘Pa’, i.e. that there is some particular ‘a’ that has the property ‘P’. Of course, the identity conditions ‘horse’ and ‘horn’ have members, since they are classes formed from resemblances in sensory experience. Instead, the existence of the particular must be *externally posited.* Is there a particular ‘a’ that belongs to class ‘P’? Whether there is some ‘a’ belonging to class ‘P’ is *contingently related* to ‘P’. What this external positing is may vary. In the case of the empirical tradition, experience is the ultimate arbiter. Is there some ‘a’ with property ‘P’? To find the answer, consult the given. In this sense, the positing of the particular is a *hypothetical* matter wholly contingent upon what particulars are *given* in experience.

At least in one very important respect, formal logic is formal to the extent that it rejects existential implication. Moreover, since the rejection of existential implication is necessitated by empirical epistemology, formal logic appears can be constructed\(^{275}\) on the basis of an empirical epistemic paradigm. Yet this is problematic, for one cannot posit the principle of non-contradiction as a universal principle, or that the universal is (universally) a class on empirical grounds while maintaining the necessity of those principles. For this reason, it appears that one must either concede (i) that even the principle of non-contradiction is contingent, as Quine argues\(^{276}\), or (ii) that the empiricist paradigm is grounded in a non-empirical system, such as theology, as Foster argues. If the former is the case, then it could be the case that the principle of non-contradiction is not true. But if it

\(^{274}\) As I note a bit further on, that we may have the identity conditions without members reflects Russell’s difference between descriptions and proper names.

\(^{275}\) I claim that it ‘can be’ since there may be other systems of epistemology on which formal logic may be constructed. We shall consider some elements of Russell’s system of logic in the next chapter, wherein a non-empirical paradigm is at work.

\(^{276}\) Quine is famous for having this conception of contradiction entailed in his concept of the ‘web of belief’.
could be the case that it is false, then it would be possible that it would be true and false in the same respect, which is absurd. If the latter is the case, then empiricism cannot function as the over-arching system of knowledge, since the universal, on which the necessary principles of logic simply cannot be grounded.\(^{277}\) In other words, the ‘if then’ relation is only justified as a universal, necessary relation on non-empirical grounds. I tend to think the latter scenario is the more plausible one.

Though the universal does not imply any subject, another problem concerning the existence of contingent non-existing particulars still plagues the logic of class membership. In what follows, we shall note the perennial problems plaguing this system of logic. Although the logic of class membership motivates the rejection of classical logical relations, it is very unclear whether formal, extensional logic does a better job at explaining negative existentials, and may in fact lead to some very strange Metaphysics. If a proper name implies the existence of its object, how is it possible to talk about entities such as Pegasus that do not exist without being committed to their existence? In order to allow empty terms, i.e. terms with significance that fail to denote, both Mill and Russell suggest similar solutions: we can replace ‘dragon’ with ‘concept of dragon’.\(^{278}\) Instead of reasoning about things, we reason about the concepts of things. Of course, we can admit that there are concepts of dragons, even if there are no dragons. On Mill’s new paradigm, not only do we define words and not things, we reason about concepts, not about things. As we expand that about which we reason to what is logically possible but has no being, we are forced to reject any existential implication that would hold between the universal and the particular thing. Instead, if any existential implication holds, it only holds of the concept. And of course, there is nothing radical or

\(^{277}\) I would like to note that despite these modifications of predicate logic, the problem of the negative existential remains. Though we discussed the issue at some length earlier in our discussion of Mill, we should note here that modern metaphysics is still plagued by this issue.

\(^{278}\) Mill, A System of Logic, 95.
interesting about the implication that if I posit some universal, then there must be a thought of that universal in my mind. In fact, we appear to have a tautology: from the concept of the dragon I may infer that there is some concept of the dragon. We simply re-iterate what we already have.

Still, the rejection of existential implication that is engendered by the expansion of logic beyond what has being, i.e. is encountered in sensuous manifold, does not leave us devoid of the same logical problem that class membership appeared to solve. For example, consider the problem of ‘negative existentials’. If we identify ‘dragon’ with the ‘concept of the dragon’, we cannot provide a meaningful interpretation of the proposition ‘there are no dragons’ or ‘there is not one dragon’. When I say there are no dragons, I do not mean that there are no concepts of dragons. Instead, I mean that fire breathing dragons do not exist. Thus, even if we reject existential implication in regards to being, and only allow it sway in the region of concepts, there is no valid interpretation we may offer to explain such negations. Indeed, if we view the universal as a class, and that class is not empty, we always already know that there is some particular. In this respect, a pseudo existential implication is preserved in the concept of the class, but again, in the most uninteresting and uninformative way—for example, if there are five members of some class, then there is some one member of the class. In this case, there is no real existential implication, since it is vacuously true that if I have all of the members I have some of the members.

Now, if the class is empty, it is quite unclear what that class is. For a class is defined by its extension, and if there is no extension to the class, then it appears that it cannot be a

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279 Not including empty terms in one’s logic is an easy way out of the problem, for we need not talk about them. But insofar as we need to exclude them, we possess a need to claim that they do not exist. If we claim that they do not exist, then we have the obligation to provide an interpretation of what it means when we deny their existence. For this reason, I believe that this problem is quite universal, and applies even to those systems that do not allow empty terms, such as Aristotle’s system.
class. What is the concept of the dragon, if a concept is defined by its extension, and there are no dragons? One may posit that the members of the empty class are images of dragons, but this does not give us a valid interpretation of negative existentials. Indeed, no particulars stand in any relation to each other if there are no particulars present in the class. So, we come back to our question but formulated in a new way: what is the empty set? We shall return to this and other related questions in our discussion of Kant’s distinction between formal logic and truth logic and Russell’s theory of descriptions.

Analytic philosophy has foundered on this problem. It appeared to be the consensus of Analytic philosophers that Russell’s theory of descriptions, as applied by Quine in his essay “On What There Is” had solved this problem. Proper names, such as ‘Scott’ refer. But terms like ‘Pegasus’ are descriptions and are not defined by denotation. A description, unlike a proper name, does not necessitate that there be such an individual described. There could be descriptions for which no individuals are given, e.g. ‘a four legged horse like creature with a horn and wings’. Given a proper differentiation between descriptions and proper names, we can explain away the apparent necessity to posit what does not exist from a merely linguistic or conceptual point of view.

Still, this solution is no longer accepted by the majority of Analytic Philosophers since the arrival of Kripke’s Naming and Necessity. Apparently, under Kripke’s concept of Rigid Designation, this distinction no longer holds water, and the problem of negative existentials remains a live problem for Analytic Philosophers today. Indeed, this problem has lead to a very strange Metaphysics. Analytic philosophers such as David Lewis have gone so far as to claim that since it appears that we must admit the existence of what is merely possible in our world, yet not actual, in order to explain how it is possible to talk about possibilities, we must admit that they in fact exist as actualities, but in some other world other
than our own. ‘Modal Realism’ appears motivated by the logical necessity to posit the existence of what is contintently non-existent in our world. Since our main task is not negative existentials, but the being of the concept, let us proceed to discuss intellectual understanding. Indeed, however strange the Metaphysics appears, from the point of view of class-membership, rejecting empty terms in this novel way appears to be the proper inference.

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280 In effect one might wonder whether this ontological point of view does not re-instate a ban on empty terms, but in a more radical sense than ever imposed in the classical point of view.
Ch. 8. Continental Rationalism

In order to fulfill the promise note which I made in the introduction to this chapter, I now wish to turn to illuminate how the concept of intellectual intuition, as well as divine omnipotence, is appropriated by early modern thinkers. If my main aim were the systematic reconstruction of this historical period in the West’s intellectual development, I would surely have the obligation to discuss others, e.g. Leibniz, Malebranche, etc. Since my main goal is to illuminate how the concept of intellectual intuition becomes constitutive of Continental Rationalism, I shall focus on Descartes and cite relevant passages from Spinoza. Because each thinker appropriates the omnipotence of God and the notion of intellectual intuition in unique ways, I will make every effort to respect the nuances of their views in my reconstruction. Though my main goal shall be the illumination of these concepts, by working through elements of their thought we shall uncover the source of another main strain of the modern debate concerning universals in the modern era, namely the debate about whether universals are intensive or extensive unities. A host of related concepts inform this debate—psychologism, nominalism, idealism, abstraction, class-membership, *a priori*, innate, and *a posteriori*, to name a few. Despite the novel contributions to thinking about universality offered by modernity, this debate is constitutive of the modern understanding of universality, and reflects a forgetfulness of the universal both systematically and historically. Far from having only narrow historical import, this disagreement finds sway well into the 20th century. Though the disagreements may appear stark, ultimately a common assumption concerning universality is at work in this debate, which fails even to raise the central questions we have been grappling with in this work.
With Descartes the modern era of philosophy begins. Still, there are numerous ways that Descartes finds himself indebted to medieval and ancient thinkers, especially St. Augustine. One main aspect of this indebtedness may be elucidated in his most famous argument, the *Cogito*. The Cogito, or the ‘I think’, is the basic principle of modern Continental Rationalism and is appropriated in novel ways by transcendental philosophy and phenomenology in the 18th-20th centuries. As is well known, Descartes desires to discover a certain, indubitable, foundation on which to ground all knowledge. Most importantly he aims to provide an indubitable foundation for the new science of nature. Unlike the empiricists, Descartes’ abandons all attempts to ground knowledge on experience, given that the senses have provided misleading information in the past, e.g. that the sun revolves around the earth, etc. The senses offer nothing indubitable, and neither can mathematics. On the one hand, Descartes notes that he has often been deceived by his senses. On the other hand, Descartes thinks up a thought experiment in which an evil demon may be deceiving him about the truths of mathematics. Having turned to the question of his own existence, Descartes shows that his own thinking is indubitable.

Though Descartes strays from the empiricist paradigm, in which all universals are *a posteriori*, his concept of the concept shares features with empiricism by offering a concept that is not wholly devoid of *psychological* content and that exists in virtue of the mind that thinks it. Why is there anything certain about thinking? Surely, when we think something other than thought itself, no certainty exists that there is any object of thought corresponding to our thought. There is no certainty that there are persons or numbers. But

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281 Descartes desires to discover an indubitable foundation for philosophy that imitates the certainty that Descartes conceived to hold in the realm of mathematical cognition. Though mathematics appears to provide a kind of model for how philosophy should proceed, it is not in itself indubitable, since it can be called into doubt via particular thought experiments such as the famous ‘evil demon’.

when I attempt to doubt *that I am thinking* I am questioning *whether* thinking exists. By doubting that thinking exists, *thinking necessarily presents itself to the mind*, for I cannot help but encounter thought in my attempts *to think* that thinking is not.\textsuperscript{283} Thus, when I attempt to call thinking into question, it responds by asserting itself. How does it assert itself? It is a self-evident because it is *self-given*. This self-given content is not derived from sensuous experience, i.e. from sense data, but from the experience of thinking as such. In this regard, the concept of the self as a thinking thing is claimed to be *innate*. As a self-given object of thinking, I do not infer that thinking is indubitable because it would be contradictory or absurd, given that I cannot be certain of the principles of logic. Instead, it is simply that to my own consciousness, *my own* thinking cannot be denied in my own act of thinking. Since it is my own thinking that I cannot deny, what is certain is *not thinking as such*, or any thinking at all, but only my own thought. We must believe that there is thinking, but *only* when we are thinking. For this reason, we believe in thinking because we are *under compulsion* to believe.

This ‘being under compulsion’ to believe is very clearly a *psychological phenomenon*, and it exists for me.\textsuperscript{284} Thought is not in itself an image or less vivid impression, as the empiricists would have it, but it is still a psychological phenomenon, and in this respect the modern concept of a concept straddles both traditions.

Thinking substance, according to Descartes, is *inmaterial, temporal, and private*. In what follows we shall briefly intimate why he holds these views. One cannot find the experience of thinking in space, as one may locate neurons. Instead, because the experience of thinking

\textsuperscript{283} See Descartes’ Second Meditation from his *Meditations*, 16–23.

cannot be found in space, the self that possesses those thoughts cannot be spatial either. Moreover, this experience is immediately accessible only to me. Descartes appears to be of this opinion because the turn to think thinking is an inward, reflective turn. By construing thinking as consciousness, Descartes immediately encounters his own consciousness. Indeed, for Descartes it is not immediately certain that there are others. I may tell others about it, but by telling others about the *Cogito* they do not experience the compulsion of the ‘I think’. Each must experience the compulsion of the ‘I think’ by themselves, for it is their own ‘I think’ which appears, not ‘anyone’ and ‘no one’s’ I think. Thus, thinking is something *private*. The privacy of thought is here connected with our inability to find it in space. The objects in space are commonly accepted as *public*. They function as common reference points to which many persons have access, and to which no one person has privileged access. Note that for the ancients it is thinking that discloses the very being of what is public, not something shut out from the public. Form, as the being of the universal, is that in virtue of which anything can be revealed as anything. Universals are not locked up in the mind, and when they are grasped by the mind, they immediately illuminate what things are in themselves. Lastly, we may say that thinking is a temporal experience, for we experience ourselves first as doubters of ourselves, and then as believers. Descartes cannot excise the temporal flux of the contents of consciousness. To the psychological view of the universal, both time and privacy are attributed.

Descartes employs thought experiments in order to elucidate the foundation of his system. Indeed, we can trace the modern tendency to employ thought experiments as a philosophical method in many philosophical disciplines, especially philosophy of mind, to Descartes’ systematic use of them to build his system. Moreover, ‘truth’ itself is stripped of its original ontological significance and becomes a ‘clear and distinct idea’. That thinking
exists is clear to me, and distinct from other possible ideas. Immediately upon finishing his
argument, Descartes identifies thinking with consciousness more generally. There is nothing
mysterious about why this is case if one properly understands the Cogito. Surely, it is one’s
own awareness that is proved to exist, for one cannot help but see that it is one’s own
awareness of thinking that is under compulsion. On this assumption each form of
consciousness has its own form of certainty. In imagining I am certain that images appear to
me, in sensing I am certain that I seem to see colors, etc. Despite not knowing whether I am
seeing, I at least know that it seems to me that I am seeing.

Perhaps it is already clear why the Cogito exhibits intellectual intuition, insofar as
thought is self-given. Intellectual intuition is the view that it is in virtue of thinking that the
object of thinking is given. The Cogito expresses intellectual intuition in the form of immediacy.
How is the object immediately given upon thinking? Without thinking there would be no
phenomenon of thought. Thus, thinking is a necessary condition for thinking to show up to as
a phenomenon. Even if no thinking would appear at all if there were not an act of thinking,
why is thinking a sufficient condition for the idea of thinking? Moreover, upon an act of
thinking, i.e. doubting whether there is thinking, thinking appears to thought. Thus, the act
of thinking alone is sufficient for the positing of the existence of thought. As long as one is
thinking, one can know that thinking exists, since I cannot deny there is thinking without
presenting a thought to myself. The subject gives itself over to be the object of its own
reflection. The immediacy of self-thinking-thought is the intuitive aspect of the Cogito. This is
the meaning of the ‘innate idea’: to be produced by thinking alone. There is no necessity to
think about the idea as that ‘with which one is born’. Thinking need not go outside itself in
order to have the concept of thought, for it can reflect on itself. Before it reflects on itself it
does not have itself as an object. On the one hand, if I reflect on a watch, or something
other than thought, it does not follow that thinking itself has produced the idea of the watch. On the other hand, if I think about nothing at all, I am not thinking. Only because thinking is there as a subject and waiting to be taken up by itself as an object can thinking give itself its own object. Here it is the potential for self-consciousness and the realization thereof that makes intellectual intuition possible.285

Note that the process of intuiting one’s own intellect is self-referential and existentially implicative. By thinking about one’s own thinking, thinking necessitates its own existence. The self-referential activity of thought engenders the existence of particular thoughts. Indeed, it is exactly because thinking turns towards itself that it is forced to recognize its own particular existence.286 Unlike the self-referential thought thinking itself,

285 In Spinoza we find another instance of intellectual intuition. In Part II of the Ethics, Of the Nature and Origin of the Mind, Proposition 4, Spinoza claims that in God there is necessarily the idea both of his essence and of everything that necessarily follows from his essence. Spinoza’s proof is as follows: Since God can think infinite things in infinite ways, including his own existence, and whatever God can do he must do, it follows that God has an idea of his own essence. Moreover, in proposition 5 of Part II, Spinoza argues that God, as a thinking thing, is the formal cause of all the ideas in God insofar as they are ideas. God, in virtue of being a thinking thing, thinks the idea of God and everything that follows from it (i.e. everything that exists). In this way, God thinks all ideas by thinking the idea of himself. In this system the idea of God is caused by God’s being a thinking thing. Like Descartes self-thinking thought, God is the immediate object of his own cognition. See Spinoza, Ethics in The Complete Works, Trans. Samuel Shirley, Hackett Pub., 2002.

286 As Schelling points out, although Fichte takes up and develops the concept of intellectual intuition from Kant, we can nonetheless find the principle of intellectual intuition in Cartesian philosophy. Indeed, the connection becomes much clearer when we see that Fichte locates the center of intellectual intuition in the concept of the “I am”. In his response to Hegel’s critique of his account of intellectual intuition, Schelling says that although he analyzes the conceptual structure of Fichte’s notion of intellectual intuition in the “I am”, he himself does not offer an alternative to Fichte’s account of intellectual intuition. Indeed, Schelling points out that upon taking intellectual intuition as an object of reflection, one ceases to be intuiting intellectually, for the subject-object division must re-appear in reflection. Schelling claims as much in the following: “For the term already, it is true, derives from Kant, but the application of it to the beginning of philosophy derives from Fichte. Fichte demanded something immediately certain as the beginning. For him this was the "I", which he wanted to make sure of by intellectual intuition as something immediately certain, i.e. as something which indubitably exists. The expression of intellectual intuition was precisely the "I am", stated with immediate certainty. The act was called intellectual intuition because in this case, unlike in sensuous intuition, subject and object were not different from each other but the same. […] Now in the treatise quoted I say, not that the I, as it is immediately certain in intellectual intuition, but rather that which has been gained by abstraction from the subject in intellectual intuition, the subject-object which has been removed from intellectual intuition, which is thus universal and without determination, and as such now is no longer something immediately certain, but, because it has been removed from intellectual intuition, can only be a matter (Sache) of pure thought: only this is the beginning of the objective philosophy which is freed from all subjectivity. Fichte had recourse to intellectual intuition in order to prove the existence of the I: now how could his successor wish to prove with the same intellectual intuition the existence of that which is no longer the I any more, but is rather the absolute subject-object? What has the force of proof in intellectual intuition in relation to the I is just its immediacy,
thoughts about what is other than thought are not self-referential, and for that reason do not imply their own existence. Although thinking engenders its own existence, regarding our thoughts of what is other than thought, for Descartes no existential implication at all may be deduced.

Though what it is to think has been radically transformed by the employment of intellectual intuition in the realization of self-consciousness, continental rationalism both affirms and rejects an essential aspect of ancient thought: existential implication. It is the case that particular universals must exist given the activity of intellectual intuition. But it is another question to ask whether, in turn, there are particulars that instantiate the universal once it is given. Following Anselm, both Descartes and Spinoza give their own versions of the ontological argument. Both argue that God’s existence can be deduced from the concept of God. In this respect, Continental Rationalism preserves this feature of the universal. But, this feature is limited to the idea of God and the idea of thinking itself. Spinoza explicitly points out for example, that in respect to things other than God, from the definition of the thing one cannot deduce how many of those things exist. From one in kind one cannot deduce what is one in number, or what is particular. Moreover, Descartes makes it explicitly clear that there is immediate certainty in the "I am" — but is there also in the "it is" which is the universal subject-object? All power of immediacy is lost here. In this it could no longer be a question of existence, but rather only of the pure content, of the essence of what was contained in intellectual intuition. The I is only a particular concept, a particular form of the subject-object; this was supposed to be shed, so that the subject-object in general should emerge as the universal content of all being. The explanation that one should take the universal concept of subject-object out of intellectual intuition was sufficient proof that it was a question of matter (Sache), of content, not of existence. (144-146) F.W.J. von Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy (Munich Lectures)*, Ed. Raymond Geuss, Trans. Andrew Bowie, Cambridge UP, Cambridge 1994, 144-146. Though I am satisfied to point out the origins of the concept of intellectual intuition in Descartes and Kant, the development of intellectual intuition in early German Idealism deserves more attention, if not only for their influence on Hegel’s thought. We shall briefly return to these issues later in Section IV.

287 We should note that both Descartes’ proof for God’s existence and his Cogito are awfully similar to some of Augustine’s arguments regarding the existence of the mind, as well as the existence of God from *On Free Choice of the Will*. Spinoza’s argument is straightforwardly ontological: “Conceive if you can, that God does not exist. Therefore, his essence does not involve existence. But this is absurd. Therefore, God necessarily exists.” (Part I, Proposition 11)

288 See, for example, in Scholium two of Proposition Eight, Spinoza claims that “no definition involves or expresses a fixed number of individuals.” “The true definition of each thing involves and expresses nothing beyond the nature of the thing defined.”
simply because we have the idea of extension does not mean that there are extended things. In fact, in order to prove that our concept of extension corresponds to extended things in the world, Descartes cannot appeal to the senses, since these do not provide a foundation of certainty. Instead, he must prove that they correspond simply by first appealing to thought alone. For this reason, he must appeal to some concept that does allow existential implication, and this concept is God. By showing that God exists, Descartes argues that a perfect Being could not be deceiving him concerning the being of extended objects. From these circumlocutions Descartes argues that concepts of the external world do correspond with their proper objects.289

Absent from the analyses altogether is the issue of self-reference. Although it is central to the ancient context, and is central to the Cogito, it fails to explicitly show up thematically here. Besides the Cogito, we find self-reference implied in the concept of God explored by the ontological argument: since God is God, God must exist.290 Though we might add that the general rejection of existential implication also entails a rejection of self-reference. In this respect, as I have already noted earlier in this chapter, modernity is not at all neutral on this issue.

Now, my use of ‘I’ and ‘my’ in these sentences is not yet justified, for I have only justified that thinking exists, and as far as ‘I’ know, I am nothing but the thinking that I encounter in the attempt to doubt thinking. In other words, at this point in the argument it is not yet established that there is a thing that underlies the thinking. Descartes offers an additional step in the argument: since there cannot be an activity without some-thing that

289 See the third meditation (24-37) and fifth meditations (44-50) for Descartes’ proofs for the existence of God, as well as the fifth and sixth meditations (50-63) for the connection between God and the essence and existence of material things.

290 In the classical identification of God with Being, the self-reference is most obvious: God, as pure Being, is that which is. God is the “I am who I am”. God, as that which is, cannot fail to be. The self-reference cannot be merely tautological: it brings with it the very content of what God is and God’s very existence.
underlies the activity, because there is thinking, there must be a thinking-thing. Insofar as this is a kind of metaphysical argument that takes it cue from grammar, it is not clear that it is self-giving in the same way thought itself is. To elucidate the thinking thing, Descartes introduces the Scholastic concept of ‘substance’, meaning a subject that cannot be a predicate. Insofar as the subject of thought, the ‘I’ in the ‘I think’ is a subject that is not a predicate, it cannot belong to a subject. Since thinking belongs to a thinking subject, and the thinking subject belongs to no subject whatever, there is no possibility for the thinker to encounter himself as a thinking thing in the act of thinking. If the thinker could encounter himself as the thinking thing, then the thinker would be both the subject and what the subject thinks in the same respect. The thinker ceases to be merely the subject of the predicate when the subject itself appears in the field of consciousness.

Because the self-evidence of Descartes’ argument relies on the psychological compulsion that occurs when one tries to doubt thinking, one can argue against Descartes’ posit of the thinking substance by showing that there is no psychological compulsion to accept it. On this basis, Hume makes the argument that no self can be identified if we rely on psychological appearances. All we encounter are contents of the mind, but no I lying beneath them. Either we identify the I with some content of consciousness, which seems erroneous, for the I should be that which has the content, or we fail to have an I. The only encounter the thinker has with his own ‘substance’ stems from the encounter he has with what belongs to himself as a thing that thinks. If we remain within the domain of what can be

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291 Indeed, it is not yet evident in Descartes’ investigation that there are other minds, so any designation of ‘my’ does cannot yet have its exclusive character, since there may not be any other minds. Despite this, Descartes allows himself this liberty; it is his own thinking that is self-evident.

encountered psychologically, the ‘I’ in ‘I think’ is not able to be encountered psychologically, but inferred from something that is. At this point in the argument, I would like to make some critical comments about the relation between self-thinking thought in Aristotelian and Plotinian *Vous* and in Descartes’ *Cogito*, the difference between ‘thing’ and ‘activity’, and immediate and mediated self-awareness.

For Aristotle, only God *immediately* thinks thought. The activity of immediate self-thinking thought is not a psychological phenomenon of a human mind, for it is an eternal, non-temporal, self-thinking thought that is independent of the human mind, upon which every being in the world depends for its existence. Moreover, though Plotinus adopts a concept of self-thinking thought in which thinking is not merely immediate, this self-thinking thought is also not psychological. In Plotinus self-thinking-thought is a non-temporal, eternal principle of what exists, that is independent of the human mind. It is not an occurrence in the consciousness of the human mind. For this reason, though it would not be completely false, it would be a great oversimplification to claim that Descartes merely takes what was originally an ontological principle and makes it into a principle for modern epistemology. This statement must be qualified: Descartes radically transforms self-thinking thought by taking the human experience of thinking as the fundamental premise of the system of philosophy.

We should also note what has become a standard distinction in Analytic philosophy but has no inherent systematic value. Descartes draws the distinction between a thing and its activity, despite defining the self as a thinking thing. Since Descartes, there has been a tendency to dogmatically assert this difference, as though it were self-evident. Here I merely wish to note that the concept of the universal we discussed in the context of ancient thought blows this assumption up entirely. Aristotle identifies the thing with a Form, and the Form
cannot be distinguished from what has a universal articulation, the ‘what it is to be of a thing’, which is properly an activity. Not only is the activity integral to the thing, but the Thinghood of the thing is an activity. There is nothing absurd about the latter position. In fact, it appears that Descartes’ use of ‘substance’ is an Aristotelian term that has lost its original significance. In Aristotle the thing is the activity. In Descartes, the thing is the subject of the activity, but not identical to it.

Regarding the relation of the thinking self to knowledge of the self we find a paradox impeding every possible way forward. Either the thinking self knows itself immediately as a thinking self or in a mediate way. Aristotle argued in De Anima that the thinking self only knows itself by way of knowledge of some Form. Since knowledge is of a Form, and the mind itself is not a Form, but that which takes on some Form, the mind cannot immediately know itself. Instead, it can only know itself in virtue of knowing a Form, something distinct from itself. Again, this cannot be a Form, because for Aristotle the mind does not have a Form. By taking on Forms it comes to know itself as that which takes on Forms. Still, how can the mind directly think itself as that which takes on Forms, if what takes on a Form is not itself a Form? Apparently, on this view there is no immediate or direct self-cognition. Or, in other words, we do not directly encounter ourselves in thinking.

Now, Descartes appears to have isolated thinking itself and thought it immediately, and this is what we seem to do when we perform the cogito. This is indicated by the way Descartes himself gives the argument. By encountering thinking he immediately states that be exists as a thinking thing. Indeed, one could identify the thing with the activity, and we are apt to do this upon performing the thought experiment. Yet, if the thing and the activity were identified, then the thinking subject would immediately encounter itself, and would not need to posit an underlying thing. But Descartes’ subsequent division of the thing from the
activity negates this immediate self-consciousness, for the thing that thinks is never directly encountered, only intimated by that which belongs to thought. If we do attempt to encounter that ‘I’ that thinks we find ourselves in an infinite regress, for the I that thinks becomes the object thought, and as the object it belongs to thought and thereby fails to be the underlying subject.\textsuperscript{293}

Though Descartes advocates a conception of thinking that identifies thinking with consciousness, he distinguishes between different types of consciousness. It is within this purview that Descartes distinguishes his own concept of the concept from the psychologism found in empirical modes of that which tend to view the concept as an image. Having dealt with the existence of the mind, he turns to the existence of materials objects. Here in the second meditation we encounter his account of concepts most explicitly. In his famous wax experiment, Descartes places a piece of wax near a fire, and shows that despite the various changes in the sensory qualities, e.g. the sound, flavor, tactile impressions, color, and smell of the wax, the wax remained wax. This shows that the external object is not inherently connected to any particular sensory qualities. These he termed ‘secondary’, while those qualities that remained in the thing, such as extension, he termed ‘primary’.\textsuperscript{294} With what faculty do we grasp that material bodies are extended? The wax experiment shows that it is not in virtue of any sensation that we know the thing. Descartes’ considers two more options: imagination and conceptualization. Clearly, the imagination cannot do the trick either, for we only imagine particulars with the imagination, e.g. this table, not what makes an extended object extended. Moreover, there are more changes and shapes the wax can

\textsuperscript{293} On the one hand, if the I cannot exist without thinking, one must ask whether the thing is the condition for the thinking, or the thinking the condition of the I. If the I cannot exist without thinking, it is unclear whether we ever justified in treating it as the mere subject of the activity.

\textsuperscript{294} Locke also makes the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. It is interesting to note that, in accordance with the rise of science and the class concept, both Locke and Descartes attribute the mathematical qualities to the thing, not the qualities of sensation.
undergo than I am capable of imagining. For example, the wax may have 10,000 sides, but I am not able to imagine a 10,000-sided figure. Yet, I very well know the difference between 9,999 and 10,001, and know what it means to be a 10,000-sided figure. Thus, if I am to grasp the thing as extended, it cannot be with an image, since this is particular, and cannot grasp the manifold changes the object is capable of undergoing. Thus, I must only be able to grasp it conceptually. To grasp something as extended is to grasp all the various alterations of the thing in one respect, i.e. qua extended, as a one over many. This one over many is not reducible to its extension. The content of the concept itself transcends the particulars to which it refers. In sum, Descartes’ concept of the concept does not identify concepts with images as many empiricists do, but he nonetheless views the concept as something that exists as a distinct kind of psychological content in the mind.

Here we have reached one central crossroad in the history of Western thought. Ought the concept be grasped merely as an empirical class, or as an intensive, qualitative unity that binds all the particulars into one signification? We should not understand this debate as one that only takes place between empiricism and rationalism, since within the latter this conflict is connected with the attempt to separate the universal from the psychological experience to which it is connected even in Descartes. Though this debate is central to the question concerning universality in early modern thought, e.g. Descartes through Hume, it is repeated in the late 19th century and early 20th century in the struggle against ‘psychologism’. This re-iteration of the disagreement finds expression in the work of Ernst Cassirer and Edmund Husserl. Moreover, Logical Positivism, e.g. Ayer, Carnap, etc. which reigned in Analytic thought for much of the 20th century revived the empiricist concept of truth and meaning in the work of 19th century philosophers such as Ernst Mach and J.S. Mill. We have already analyzed different views of the empirical universal from
different centuries. In what follows I wish to show how the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century work of Cassirer and Husserl undermine the psychological views of the universal advocated by empiricists from Locke to Mill. Although I will be examining their critical arguments, I will refrain from any exposition of their method or their respective concepts of the concept until we arrive at a more fitting context for such a discussion. Their criticisms apply well beyond their historical scope, for they aim to undermine any attempt to construct concepts from merely empirical grounds and any attempt to reduce the universal to its extension, or what it denotes. Their work is significant for it shows how the rationalist tradition beginning with Descartes attempts to purify itself of the psychological context in which it begins.

Though Husserl and Cassirer’s concepts of the universal also fall subject to the same fallacy of psychologism that they reject, I think it is instructive to consider the argument advanced by both the Neo-Kantian and Transcendental-Phenomenological schools against the radically empiricist concept of the universal as a class, and in particular, as an empirical class. Let us consider Husserl’s basic phenomenological argument\textsuperscript{295} against the universal as an empirical class, since Cassirer’s argument in \textit{Substance and Function} is a condensed version of the same.

Let us first consider what \textit{we mean} when we talk about a concept. Take, for example, the concept ‘four’. When we think ‘four’, and what belongs to the concept ‘four’, we treat ‘four’ as \textit{a subject} of predicates. What is ‘four’? Four is a natural, whole number. When we think that ‘four’ is a natural, whole number, we do not mean that four pebbles are a natural whole number or four feelings are a natural whole number. No, instead, we mean that ‘four \textit{itself}’ has the predicates, not the particulars that are thought under it. It is absurd to predicate

‘natural whole number’ to four pebbles, since the pebbles themselves do not have the properties in question, nor do we mean them to have them. If what I mean by a concept always signifies some individual presentation, then concepts are ultimately proper names. But, we do not mean some individual content or plurality of individual contents except the universal presentation of ‘four itself’ when we attribute ‘whole number’ to ‘four’. ‘Four itself’ appears as a this. In my nominalization of ‘four’ I cannot help but treat it as an independent object. Note that in thinking about ‘four’ I am not referring to any class at all, empirical or otherwise, but some content containing, if you will, the intensive predicates ‘whole’ and ‘number’.

If we wish to explain what universals are in a way that is consistent with what we mean when we think concepts, then we assume, as a starting point of our investigation, that there are what Husserl calls ‘universal presentations’ of concepts, and not just individual presentations. Instead of taking the universal concept ‘four’ as given foundation from which to begin an inquiry into universals, modern empiricism attempts to explain away the concept we mean in our signification. The key complaint here is that modern nominalism fails to take the ideal signification of concepts as the starting point of the inquiry.

If we proceed to think about what universals are in light of this ideal signification, we come to see how absurd the empiricist rendering of the concept is. If the universal is merely some psychological appropriation of given individuals into classes, each which is originally given separately from the others, the universal is something which only exists in the particular mind that makes the class. If the universal exists in the particular mind that makes the class, the universal only exists in those temporal moments when the thinker comprehends the particulars into a class. So, how many ‘fours’ are there? There are as many concepts of ‘four’ as there are minds that comprehend ‘four’. Yet, when someone tells me that ‘four’ is a
natural number, *this does not mean that ‘her four’ is a natural number.* It means that ‘four’ itself, irrespective of the thinker, is a natural number. If it were her four, she could not make a claim concerning its universal application to any four as such. Accordingly, she should give up making any claim to know what ‘four’ is. Instead, there are only individual contents for particular individuals, no universal contents. When the empiricist claims that every thinker has a different image of a table in her mind, and therefore has a different concept of the table in her mind, *the concept has been eliminated; instead, there are diverse images denoted by the word ‘table’.* This kind of empiricist is only talking to herself.

Further, the concept itself is an individual psychological presentation in the mind of the thinker at *some time,* such that the universal cannot simultaneously exist at other times in the minds of the same thinker. Each universal would have a particular temporal duration, such that as an individual temporal content, it is a distinct universal from contents that appear at other times. Thus, there are in principle *no repeatable* terms. When I think what ‘four’ is, I determine it irrespective of what time it is thought, or where I am when I think it. I am able to cognize the ‘same four’ irrespective of the time. Thus, the ‘four’ itself is not inherently connected to any particular temporal duration of my consciousness. I encounter ‘four’ as a *self-same* presentation whose content is not constituted by *who* thinks it or *when* they think it. Still, for the empiricist who posits the universal as an empirical class, there can only be a passing temporal flux which bars any further unification of the particulars that is not merely symbolic or itself particular. We might attempt to ground the universal, not in any psychological content, but in a psychological *act.* The problem with the latter point of view is that it fails to escape the temporal limitations constraining the psychological contents. If we grasp universals as somehow constituted by psychological acts, then we fail to grasp the self-identity of the universal that persists irrespective of the temporal variations.
Again, when I say that ‘four’ is a natural number, I do not mean that ‘four now’ is a natural number, but may not be tomorrow. If we wish to revise our concepts such that we now mean by ‘four’ ‘my four now’, there shall no longer be any discussion of ‘four’. On such a perspective, there is nothing for us to speak about that is the same in any case either to ourselves or in the company of others. Indeed, we cannot even say ‘my’ or ‘yours’ without failing into the same trap. Instead, we bottom out in one in number, having entirely lost what is one in kind. Reducing one in kind to one in number seems indistinguishable from the annihilation of universality altogether.\footnote{296}

By rejecting what is one in kind we also undermine unity in number. Insofar as the universal is a self-same presentation, it cannot be temporal, without ceasing to be itself every time it is thought. In reducing the universal to a psychological class, each four is a four. What is ‘four’, then, if ‘four’ is ‘a four’?\footnote{297} There is no difference! Since we have no unity in kind, we cannot even talk about ‘a four’, since there is no instance of a common term. As such, we have no identity by which we could identify resemblances and differences. We cannot form classes and instances of ‘four’ without some identity by which to identify the instances. It appears that resemblance can only do work if there is something in virtue of which they resemble each other, i.e. some common mark. This common mark cannot be a class, for it is that in virtue of which the class is formed.

We might also point out, with Cassirer, that we cannot find psychological presentations with which many concepts can be correlated. Though we may be able to distinguish 10,000 from 9,999, we do not possess psychological presentations that correlate to 10,000 by which we distinguish it from 9,999. Likewise, any concept of the infinite cannot

\footnote{296} These arguments are reconstructions from Cassirer’s arguments in the second chapter of Substance and Function.
\footnote{297} Husserl makes this argument in chapter three of his Logical Investigations, Investigation I, 121-126.
be grounded in any particular presentations, since we only ever consciously encounter finite presentations. With what presentation shall we correlate an uncountable infinity? It seems that we are not only better suited to render the difference without appeal to some psychological presentation, but that reducing the difference to one pertaining to some private, temporal determination at least muddles, but at worst undermines the very possibility of making the distinction in the first place.

The main function of the preceding arguments is to show how the empirical class concept fails to do justice to what we mean when we think what is universal, and when we make conceptual distinctions, since it entails the untenable commitment to psychologism. The ‘logicist’ position, which we shall discuss later, does not commit itself to a psychological theory of the universal. In ‘logicism’, class-membership is rescued from the empirical and psychological contexts.

Still, we shall find that some of the previous criticisms should apply to any concept of the class concept whatever. First, since the universal does not primarily signify the mere extension, and class-membership is exhausted in the extension, it follows that class-membership, empirical or not, fails to constitute what we mean by ‘universal’. Second, some common terms appears necessary in order to provide the identity conditions of any class-membership. Thus, even non-empirical classes, whatever they may be, appear to stand in need of some prior conceptual factor that makes them possible. The abstract universal could in principle offer a way to make them possible, for it is able to provide a conceptual factor by which the identity conditions of membership are specified. Overall, class-membership comprehends the universal wholly from the side of the particular, i.e. it is a mode of self-indifference, in which the universal is only conceived in the mode of self-negation.
We might also note that what is being rejected in these criticisms is a cluster of related ways of thinking about the universal. Insofar as modern nominalism entails psychologism, the rejection of psychologism also entails a rejection of modern nominalism. First, we may say that the critique of psychologism, i.e. the rejection of the view that the concept has it’s being in some individual temporal presentation or act of consciousness, constitutes a rejection of modern empiricism. This is true. But it also undermines Descartes’ characterization of the universal as a type of consciousness-content. In sum, the critique of psychologism undermines the psychological context of the universal, which affects both paradigms of modern thought: British Empiricism and Modern Rationalism. Accordingly, the concept of intellectual intuition is at risk of being of little value. Through the criticism, the purist strain in Descartes is preserved, while the psychological strain is cancelled.\footnote{In our discussion of Analytic Philosophy we shall have to see whether Wittgenstein’s concept of meaning as use and family resemblance may provide free empiricism from the unpalatable entailments of class membership and psychologism.}

Should the universal be conceived as an abstract ‘one’ over many, or should the many themselves constitute the universal itself? It seems that this question may be asked independently of whether one is committed to an empirical or non-empirical theory of the universal. Yet, either answer is problematic. However you answer the question, you are taking one side of the same duality. If one in number is the essential factor, and one in kind unessential, you can remove unity in kind and still have one in number. But if unity in kind is absent, not only can there not be any common feature, e.g. not even ‘one in number’, for ‘number’ seems to make an appeal to a universal that is not merely a class, but provides an intensive difference with other kinds of unity. We may say that all classes are arbitrary, including the concept ‘class membership’. Without one in kind, there are no instances of the kind, and thus no particulars. If one in kind is essential, and one in number unessential, there cannot
be one in kind. For without particulars, there cannot be any term common to the particulars. Thus, without what is one in number there is no unity in kind. It appears that intensive unity requires extensive unity, and extensive unity requires the intensive. Each is a condition of the other. In other words, class-membership is a condition for the abstract universal and the abstract universal is a condition for class membership. In this regard, the question, ‘is the universal a class or an abstraction?’ is misguided, as each is a one-sides emphasis of one opposition. Indeed, we have already been over this ground in our discussion of Aristotle’s *aporia* concerning the derivation of one in kind from one in number and one in number from one in kind.
It is only because of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* that philosophers such as Cassirer and Husserl were possible at all. For this reason alone Kant is worthy of our consideration. But more than this, Kant initiated a novel philosophical methodology, whose influence cannot be overstated. Moreover, any approximate understanding of early analytic or continental philosophy indubitably hangs upon grasping Kant’s transcendental philosophy. Since our main concern is the being of universality, our discussion of Kant will be limited to evaluating to what extent Kant’s transcendental philosophy, as well as the transcendental paradigm in general, makes progress towards answering this question, or at least helps us to understand what we are asking when we posit the question.

We might also point out in advance that working out Kant’s basic position regarding universality is central for approaching Hegel, to whom we shall devote the last chapter of this work. There are many ways in which Kant is important for Hegel, and the following exegesis by no means aims to investigate them all. In particular, we must work out the philosophical problem that arises for Kant when he attempts to establish the objective, synthetic, *a priori* content of categories, since the question ‘what is the universal?’ is our leading question. As we shall see, Kant’s identification of the concept with ‘the function of judgment’ is one of the main problematic assumptions that undermine Kant’s position. Hegel shall attempt to remedy this by giving a separate account of categories *independently* of judgment. Moreover, Kant himself fails to even investigate the categories *qua* categories. In this sense, Kant appears to have little to add to our investigation. Yet it is exactly the absence of the inquiry into what categories qua categories are that Hegel recognizes as problematic.
Beyond these issues regarding categories, we shall also work out two other themes that are central for Hegel’s account of the concept: the synthetic unity of apperception and intellectual intuition. Hegel himself employs the synthetic unity of apperception as an example of what the concept is. In order to do justice to Kant this requires a careful analysis of his terminology, motivation, and transcendental methodology.

The fundamental question for ancient philosophy is the question concerning the being of Being. Kant’s Copernican revolution in philosophy re-directs our inquiry to an assumption that ancient philosophy takes for granted. By immediately inquiring into the what it is to be of being, ancient thought fails to ask whether the subject is capable of knowing what it is to be and under what conditions that knowing is made possible. This is not to claim that the ancients were not critical in their Metaphysics. For sure, any philosophy that makes a claim to be first philosophy must inquire into its own possibility, since there are no prior sciences that could establish that for it. But the ancients inquired into the possibility of first philosophy from the side of the object. What does this mean? It means that instead of asking under what conditions subjectivity must be construed in order to know its object, they inquired into how the object must be construed in order for it to be knowable. For example, Aristotle argues that in order for being to be knowable, it must be governed by the principle of non-contradiction. The thing must conform to the principles of knowledge in order for it to be graspable. Despite this critical appropriation of Metaphysics, Aristotle, for example, assumes that the subject is a transparent vessel that takes on the Form of what it knows.

Any philosophy which does not inquire into the knowing of being, but instead immediately inquires into being itself is dogmatic, since it fails to be critical of the knowing that underlies the scientific appropriation of the object. Kant’s philosophy is critical exactly in

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this respect: he attempts to lay bare the conditions under which the knowing of an object is possible from the side of subjectivity. Put in more informal terms, Kant is thinking about thinking. Reason must set the limits of its own knowing, in order to know what it is and is not capable of grasping. For this reason, Kant’s methodology takes epistemology as first philosophy, since knowing is the primary object of philosophy, not being. Being can be an object of philosophy only once we have determined what reason is capable of grasping.

One essential assumption of Kant’s methodology is the separation of knowing from being. The very turn from being to the knowing of being as the object of the inquiry implies that the object of Metaphysics is distinct from the object of Epistemology. Indeed, that the inquiry into being characteristic of ancient philosophy is deemed separate from the inquiry into the knowing of being implies this difference. Though it is not initially obvious how this difference is significant, it shall nonetheless have great significance for establishing whether Kant’s project is successful. Unfortunately, we shall see that this distinction undermines the very possibility of inquiring into being, thereby undermining the status of Kant’s method as a propaedeutic.

In general, one might complain that it is not with Kant that the critical turn to the subject begins. In one sense, this is correct. Already with Descartes we have a critical investigation into what the subject can know with certainty about being. The modern period itself is characterized by the critical turn to subjectivity. As is evident, the global skepticism of Hume supports this thesis well. For example, Hume argues that if all knowledge is from experience, no necessary connection between cause and effect may be established, no I is discoverable in introspection, and the existence of the external world cannot be established.

Given the critical turn of modernity, what is significant about Kant’s project? As Kant scholars know, one fundamental difference lies in what is taken for granted, since this
determines what inquiries are possible. On the one hand, Descartes doubts all his beliefs, and thereby refuses to take any knowledge as a given. Insofar as Descartes doubts that he knows, Descartes is critical of the subject. On the other hand, Kant does take knowledge as a given. Taking knowledge as given, Kant inquires into the condition for the possibility of knowledge. An inquiry is transcendental exactly to the extent that it inquires into and establishes those conditions that make knowledge possible. Since Descartes does not take knowledge itself as an actual given, he cannot inquire into what makes that knowledge possible. Instead, he asks whether there is such a thing as knowing, and this is a fundamentally different question than the one posed by transcendental inquiry.

We would do well to remember that modern rationalism is not critical in itself. For example, Spinoza and Leibniz both take being as the immediate object of inquiry, and fail to continue the spirit of critical self-analysis initiated by Descartes. It should be no surprise then, that it was Hume, not any of the rationalists, who awoke Kant from his dogmatic slumber. But given this fundamental difference between the epistemic method of Kant and Descartes, what advantage does Kant’s approach have over his modern and ancient predecessors?

In order to answer this question, it is important to remember one central motivation of modern philosophy. Descartes’ Meditations are fundamentally concerned with providing a philosophical groundwork for modern science, namely mechanics. In order to secure a field for theoretical physics that protects it from the anthropomorphic tendencies of human

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300 Though Kant recognizes the legitimacy of universal necessary laws, by constraining knowledge to claims that only have contingent validity, Kant recognized the need to develop a new epistemology upon which universal necessary laws could be grounded.
thought, Descartes’ ensures the absolute separation of mind from body by arguing for substance dualism, the thesis that there are two fundamental kinds of substances: thinking and extended entities. Since the principle motivation of philosophy becomes the grounding of the natural sciences, the philosophical approach to being is lead by the sciences. In this way, metaphysics becomes closely aligned with philosophy of science. By ‘philosophy of science’ I do not mean an analysis and investigation merely into philosophical method, but an attempt to provide a metaphysical groundwork from which natural science may proceed. Given this motivation, it is clear why Hume is important. Hume’s project fundamentally undermines any secure philosophical groundwork not only for classical mechanics but also for metaphysics. Already by the time of Hume’s devastating critique of causation, Newton’s *Principia* had already become scientific dogma, and had already solidified the separation between natural science and natural philosophy. Indeed, Hume’s critique only further threatens to divorce philosophy from science.

Perhaps it is not obvious why Hume’s philosophy fundamentally undermines the possibility of classical mechanics. In order to motivate Kant’s question, and to grasp Hume’s influence thereon, we should dwell on the type of proposition characteristic of classical mechanics and metaphysics. Consider the following propositions: ‘all bodies exert gravitational pull’, ‘everything that happens has a cause’, and ‘the world necessarily has a beginning in time’. The first proposition, ‘all bodies exert gravitational pull’ is central to classical mechanics. The second and third propositions, ‘everything that happens has a cause’ and ‘the world necessarily has a beginning in time’, are metaphysical claims. Though they may

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301 By ‘anthropomorphic tendencies’ I mean the appeal to teleology. Though I do not consider teleological explanations ‘anthropomorphic’ I use the term here in a way consistent with the thought of early modern rationalism.

302 I intentionally fail to mention mathematical propositions here. Kant includes mathematics with the *synthetic* a priori sciences. This is a terribly controversial topic, and though I shall have more opportunity to discuss and even defend this claim later, for now it would merely distract from my main purpose.
exist in separate sciences, each of these claims is synthetic and a priori. Let us take each term in turn, beginning with ‘a priori’.

Any proposition grounded in observation is called empirical or a posteriori. Since observations occur at particular times and places, from any observation or set of observations one cannot establish that what is observed is universally valid for all times and places. As is obvious, there are times and places excluded by one’s situated observation. In order to infer that observations apply universally to similar situations, one must give an inductive argument of the type: Given specific parameters, since a is the case in T1, T2 at P1, P2 a is the case in every time and in every place. In order for the ‘every’ to be valid, either the claim is only being made for those temporal and spatial locations in which the observation is made, or one must assume that nature is uniform. Of course, ‘nature is uniform’ is a claim about nature as such, and requires its own inductive inference if it is to be grounded on experience as well. Thus, one cannot establish any universal proposition if the proposition arises from experience. Not only is empiricism limited to the particular, but it is also limited to contingency. All empirical propositions are contingent, for the inferences grounded in one’s observations may be undermined by future observations. Thus, there is neither necessity nor universality in propositions grounded in observation either of one’s own states or what is external to oneself.

In contrast to a posteriori claims, a proposition is a priori, or independently of experience, if it is universal and necessary. Since all a posteriori claims are particular and contingent, neither universality nor necessity may be grounded by a posteriori propositions. Thus, the truth of any proposition containing some universal and necessary truth may only be validated independent of experience as such. Basic propositions representative of classical mechanics are a priori, for ‘all bodies exert gravitational pull’ is a claim about every body.
Likewise, ‘everything that happens has a cause’ is a claim about everything—both physics and metaphysics contain a priori claims. A priori propositions may be either synthetic or analytic.

‘Bachelors are unmarried men’ and ‘all bodies are extended’ are analytic propositions. Why? A proposition is analytic if it connects the subject to the predicate in virtue of identity. The copula in an analytic proposition explicates what is already implied by the subject: it is internal to the very being of the bachelor to be unmarried, just as it is internal to the very being of the body to be extended. Or, there is nothing else to the very being of the body except that it is an extended thing, as Descartes claimed. In the 20th century, logical positivists such as A.J. Ayer considered analytic propositions to be true ‘in virtue of meaning alone’. Though all propositions that are true in virtue of meaning alone are analytic propositions, this is not the specific way Kant defines them, for there is an implication that bodies are merely stipulated to be extended. The ‘is’ of the proposition here need not merely imply stipulation, but could also indicate that bodies themselves, not just the term, are such and such a thing. We employ the term ‘analytic’ since we only need analysis of the subject to discover the predicate. Metaphorically, this is tantamount to ‘unpacking’ what is already ‘contained in’ the subject.

Are the propositions constitutive of classical mechanics and metaphysics analytic? It is clear that they are not. If ‘the world necessarily has a beginning in time’ were analytic, to be a world would simply imply having a beginning. As we know, establishing that the world has a beginning in time is not so easy. It is possible that the world has always existed in time. Not only is it possible, but as we have discussed, it was a view actually held by the ancient Greeks. It requires more than mere analysis to predicate ‘beginning in time’ to ‘world’. In other words, when we think about the concept of the world we do not know already whether it has a beginning in time. In order to establish the predicate ‘beginning in time’, we
must introduce a third term by which the subject is connected to the predicate. Synthetic
calls are ampliative, for they add new content to the subject that is not already given in the
subject itself. Likewise, the claim that ‘all bodies exhibit gravitational pull’ is not analytic
either, simply due to the fact that by thinking about a body I do not immediately discover
the law of gravitation. It is in virtue of a third term, not merely through identity, that I know
all bodies exhibit gravitational pull. Thus, we may conclude that many of the propositions
constitutive of metaphysics and natural science are not analytic, but synthetic. Taking our
considerations into account as a whole, we discover that the propositions of metaphysics
and classical mechanics are synthetic and a priori.

In contrast, all propositions grounded on observation are a posteriori. For example, if
I state that ‘birds are winged’ I connect the predicate ‘winged’ to ‘birds’ in virtue of my
experience of birds. In the empirical proposition, observation itself functions as the middle
term, for I do not know simply by thinking about the term ‘bird’ that it is ‘winged’. It is only
through experience that I know that they have the property ‘winged’. A posteriori
propositions all appear to be synthetic.303

But why think that what holds of particular propositions selected from the corpus of
classical mechanics and metaphysics that all propositions are synthetic and a priori? Perhaps
we might first note what we have already argued earlier in the chapter: classical mechanics is
a science of the laws of nature, or matter in motion, as such. These laws govern the relations
of matter qua matter, and motion qua motion. In order to establish what is the case for
matter as such, it is clear that this universality cannot be established analytically a priori.
Likewise, the necessity of the Newton’s laws of motion, e.g. that bodies are inert in themselves,

303 What these distinctions fail to reveal is the origin of the definition of terms. An investigation into the origin
of the meanings of terms has lead some contemporary thinkers to re-draw the boundaries between synthesis,
analysis, a priori and a posteriori. In any case, this is not directly relevant for us, since Kant’s question concerns
the synthetic a priori.
likewise fails on *a posteriori* grounds. If all knowledge is from experience, we should be ready to empty theoretical physics of its characteristic scope and modality: universality and necessity. Moreover, insofar as natural science investigates the causes of motion, empiricism radically undermines the very possibility of theoretical physics by rendering the attribution of cause a psychological phenomenon. Secondly, it is clear that epistemology and metaphysics, insofar they investigate the assumptions on which the propositions of physics rest, cannot proceed *a posteriori*, for *a posteriori* methodology only establishes claims with a contingent and particular extension. For as we argued in the introduction, if they were to proceed *a posteriori*, they would not be able to study themselves. Naturally, the scientific method is not about itself, and for this reason, it cannot study itself. Metaphysics must ask about the being of Metaphysics, and Epistemology must ask about the knowing that is constitutive of Epistemology. Self-knowledge is exactly what is required of any science of science, whether it be construed as Metaphysics, Epistemology, or Logic. The transcendental thinking of thinking must be able to account for its own transcendental activity.

If all knowledge arises from experience, then synthetic *a priori* propositions are impossible. For if synthetic, *a priori* propositions were possible, then there would be non-empirical synthetic propositions, since no *a priori* proposition is empirical. But, if all knowledge were to arise from experience, *all synthetic propositions would be empirical*, and thereby contingent and particular. So, if all knowledge were from experience, non-empirical synthetic propositions would not be possible. Thus, synthetic, *a priori* propositions would be impossible. Hume makes this inference, and reduces synthetic, *a priori* claims to a matter of custom and psychological habit. Since the body of truths purported by mechanics and metaphysics are synthetic and *a priori*, classical mechanics and metaphysics would also be impossible if all knowledge were to arise from experience. Yet, for Kant there is the science
of mechanics, in which synthetic a priori propositions are contained. If the sciences are given as a fact, (not to exclude the disposition of philosophers to engage in Metaphysics), then they must be possible, since the very being of something implies its possibility. Still, if all knowledge arises from experience, then they are not possible.

Given this problematic, Kant asks the proper question: how is the synthetic a priori knowledge possible? Since metaphysics and theoretical physics are constituted by synthetic a priori judgments, the question ‘how is synthetic a priori knowledge possible?’ also implies the following questions: ‘how is metaphysics possible?’ and ‘how is natural science possible?’ Let us be aware of what we have not yet specified, since this gives us a sense of what it is into which we are inquiring. We have not yet specified the third term connecting subject to predicate in the metaphysical proposition, yet we know that there must be a third term if the propositions are possible. We know there must be a third term, because synthetic judgments connect the subject to the predicate through a third term; without the third term the claim would be analytic. Though we do not yet know what it is that makes the synthetic a priori possible, we know what it means to answer the question: the specification of the third term.

Since Kant defines the concept in the context of his transcendental project, we must be careful to think through Kant’s definition of the concept within the context of transcendental argumentation. In order to do this, we shall require ourselves to trace the basic arguments and methodology at work in Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason. In particular, we shall give special attention to the Schematism, for it is there that the basic problem of

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304 From this point in the discourse, I will supplant ‘judgment’ for ‘proposition’, since ‘judgment’ is the term Kant uses, and it has a narrower, more specific meaning than ‘proposition’. A proposition is a declarative statement about some state of affairs, while judgments predicate the universal to the individual. Not all propositions are limited to that form.

305 To these questions Kant adds a third: ‘how is mathematics (arithmetic/geometry) possible?’
participation endemic to the question of universality again rises to the surface of philosophical consciousness. Since it is Hume who successfully draws out the skeptical consequences of empiricism, it is with Hume’s assumption that ‘all knowledge arises from experience’ that we must begin. Still, Kant is the first to recognize the question lying in the wake of Hume’s criticism. Thus, Kant must show that empiricism overlooks a possibility, and subsequently show that empiricism must assume knowledge that the empiricist methodology cannot explain.

At the ground of Kant’s criticism of empiricism is the distinction between ‘arises from’ experience and ‘begins with’ experience. Empiricist methodology cannot be grounded on empiricist assumptions. Indeed, since ‘all knowledge arises from experience’ is a universal claim, and we cannot establish the universal on empiricist assumptions, we cannot establish that ‘all knowledge arises from experience’ on empiricist assumptions. Instead, we could only claim that ‘as far as we know’ all knowledge is from experience, or ‘we have not yet discovered knowledge that does not arise from experience’. If empiricism gives an inductive argument for its own method, then it begs the question, since it assumes that the only way to establish the universal is on empiricist grounds. If empiricism does not give a ground for their method, then they simply assume it ad hoc. If we think about the assumptions that empiricism makes concerning what is experienced, we shall discover the fundamental direction of Kant’s inquiry.

Empiricism assumes that all universals are constructed from sense impressions. Sense impressions are assumed to be particular, not universal. Experience, in its most fundamental form, is of particular sense impressions. Having grasped the conditions for empirical method, it becomes evident what the empiricist must assume in order for the methodology to be put to work. In order for any universal to be constructed from a set of
particulars, the particulars must be given in and to some consciousness. Empiricism cannot itself establish that particulars are given in and to consciousness, but must assume that particulars are given to consciousness. Empiricism cannot establish that particulars are given to consciousness because this would require the application of some universal prior to experience in virtue of which they would initially be given. Empiricists must assume that there are particulars from which they may form concepts by analogy. For this reason, their concepts all assume the particulars, rather than account for them. Kant investigates the conditions for the possibility of knowledge by asking, ‘what are the conditions for the possibility of the givenness of particulars to consciousness?’ Since experience is construed as the givenness of particulars to consciousness, Kant’s inquiry into the conditions for the possibility of the givenness of particulars to consciousness is the same as the question concerning the possibility of experience. In sum, we have finally arrived at the fundamental form of Kant’s transcendental question: what are the conditions for the possibility of experience?

Thinking of Kant as a logician, another way of asking his question is the following: what is it for experience to be what it is? Or more exactly: what are the universal and necessary conditions for experience as such? Understood this way, Kant is asking about the logical structure of experience as experience.\(^{306}\) In order for any knowledge to be derived from the content of experience, experience itself must be given. Of course, all knowledge derived from experience is empirical or a posteriori. Thus, our question may be formulated another way: what is the condition for the possibility of empirical knowledge? Since the ingredients constitutive of experience cannot be derived from experience, we must inquire

\(^{306}\) Kant’s ‘logical’ investigation is clearly a transcendental one. But more generally, it is simply analyzing what is necessary to the concept of experience. Kant grounds his whole account in forms of analysis, or forms of judgments, which are formal.
into those elements that are independent of all experience, the a priori conditions for any empirical knowledge, or the a priori conditions for the synthetic a posteriori.

Since the transcendental inquiry is not interested in what is derived from the content of experience, but instead is interested in what is necessary for any content, Kant proceeds by investigating what structures constitutive of consciousness are necessary for consciousness of particulars. What the empiricist methodology assumes to be impossible is the possibility that there are a priori structures of consciousness that make possible the givenness of particulars. This possibility needs to be shown to be false, in order for the empiricist method to be viable. If it is possible that there are a priori structures that structure and give form to the content of experience, it would still be true that all knowledge temporally begins with experience, since content cannot have form unless some content is given. Yet, if it were possible that there were a priori structures that make experience possible, it would not follow that all knowledge would arise from experience, since those a priori structures would be necessary for experience. Indeed, Kant’s arguments in the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Analytic offer a strong case that there are a priori structures necessary for experience. It is within this context that Kant’s concept of the concept comes to the fore.

Though we might expect Kant to inquire into the being of universality transcendentally, in fact Kant never asks transcendental questions about universality. For example, one could ask “what is the condition for the possibility of universals?” In order to understand why the condition for the possibility of universality is never an object of transcendental inquiry, we must uncover, albeit briefly, the basic a priori features of experience. In the Transcendental Doctrine of the Elements, Kant analyzes two faculties necessary for experience: Sensibility and the Understanding. The analysis of the former is called the Transcendental Aesthetic, while the latter is called the Transcendental Analytic. In each division of
the Transcendental Doctrine of the Elements Kant gives two types of arguments: Metaphysical and Transcendental deductions. The Metaphysical Deduction analyzes what is contained in the faculty a priori. The Transcendental Deduction takes the result of the Metaphysical Deduction as an assumption, and shows how the elements deduced in that deduction makes synthetic, a priori judgments possible.

Sensibility is our capacity to receive representations in virtue of being affected by objects. Qua receptive, Sensibility is a passive faculty in which one simply finds representations given. Thus, Sensibility is that faculty in which representations (Vorstellungen) are given. In contrast, Understanding is the faculty in virtue of which given representations are thought.

Here I should like to briefly note the meaning of terms of some considerable import. Sensation is the affection of the faculty of Sensibility by an object. In sensation, Sensibility relates to the object intuitively- that is, it has an immediate relation to its object. An immediate relation, is one in which there is no mediating factor standing between the subject and the object. For example, the act of seeing a red color is intuitive, for I am simply beholding the red color. If I, for contrast, think the red as a ‘wavelength of light’, I do not relate to the color immediately, but instead my relation to the splotch of red is mediated by a concept, e.g. ‘wavelength’. An intuition is empirical, as in the case of seeing a red color, when I have a representation through sensation. Insofar as it is considered independently of any conceptual determination, the object of the empirical intuition is called an appearance. In sum, it is in virtue of the capacity of Sensibility that appearances are experienced as objects of

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307 Please consider that some of these terms shall receive greater explication in the arguments to follow. The definitions provided here shall give the reader the ability to follow the discussion, but are not intended to be the final arbiter concerning their signification.
empirical intuitions. In contrast to what is empirical, a representation is pure if it is independent of sensation.

We might be offended at the phrase ‘immediate relation’, since ‘immediate’ implies that the subject and object are identical. Indeed, in the seeing of the red, the subject may be described as ‘absorbed’ in the red, and not ‘reflecting’ on the red. In a state of absorption, the subject is not permanently stuck in the intuiting of the red; the subject could ‘reflect’ on the color as a ‘wavelength’. Thus, we do have good reason to employ ‘immediate relation’, since subject and object are not in themselves identical, even in the case of an intuition. The various terms described above express the various subject and object sides of the immediate relation: ‘appearance’ is the object side of the ‘empirical intuition’, which reflects the side of the subject.

In order to proceed in the analytic of Sensibility, Kant first thinks Sensibility by itself apart from the Understanding. Secondly, he thinks what Sensibility qua Sensibility is if one were to remove all sensuous, empirical content from the faculty. Likewise, in the analytic of the Understanding, Kant shall think the Understanding by itself, and remove all that is sensuous and empirical from the faculty. More generally, Kant’s aim is to separate out the matter of the appearance, and think the form of the appearance, that by which appearance is ordered. In the analytic of Sensibility, Kant deduces the a priori form of appearance as such.

As Kant scholars know, Kant identifies two a priori conditions for the givenness of any sensible representation: space and time. Space and time are a priori intuitions (Anschauung), not concepts (Begriff). We shall make quick progress in identifying Kant’s concept of the concept upon grasping why space and time are both a priori intuitions. What is of essential value for us is how the argument for the intuitive character of the a priori form

of *Sensibility* relies on the contrast between intuition and conceptual determination, for this difference provides a clue towards grasping the structure and limits of the transcendental concept.

Let us begin with Kant’s arguments for space and time as determined *a priori*. Though one can take away all empirical intuitions from time and space without undermining the representation of time and space, one cannot take away time and space from the empirical representations without undermining the possibility of representing empirical intuitions. Hence, time and space are *a priori* conditions for any empirical representation, and therefore cannot be derived from any empirical representation without already having presupposed them. Moreover, one cannot represent anything as external to oneself, i.e. as having a distinct place from oneself) without already assuming the representation of space as such. Likewise, one cannot represent simultaneous or successive representations without already assuming the representation of time: time and space are *a priori* representations which makes possible any particular representation of time and space, as well as any empirical representation at all.

Let us put the argument in the most succinct terms, in which space and time are necessary, but not sufficient conditions: if there is empirical representation, then there is space and time. If there is no space and time, there is no empirical representation. Thus, space and time are necessary conditions for empirical representation. Note that space and time are *not* the principles by which the empirical content is *generated*, but simply the *a priori* intuitions in which the empirical content is *given*. Put more generally, if there is experience, there is space and time. There is experience. Hence, there is space and time. The ‘hence’ in the previous conclusion does not indicate that space and time *follow from* or arise from
experience, as the order of the terms might indicate, but that they are logically necessary conditions for the antecedent.

Before we re-construct Kant’s argument for the intuitive character of space and time, let us briefly discuss some minimal specifications of the concept. Concepts may be conceived either empirically or \textit{a priori}. An empirical concept is a common mark of some set of empirical intuitions, e.g. ‘bald’. An \textit{a priori} concept, though not simply a common mark, is a unity \textit{under which} a multiplicity is grasped as one, e.g. ‘bodies are extended’. In this judgment I grasp a multitude of bodies as one in the predicate ‘extended’. If I think about what is entailed in the concept, I do not thereby discover the instances of that concept. For example, if I ‘divide’ the concept of ‘body’ into the conceptual features constitutive of it, I do not discover the \textit{particular} bodies that fall under ‘body’. Instead, I simply find the ‘what it is to be’ of a body. Indeed, as a \textit{common feature} of a plurality, or a one over many, the concept \textit{by itself} does not specify which particulars fall under the concept, nor does it tell me what other properties belong to the objects to which the concept applies. Given this limitation, in order to acquire an instance of the concept, one must appeal to a principle \textit{external} to the concept. This is a basic principle of Kant’s: Sensibility provides the objects that the Understanding thinks, but the Understanding, the faculty of concepts, cannot provide its own objects.

Space and time are each, according to Kant, \textit{single}. There is one time, and one space. If there were multiple spaces, there would be spaces between those spaces, and the multiple spaces would be forced to abide in a larger unitary space. For the same reason, there can only be one time.\textsuperscript{309} In order to differentiate times or spaces, time and space must be divided into particular spaces and times. Each place or time, therefore, is a \textit{limitation} of the single

\textsuperscript{309} It almost goes without saying that these concepts of space and time are absolutist, and therefore inconsistent with the special and general theories of relativity. Still, it is unclear whether this means that Kant is wrong to think of space and time as intuitions.
space or time. As such, time and space are infinite, the instances of which are either all simultaneous, as in the case of space, or successive, as in the case of time.\footnote{Note that the way spaces are grasped in relation to each other is by the application of a temporal determination.} Since the particular space or time may be accessed via a limitation of space and time, the instance of space and time is located within space and time. The relation of space to a particular space, as well as time to a particular time, is immediate, for one must not appeal to anything external to space, or any other mediating factor, to derive the particular. Space and time are sufficient for a complete derivation of their particulars, unlike concepts, which only provide a partial determination of their objects, and require external principles for the derivation of the particular. Therefore, space and time are intuitions, not concepts. Hence, space and time are \textit{a priori} intuitions. As a priori intuitions, space and time contain their own \textit{a priori} content. Each is a ‘manifold’ (\textit{Mannigfaltigkeit}) of contents.

For convenience and brevity, I have treated time and space together, since the arguments supporting their status as \textit{a priori} intuitions are not different. Still, we should note that space is a condition for all external representations, while time is a condition not only for internal representations internal to my own consciousness, but all representations, whether they are internal or external. Taken together, space and time are the \textit{a priori} conditions that make possible the experience of any empirical representation whatever. For this reason, we have no access to things independent of our intuition. Moreover, we are also forbidden to attribute space and time to objects independent of our Sensibility, since space and time constitute the form of Sensibility as such. What we are able to experience is limited to what can be given in the parameters of space and time.\footnote{What we have elucidated thus far in our discussion of the analytic of Sensibility is the metaphysical deduction. Kant argues that space and time make possible synthetic \textit{a priori} judgments concerning geometry and}
In our analysis of Sensibility, we focused solely on the Metaphysical Deduction. In the following, we must re-construct the Metaphysical and Transcendental Deduction of the Categories, since it is the latter which shall offer up insight into the being of the concept as well as the basic problem underlying Kant’s account. Let us begin with the Metaphysical Deduction.

Following the same pattern of reasoning in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, Kant isolates the Understanding from Sensibility in order to analyze what is pure in that faculty, i.e. what is contained in the faculty *a priori*. Why must the transcendental investigator posit another faculty? Let us remind ourselves of one of Kant’s basic principles: concepts without intuitions are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. As we said earlier, concepts do not provide their own objects—for this concepts require Sensibility. But what need do we have of concepts? Let us begin with the latter proposition: “intuitions without concepts are blind”. If we only posit Sensibility, and do not allow another faculty a role in making experience possible, experience would be thoroughly indeterminate. Since concepts order appearances, without concepts appearances would be utterly unordered *a priori*. The *a priori* manifold of time and space does not come ready made—without the determination of concepts, it is unclear how one could distinguish any time from another, likewise any place from another place. If we cannot maintain the difference between intuitions, neither can we maintain the identity of any intuitions. In themselves the pure intuitions are indeterminate. Since no *a priori* determinacy appears given, the only determinate differences would be given *a posteriori*. For sure, in order to show the possibility of synthetic *a priori* knowledge, we could not be satisfied with an indeterminate *a priori* structure. In sum, in order to account for the motion. Let us pass over Kant’s arguments concerning the transcendental function of Sensibility in order that we might not get distracted from our main task: Kant’s account of the concept.
givenness of determine, a priori particulars\textsuperscript{312}, the a priori foundation of experience cannot be merely intuitive.

“Concepts without intuitions are empty”. Though Kant has new terminology for this relation, the proposition “concepts without intuitions are empty” signifies a prejudice of long standing in the philosophical tradition of the West, namely that concepts are insufficient principles of particularity. We should not underestimate the importance of this prejudice in Kant’s thought, despite its failure to demarcate the novelty in Kant’s appropriation of conceptual determination. Since intuition is only given in Sensibility, we know that the Understanding, the faculty of concepts, is not intuitive. As a non-intuitive faculty, Understanding is not receptive.\textsuperscript{313} That the faculty of concepts is not intuitive is expressed in the proposition that “concepts without intuitions are empty”. Since intuition is an immediate relation to an object, and concepts are not intuitive, concepts cannot relate to their objects immediately. Given that the concept relates to the object, the non-immediate relation to an object cannot be anything more than a mediated relation.

Kant provides an instructive example of conceptual determination. Consider the judgment ‘every body is divisible’. In this judgment, the concept ‘body’ is subsumed under the concept ‘divisibility’. In turn, the appearances of particular bodies in space and time are subsumed under the concept ‘body’. The concept of divisibility in the proposition ‘all bodies are divisible’ relates to the appearances of bodies in a mediated way. More specifically, the mediated relation to the object constitutive of conceptual determination is nothing more

\textsuperscript{312} The determinate a priori particulars are the particular contents of the a priori manifold of time and space.

\textsuperscript{313} Kant employs the term ‘spontaneous’ in order to contrast the activity of Understanding with the receptivity, or passivity of Sensibility.
than a representation of a representation. As Kant points out, what mediates between a concept and its object may not be a concept, but an a priori intuition.

Since the attribution of the concept to the object is reducible to the act judgment, for judgment is nothing more than the attribution of the universal to the individual, e.g. ‘the individual is universal’, no representation is subsumed under a concept except in a judgment. It is in a judgment that different representations are ordered under a common one, e.g. different bodies are ordered under ‘body’. Kant calls the unity of action that orders different representations under a common one a function. Since judgment is just the application of a concept, each distinct form of judgment contains its own distinct concept. Each form of judgment, simply as a form of judgment, is formal, for it abstracts from what is being judged, or the content of judgment. Given that concepts only apply to objects in the act of judgment, Kant postulates that the a priori concepts inherent in Understanding, the categories or unifying functions in acts of judgment, can be discovered by enumerating every form of judgment per se. For example, in the universal judgment, the category of ‘unity’ is the operative concept. But simply specifying what category is operative in the judgment does not specify what is unified. By itself, the category, like the judgment, is also formal, for if the category, simply as the category, specified what it unified, it would not be a concept, since concepts without intuitions are empty. In sum, we may say that it is through the study of formal judgment, and formal reasoning in general, that Kant finds his clue to discovering the a priori categories inherent in the Understanding.

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314 Here we might note that defining the concept as a ‘representation of a representation’ renders conceptual determination a higher order determination in itself. If, on the other hand, we were to model concepts on intuitions, as the empiricists are inclined, we would reject higher order representations in principle, for it undermines the immediacy of intuitive determination.

315 Note that here I am not just talking about categories, but the way categories relate to objects. They can only apply to a posteriori intuitions through something that is both a priori and contains a posteriori content, such as the pure intuitions of time. As it turns out, the pure intuition of time will provide the categories with determinate content—but this is not a posteriori. For if it were, then the categories would not have universal, necessary application to the a posteriori.
Kant posits four general headings, under which three forms of judgment are included: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Modality. ‘Universal’, ‘Particular’, and ‘Singular’ fall under Quantity, ‘Affirmative’, ‘Negative’, and ‘Infinite’ fall under Quality, ‘Categorical’, ‘Hypothetical’, and ‘Disjunctive’ fall under Relation, and ‘Problematic’, ‘Assertoric’, and ‘Apodictic’ fall under Modality. Note that ‘universal’ is a form of judgment. Since for Kant the a priori categories are to be discovered as functions of judgment, we must be careful not to identify the concept with universality as such, since the universal is only one form of judgment. Still, as we proceed we shall find Kant appealing to such terms in his general description of conceptual determination. Since each form of judgment contains a distinct function of unity, Kant simply reads off each category from each form of judgment. ‘Unity’, ‘Plurality’, and ‘Totality’ fall under Quantity, ‘Reality’, ‘Negation’, and ‘Limitation’ fall under Quality, ‘Inherence and Subsistence’, ‘Cause and Effect’, and ‘Community’ fall under Relation, and ‘Possibility’, ‘Existence’, and ‘Necessity’ fall under Modality. The third category in each list may be derived from the first two. For example, ‘totality’ is plurality considered as a unity. Though Kant writes that he is not concerned with defining the categories in this deduction, I hope to show that without appealing to a priori intuition Kant could not have defined the categories anyhow.

The Metaphysical Deduction of the categories is thereby exhausted with this procedure. With his table of categories in hand, Kant criticizes Aristotle for having included forms of Sensibility, i.e. space and time in his list of categories. The mistake is fundamental, since Aristotle appears to be treating space and time as categories, not intuitions. Moreover, Kant complains that Aristotle did not possess a singular principle for the deduction of his

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316 Quality and quantity contain forms of judgment that relate subject to predicate, whereas the hypothetical and disjunctive judgments under Relation connect judgments to one another, and Modality expresses the way a subject relates to the predicate, i.e. ‘actually’, ‘possibly’, or ‘necessarily’.
categories. Because he lacked a principle, Aristotle collected them haphazardly, or what is the same, via empirical description. Kant is systematic insofar as he derives his categories from a single principle: the table of judgments.

Having elucidated the Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories, we should proceed to re-construct Kant’s argument that the categories in the Understanding apply to intuition. This argument is none other than the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories. Before preceding this most significant portion of the Critique, we ought to briefly outline the difference between formal and transcendental logic, since it is the table of formal judgments that provides Kant his clue for the deduction of the categories.

We have already discussed how Mill distinguished formal logic from truth logic. But it is important to note that this difference had been firmly in place in the Western tradition long before Mill. By the time of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, Aristotelian logic had already undergone some fundamental changes. Aristotle’s logic is inherently a logic of truth, whose terms are inseparable from beings that exist. For example, syllogisms are not formal, but establish why particular things have particular attributes. It answers questions like “Why do people laugh?” or “why do birds sing?” Precisely to the extent that logic is inseparable from truth, Aristotle’s logic is not formal. Though the reception of Aristotelian syllogistic remained retained much of the central tents of Aristotelian logic, its ontological significance had long been shed. By the time of Kant the tradition had rendered logic per se an inherently formal discipline. Kant’s term for the content-free system of logic he inherited from the tradition ‘formal logic’.

Formal Logic is the science of thinking per se, without regard to what is thought. As a science of thinking that does not take into account the content of thinking, formal logic ultimately rests on the principle of non-contradiction, which in Kant’s terms, states that
contradictory predicates cannot be attributed to the same subject. The principle of non-contradiction, which is interchangeable with the principle of identity and excluded middle, gives a criterion of consistency. Though a proposition may be consistent, it does not follow that it is true, since a proposition may be consistent with itself and other propositions, yet still be false. For example, the claim that “unicorns are grazing on the lawn outside Peabody Hall” is not inconsistent with the claim that “the unicorns grazing on the lawn are not eating each other”, but this does not mean that there are unicorns eating grass or peacefully getting along. This possibility shows that the principle of non-contradiction does not allow us to determine what is true, but at best, which judgments are candidates for truth. A logic that only determines the candidates for truth possesses a greater domain of application than any logic of truth, since the universe of discourse concerns what is logically possible, not what exists or necessarily exists. What is logically possible does not inform us about what is or what must necessarily be or what is the same, what exists essentially, only what could be. More exactly, formal logic tells us what the conditions of logical possibility are. For the system of formal logic, ‘essence’, that whose existence is necessary, is no longer an essential moment in the logical system.

In contrast to formal logic, Kant introduces how own truth logic, which he calls transcendental logic. Unlike formal logic, transcendental logic does not abstract from all content whatsoever. Instead, transcendental logic comprehends the necessary conditions for the possibility of experience. More concretely, transcendental logic grasps the categories that are necessary for any object of experience to be an object of experience. Such a logic could not abstract from all content without ceasing to be what it is: the logical form of object-hood as such. Since transcendental logic thinks what is universal and necessary to being an object of experience,

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317 Note the epistemic, and non-ontological formulation of the principle. Kant leaves out the qualifiers ‘in the same respect’ and ‘at the same time’.
it does exclude all empirical cognition. For insofar as any empirical cognition is not universal and necessary to any object of experience as such, but contingently related thereto, no empirical concept is entailed in the concept of the object as an object. Transcendental logic determines the truth as such, or better, what is true in every experience of an object as such. The content of Transcendental Logic does specify what logical structures in the Understanding are necessary for the possibility of experience. In this way, Transcendental Logic specifies how logical structures of subjectivity constitute the object.

When faced with the question, ‘what is truth?’, the formal logician is at a loss for words. Since truth is the correspondence of the concept with the object, and formal logic abstracts from all content, no general mark may be found for the correspondence of the concept with the object within the canon of formal logic itself. Indeed, if rationalist’s aim is to grasp the truth as such through thinking alone, yet reason is merely a formal discipline, it appears that truth itself cannot be grasped by thinking alone. Rationalism cannot conceive of truth as long as it considers reason to be a merely formal discipline. Thus, in order for transcendental logic to establish a priori truth, or what is the same, truth itself, a priori categories must have a priori content that is not culled from the categories themselves.

Since a priori concepts are empty in themselves, in order for them to function transcendently, and not merely formally, they must have a content that corresponds to their a priori character. Since the categories cannot be their own source of content, the only a priori content available for the categories is the a priori manifold given in the intuitions of space and time. In order to develop the content of transcendental logic, Kant must show (i) that the categories apply to the pure intuitions of space and time and (ii) how the categories apply to intuitions. The Transcendental Doctrine on the Power of Judgment shows (ii), while the Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding proves (i). Viewed from this perspective, it is
clear that the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories provide the groundwork for transcendental logic. In sum, the function of the Transcendental Deduction ought to be expressed in two ways: subjectively and objectively. Subjectively, the Transcendental Deduction seeks to give the *a priori* categories objective content by bringing pure intuitions under the categories. Objectively, the Transcendental Deduction seeks to transform indeterminate intuitions into objects in virtue of the application of the categories.

The function of the *Transcendental Analytic* in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is to set the limits for the proper application of categories. Upon demarcating the proper sphere of application for the categories to the contents given in Sensibility, all application beyond Sensibility is *verboten*, a category error. When reason treats formal logic as an *organon*, instead of a canon for thinking, it assumes that it can determine what is true irrespective of any appeal to intuition. When formal reason treats itself this way, it fails to understand itself and its limits. *Thinking as such cannot determine what is true independently of intuition.* Kant deems any logic that treats itself as an organon for truth, what Kant terms ‘Dialectic’, a *logic of illusion*, since it treats formal principles as though they were sufficient for the determination of their own content or their own truth. The insistence that i) *formal logic is not an organon for truth* reflects Kant’s demand that ii) *no category ought to be applied beyond the limits of Sensibility.*

Kant’s great insight from which the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories begins is the *original synthetic unity of apperception*. The original synthetic unity of apperception states that the *I think* must *be able* to accompany all of my representations. If there were a representation which the I think could not accompany, then that representation either would not be, or at the very least, it would not be *for me*. We might consider intuitions that I do not explicitly take as mine as being *potential contents*. The I think is not itself an intuitive content, for it is the condition for the possibility that any intuition is given as my own. If it were an
intuitive content, it would presuppose itself. Instead, the I think constitutes the most basic universal logical relation in which every representation must be able to stand in order to be for me.\(^{318}\) Since the I think must be able to accompany all of my representations, the I must be able to attribute representations to itself in order for the representation to be possible. Since the I must be able to attribute the representation to itself, the I think is an activity of self-consciousness.\(^{319}\) All intuitive content, a priori or a posteriori, must be subsumed under the activity of self-consciousness in order for it to be possible. Indeed, self-consciousness is the condition for the subject and object: no awareness of the object is possible unless that awareness is capable of being self-aware; no object can be for me unless it can be for self-consciousness.

Why is this principle called the original synthetic unity of apperception? Synthesis is the activity of combining various representations into one cognition. If we return to the question from which Kant’s inquiry begins, we will remember that the issue at hand concerns the possibility of the givenness of particulars to consciousness. Issued in Kant’s terminology, in order for any intuitive content (particulars) to be given to consciousness, intuitions must be combined into one consciousness by the I think. Without the I think it would be impossible for consciousness to have any empirical access to particular empirical objects, intuitions, or appearances. The act of the I think is original, for there is no more

\(^{318}\) Though there is significant dispute about the degree to which the account of Kant’s synthetic unity of apperception is psychological, I only mean to claim here that the I is not itself identical with any intuitive content within merely temporal experience. Kant himself accepts this claim as a premise against Descartes. Because the I has no intuitive content of its own, in order for the self to know itself as persisting in time, it must appeal to something enduring in space. For this reason, I do not take my claim here to be very controversial. Regarding the more general debate, it is clear to me that empirical self-consciousness identifies itself with a particular intuitive content. Naturally, the synthetic unity of apperception is not empirical in this sense, for it is the condition of the possibility of such a consciousness. For this reason, I tend to view the synthetic unity of apperception as the ‘subject as such’ whatever it may be, not empirical self-consciousness.

\(^{319}\) By self-consciousness here I do not mean to say that consciousness thinks itself as the synthetic unity of apperception, for this would make the synthetic unity of apperception an object. In principle, we shall see that this is a problem. I only mean that consciousness must be able to ascribe the object to itself if it is to be an object of consciousness. In this act, consciousness relates itself to itself even if the transcendental investigator does not yet know that.
fundamental principle of unity for consciousness. Without the combination of intuitions into
one awareness, consciousness would not be of anything, or what is the same—no awareness
would be given. Thus, the principle is synthetic and original. Indeed, only when
representations are given in one consciousness can they function as resources for the
analysis of what they contain. To put this in Kant’s terminology, *the analytic unity of apperception
is contingent upon the synthetic unity of apperception*. I can only recognize my self in the intuitions I
encounter, i.e. analyze the I out of each in an act of abstraction, if I have already synthesized
them all into one awareness. We can lay it down as a principle that *synthesis precedes analysis*.

If Kant’s sole contribution had been the synthetic unity of apperception, it would
have been sufficient to reduce empiricism to rubble. The basic failure of the empiricist
paradigm is the fact that they lacked insight into the original synthetic unity of apperception.
Again, empiricism does not explain the giveneness of particulars to consciousness. Instead
they take it as an assumption for deriving concepts. Kant remedies this by introducing the
synthetic unity of apperception in virtue of which particulars are given to consciousness.
One cannot help but be astonished that empiricism has undergone as many rebirths as it has
since Kant! We should note here that Kant’s I think is not that of Descartes, for Descartes
treats the I think as something he intuits in introspection. For Descartes, the I is some
particular psychological content, an intuition, that appears before the thinking I. Of course
Hume cannot discover the intuitive content of this I, because there is none. This, though,
does not mean that there is no self, as Hume inferred, since the I, in its activity of thinking,
is an act of synthesis, not an object of empirical intuition. Looking for the I as though it
were an object of consciousness is to inquire ‘after the fact’ as it were. It is to have the I
without knowing one has the I.
Since the I think is an act of combination of the side of subjectivity, it is not an act of synthesis that is already given ready-made in the object. Moreover, Sensibility, as a faculty of receptivity, can only receive intuitions, but it cannot combine them, since the latter is an act of spontaneity, which is the sole domain of the Understanding. Thus, the Understanding is responsible for the original synthetic unity of apperception. Having established that the intuitive content of Sensibility is only given to consciousness by the synthesis of Understanding, Kant argues that the categories he laid bare in the Metaphysical Deduction are the means by which intuitions are brought to the synthetic unity of apperception. Let us consider the argument.

Since it is the Understanding which brings intuitions under the synthetic unity of apperception, we must consult the Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories in order to discover what it is that brings intuitions to the synthetic unity of apperception. The Understanding contains the table to judgments, as enumerated above. Judgments are activities of synthesis, for they combine different representations, whether they are intuitions or concepts, under a common one. Since judgments exhaust the activities of Understanding, it is only in virtue of judgment that the Understanding can bring intuitions to one consciousness. Since categories are the logical functions in judgments, categories are that in virtue of which judgments bring different representations under a common one. Since it is judgment that brings intuition to the synthetic unity of apperception, and categories are the logical functions in judgment, it follows that the categories necessarily apply to intuition as that in virtue of which intuition is brought to the synthetic unity of apperception.²²⁰

Because the preceding argument is so abstract, it is quite easy to misunderstand the implication and meaning of the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories. Let us first

²²⁰ See paragraph 20, B143 of Kant’s CPR.
note what is extraordinary about Kant’s deduction. Categories are not derived analytically, but are the conditions for the possibility of analysis. It is not just the representations that are subsumed under the categories, but that the synthesis of representations is subsumed under the categories. Kant’s contribution to our understanding of Understanding is profound by showing that Categories are principles of synthesis that make objects possible. The modern narrative concerning abstract universals and classes begins from the givenness of the particulars, but is silent concerning their origin.321

‘That categories apply to intuition’ does not specify how categories apply to intuition. ‘How categories apply to intuitions’ is the domain of the Analytic of Principles. Still, we should make some distinctions that help illuminate the latter issue. As we noted earlier in our discussion of the limitation of the Transcendental Aesthetic, the form of Sensibility in itself is indeterminate. Since the categories subsume the content of Sensibility under themselves, the content of Sensibility becomes determined by the categories of the Understanding so that universal, necessary relations appear in the intuition. By subsuming the individual intuitions under the universal, the intuition acquires the identity of the categorial determination. In other words, the category becomes immanent in the indeterminate intuitive content, thereby rendering the indeterminate manifold determinate. Each act of judgment applies a distinct category to the intuition. Since each judgment applies a distinct category, each category gives a distinct determinate form to the matter of intuition. Accordingly, though the categories as a whole make experience possible, they give as many distinct determinate forms to the intuition as there are categories.

321 In the Critique of Judgment, Kant distinguishes between reflective and determinative judgment. Here I mean determinative judgment, since it does not begin with a particular and look for a concept, as in reflective judgment.
Kant’s term for the intuition rendered categorically determinate, i.e. unified and differentiated, by the application of the categories, is ‘object’. The categorial determination of the intuitions is nothing more than the universal, necessary relations of intuitions to one another. Put more simply, the object is the categorial unity in the relations of the intuitions. The object of experience as such is not a mere intuition, but a product of the co-operation of Sensibility and Understanding. Cognition is the state of the subject resulting from this co-operation.\textsuperscript{322} For Kant, it consists in the determinate relation of representations to an object.\textsuperscript{323} What does this mean? By establishing necessary connections amongst the various intuitions given in Sensibility, the intuitions are related to an object, since intuitions are placed into necessary connection with one another, though they are not identical to objects. Though the intuitions vary, the necessary connections obtaining between them remain the same: this necessary connection is what makes the object of experience what it is. The necessary connections obtaining between the intuitions are the invariables in experience, the objectivity of experience. Put in more traditional language, intuition is the matter differentiated by the category, the form, though we should be careful to note that ‘form’ here has neither teleological connotations, nor connotations of a genus and species. To the contrary, Form is a necessary connection. Intuitions become cognitions when they are put into necessary determinate relations with other intuitions. Through the determinacy given by the Understanding, intuitions represent different sides of the self-same unity obtaining between them. Thus, by being set into necessary unity with other intuitions, intuitions are set into relation to objects.\textsuperscript{324}

\textsuperscript{322} Since cognition necessarily involves intuition, yet thinking can be utterly formal, Kant does not identify cognition with thinking. Thinking is necessary for cognition, but not sufficient.

\textsuperscript{323} Cognition is ‘Erkenntnis’.

\textsuperscript{324} The term ‘object’ offers many opportunities for confusion. Regarding the Transcendental Deduction, the term means the determinate unity of intuition. More specifically, the object is the necessary connection of the
The preceding account of the categorial determination of intuition gives what Kant calls the *objective unity of self-consciousness*. This should be well distinguished from the subjective unity of self-consciousness. *Subjective* unity of self-consciousness is a consciousness of a *particular sensuous* representation as one’s own, e.g. the representation of two objects existing simultaneously. In conjunction with this distinction, we should briefly mention the difference between the synthetic act of the imagination and conceptual synthesis. The latter gives a necessary form, while the former only combines the intuition contingently. For example, we apprehend an empirical object as one object by running through all the intuitive moments that constitute our cognition of it. To take an example from Husserl, if I imagine myself walking around a table, then I cognize the unity of the object in virtue of cognizing consistent changes in my perception of the table, whether this be the spatial or color content of the perception. Still, no necessary connection is implied by the imagination. Experience is still possible even if I never cognize the form of a table.

No subjective unity of self-consciousness (identification of the self with an empirical representation) is possible without the objective unity of self-consciousness (the universal, necessary relations amongst intuitions) given by the original synthetic unity of apperception. Because empirical self-consciousness (subjective unity of self-consciousness) is only possible if we have determinate representations, and the synthetic unity of apperception makes it possible for us to have determinate representations, the synthetic unity of apperception is a necessary condition for any empirical self-consciousness. Since the objective unity of self-consciousness is a necessary condition for any subjective unity, we may make some broad claims concerning the possibility of experience. To Hume’s chagrin, since experience is

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intuitions. We should make sure not to identify object with ‘thing’. The necessary connection constitutes the objectivity of experience, or what is ‘objective’ about it. In what follows I will give an example of objectivity from the Second Analogy of Experience.
cognition through connected perceptions, the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories makes experience possible. Moreover, insofar as experience is identified with empirical cognition, every empirical cognition, i.e. perception or image of a particular sensible object, is dependent on the categories.

In some respects, Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* is just as devastating for Rationalism as it is for Empiricism. We have already demonstrated how the Transcendental Aesthetic and Transcendental Analytic have undermined the idea that the empiricist concept of class-membership constitutes the ground of experience. Of course, family resemblances and abstract universals still apply to the matter of experience. Besides functioning as a model for Hegel’s concept of the concept, the synthetic unity of apperception also provides Kant a basis upon which to criticize the way that the concept has been employed throughout the tradition, namely as *intellectual intuition*. Interestingly, Hegel and Kant learn different lessons from the Synthetic Unity of Apperception. Hegel will show how the logical form that underlies the synthetic unity of apperception makes intellectual intuition possible. Though there are many respects in which Kant undermines the Rationalist tradition, and in particular Descartes, let us proceed to discuss how Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* integrates and critiques concept of intellectual intuition, as well as his critique of the Cogito, in order that we might begin to get some clarity regarding this disagreement between Kant and Hegel.

Since cognition is the result of the application of categories to intuition, there is no possibility to cognize what transcends the faculty of Sensibility. More specifically, there are no other objects for us to think except those that are given in Sensibility. Accordingly, Kant limits the application of categories to the field of Sensibility. Without the intuition given in Sensibility, concepts remain empty of any content whatever, as they have nothing to which they could be applied. For this reason, when a category is applied beyond experience, there is
no content available for the determination of the concept. Instead, one is forced to determine it merely negatively, i.e. in respect to what it is not.\footnote{For example, since God is not given as an object of experience, theology has often resorted to merely negative determinations of the concept of God.} In order to draw the limit on what can be cognized, Kant distinguishes between noumena and phenomena. A noumenon is a thing \textit{in itself}, irrespective of its relation to us, while phenomena are constituted by what is given to us, i.e. appearances. Since we can only know what is given in Sensibility, we can only know phenomena, but have no access to what it is that exists in itself without relation to our form of receptivity. The epistemic function of the noumena is to set a limit to what is knowable. This concept is \textit{problematic} because we do not know what it is that limits our knowledge. But what is important is that whatever it is that is in itself is not accessible to us. Surely, this distinction seems to be implied by the original unity of apperception, which limits what is accessible by the modifier ‘for me’.\footnote{Michael Bauer, at the most recent meeting of the Metaphysical Society of America, has suggested that we interpret the noumena as the \textit{indeterminate manifold}. Simply as the indeterminate, the manifold is always outstanding and is never cognized. There is always a further division that can be made in the manifold. Though this is an interesting hypothesis, I think there is some work to be done in order to integrate freedom into this concept of the noumena.} This seems implied exactly because what I do not have access to is what is in itself. Though we do not know whether there is something that is independently of me, at least we know that if there were something that existed independently of me, I would not be able to know it.

The limitation of the knowable to appearances has another important subjective correlate in the concept of intellectual intuition. We have traced the concept of intellectual intuition from medieval to modern thought. Since it is intellectual intuition that constitutes the spirit of Rationalism (both medieval and modern) Kant’s critique of intellectual intuition radically undermines the spirit of Rationalism. If we believe with Kant that concepts without intuitions are empty, and intuitions without concepts are blind, then concepts as concepts do not provide their \textit{own} manifold. Just as Plato and Plotinus before him, Kant separates the
principles of unity (universal) and difference (the particular), except here they are posited as faculties. Understanding is a faculty of Concepts (what we have been calling universals), and Sensibility is the faculty of intuition (particulars). Though Kant posits two separate principles of unity and difference, he nonetheless understands one key assumption endemic to the problem of participation. *Without connection to the particular the universal cannot be given any determinate objective content.* Any account of truth, the correspondence of the concept with the object, will also be an account of the content of the concept as such.\(^{327}\) Accordingly, Kant insists that the intuitive content of experience gives the categories *sense*.\(^{328}\) Another way of stating this is to say that the concept cannot be defined apart from its application, i.e. in a judgment.\(^{329}\)

Since the thinking of the concept does not ensure the existence of the concept, the Understanding cannot have the power of intellectual intuition. In contrast to the human understanding, Kant introduces intellectual intuition as a limit concept, analogous to noumena, which is problematic in a similar way. Since our Understanding does not provide its own manifold of intuition, *thinking cannot produce its own objects*.\(^{330}\) A divine understanding would provide its own manifold of intuition simply in virtue of thinking alone. What this manifold would be, one cannot exactly say, except that the divine understanding, in virtue of thinking alone, gives rise to its own particulars, and thereby thinks its objects without appeals to any additional faculty, such as Sensibility. The mistake of Rationalism is to confuse our understanding with that of God, i.e. to think that thinking alone is sufficient for the comprehension of objects. Instead, the empiricists were right to limit the thinkable to

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\(^{327}\) This is why Kant calls the transcendental logic a ‘logic of truth’.

\(^{328}\) Also, Kant defines the category as *that which applies to experience*. In other words, he refuses to define them independently of their application to experience.

\(^{329}\) In the fourth chapter we will reconstruct Hegel’s argument that it is inherently problematic to treat the elucidation of the concept as identical to the elucidation of its application.

\(^{330}\) Note that in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, willing does produce its own duties from itself alone, without regard to sensible content.
experience, but they did not understand how the *a priori* could have a role despite that restriction. By requiring an external source of content, Kant renders the power of the concept merely discursive, and banishes intellectual intuition from realm of the concept, instead demoting its status to that of a problematic limit concept. ‘Intellectual intuition’ signifies the possibility of intuiting the object merely intellectually, i.e. the intellect would be sufficient for grasping objectivity. It would have the activity of both the Understanding and Sensibility. Naturally, we do not know what this objectivity is; if we did, it would not be a problematic concept. If we were able to intuit objects intellectually, in this case we would have no need for Sensibility. Likewise, we would have no need for the categories, since their basic function is to bring the contents of intuition to the synthetic unity of apperception. Indeed, we would grasp the object independently of how the object appeared to us, namely independently of their givenness in Sensibility: our grasp would be *noumenal*. Here it becomes evident that the concept of the noumena and intellectual intuition have been wedded together: the noumena is the object of an understanding that intuits what it thinks. We do not intuit in virtue of thinking, thus we do not grasp noumena.

Kant’s appropriation of intellectual intuition modifies Augustine’s use of the term. In Augustine, as in Kant, God’s thinking of the universal is that in virtue of which the content of the universal exists. Yet, for Augustine, on the one hand, the creation of the content of the universal is separate from its existence in some intuitive content. Kant, on the other hand, suggests that God’s thinking of the universal would generate the content of the universal in such wise that the intuitive content would also be given. This difference may in fact stem from Kant’s insistence that the objective content of categories cannot be thought independently of some intuitive base, whereas the more Platonic approach of Augustine rejects this thesis. It is Kant who finally puts a halt to the employment of intellectual
intuition in the Rationalist tradition stemming from medieval arguments by insisting on the
necessity of intuitive content for the objectivity of thinking.

Since thinking is not sufficient for the producing of the object of thought, one
cannot think the I think and thereby arrive at a cognition of any manifold or content
corresponding with the I think. Thus, Descartes’ Cogito falls victim to Kant’s criticism, since
it is there that Descartes attempts to derive knowledge of the particular I by thinking alone.
Indeed, Hume is correct to point out that no I can be found in introspection. What this
points to is the fact that the I has no intuitive content except a relative empirical content.
Instead, it is a mere logical form signifying a universal connection of representations in one
consciousness. To insist that the I is a subject that is not a predicate is not to cognize it as an
object. This is a formal description that does not inform us about what the subject is.
Moreover, Kant argues that Idealism cannot infer the existence of the I before it has secured
knowledge of space. When I think about the I, and indeed, engage in any introspection, I
must be able to represent time to myself. Kant argues that the representation of time as a
permanent whole cannot be given in internal experience, since no self-identical, persisting
intuition is given in time by which it may be represented. Instead, we can only represent time
as a whole by representing something permanent in time. Only the persistence of matter in
space provides us with the representation by which the persistence of time, and thereby the
persistence of the I over time may be represented. So, for example, in order to represent
time, I need to be able to draw a line, since I can only think the passage of time on analogy
with space. Thus, in order to cognize myself in time, I must already have knowledge of
external things.\footnote{In \textit{The Living Mind}, Richard Dien Winfield argues that not only must one have spatial cognition before one
can represent oneself in inner intuition, but one’s mind must also be \textit{embodied}.} Descartes, therefore, gets the order of cognition wrong, since we must
already be certain of the external world before we can represent the I to ourselves as
something persisting over time.

In the work of our great teacher Plato, Kant finds an excellent example of *Dialectic*,
the logic of illusion. According to Kant, Plato employs the formal principle of non-
contradiction as a *sufficient* measure for what is true. Plato argues that what fails to be
consistent *fails to be*. Anything that is plural cannot be consistent with itself. Thus, the only
thing that can be is the One. In his Transcendental Dialectic, Kant employs the
*Transcendental Doctrine of the Elements* as a measure for the critique of pure reason, i.e. reason
that applies itself without regard to intuition. Let us briefly foray into one of the subdivisions
in the Transcendental Dialectic: the *Ideal of Pure Reason*.

Modern Rationalism, as exhibited in the philosophy of Descartes and Spinoza,
preserves existential implication in self-consciousness and the concept of God. Regarding
the latter, it is in the Ontological Argument that existential implication retains its appeal: If
God is God, then God exists. With Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, the last vestige of
existential implication characteristic of Modern Rationalism disappears, a logical
consequence demanded by the transformation of logic into a merely formal system.

Kant raises three objections to the Ontological Argument. A contradiction is a
logical relation that obtains between propositions, e.g. ‘every man is mortal’, ‘not every man
is mortal’. In order to have a contradiction in which contradictory predicates are attributed
to the same subject, one must already presuppose a subject to exist. The question concerning

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332 I find this story somewhat implausible, given my interpretation of Plato as a philosopher committed to the
duality of principles.
333 Though of central import to Kant’s project, the *Antinomies* and *Paralogisms* must be passed over for brevity’s
sake. By focusing on the Transcendental Ideal we shall be better able to focus on one of the main themes of
our discourse: existential implication.
334 Here we ought to note two senses of ‘possible’: formal logic determines what is logically possible, i.e. what is
consistent. Transcendental logic determines what is *really possible*, i.e. what could be an object. Kant would allow
that ‘God’ is possible in the former, but not in the latter sense, since God is not a possible object of experience.
the existence of God is a question concerning the existence of the subject ‘God’. If, by hypothesis, there is no God, then there cannot be a contradiction, for there would be no subject possessing contradictory predicates. So, it appears that the Ontological Argument must assume the existence of the subject to generate the contradiction—which begs the question.

Kant notes that the proponent can easily respond by arguing that there is at least one subject that could not fail to be without a contradiction— and that is God. Still, even this response cannot help but be circular. For, ‘God exists’ is either an analytic claim or a synthetic one. If ‘God exists’ were an analytic claim, then ‘exists’ would be a mere repetition of what is already stated in the subject ‘God’, rendering the claim a ‘miserable’ tautology. If ‘God exists’ were a synthetic claim, which Kant thinks it must be, since it concerns existence, we could not establish that God ‘exists’ by the employment of a merely formal principle, since analysis cannot, by itself, produce a synthetic proposition.335

Despite these arguments, the proponent of the Ontological Argument could argue that ‘God exists’ is a synthetic claim that is established by analysis alone. After all, this is the claim of Rationalism. In response, Kant makes a distinction that he thinks has gone long overlooked, and allowed reason to neglect the bounds of its proper application. ‘Existence’ (Sein) cannot be analyzed out of a subject as a predicate, since ‘existence’ is not a predicate. Note that here we are discussing existence, not being. The latter concerns the ‘what it is’ of something, not the ‘that it is’, expressed by the former term.336 When one thinks the concept

335 See Kant’s CPR, B622-B625.
336 Earlier I argued that ‘being’ ought to be identified with the ‘what it is’. When we ask ‘what is piety?’ for example, we are asking about the what it is to be of piety—what makes piety be what it is. I have chosen ‘existence’ for Sein here i) because this is the traditional rendering of the term in Kant studies, but also because ii) qua the ‘that it is’ it draws a nice contrast with the ‘what it is’ that signifies some categorical content. We cannot just limit existence to determinate being, for categories have determinate being despite not having some intuitive fulfillment, which Kant identifies with existence. Concepts have being as concepts, but for Kant this is
of something, e.g. one hundred dollars, and one thinks one hundred dollars that exists, ‘that it exists’ does not add anything to the content of the concept. Whether the concept of ‘one hundred dollars’ is or is not, the content of the concept contains the same content, i.e. ‘one hundred dollars’. To state that a being exists is not to predicate existence to an existing being, but instead it is to posit the subject as such. This is the function of the existential quantifier ‘there is some x’. Some subject must exist in order for it to have predicates. The copula ‘is’ is a necessary condition for predication, e.g. ‘x is’, but it is not a predicate itself. If existence were a predicate, then we could establish a synthetic claim, a claim about existence, merely from an analysis of the subject itself. Thus, the distinction between analysis and synthesis implies that existence cannot be analyzed out of the subject. If Kant allowed existence to be a predicate, the distinction between analysis and synthesis would collapse, as would his ban on intellectual intuition and our capacity to know noumena. For sure, Kant’s separation of the principles of universality and particularity engenders the non-predicative character of existence.

What the previous argument illuminates is that concepts, in themselves, contain merely what is possible. The actual one hundred dollars does not contain any more conceptual content than merely what is contained in the mere possibility of one hundred dollars. What this does not mean is that if I have the concept of one hundred dollars that I have one hundred actual dollars. In fact, Kant’s argument implies that this is false. The point is simply that existence cannot be analyzed out of concepts, whether they are instantiated in intuition or not, since the concept itself only contains what is possible, not what is actual. If existence were a predicate, then it could be analyzed out of the subject. But, if we allowed existence to be a predicate, we would undermine the very possibility of truth. For, if the actual object contained just to say that they have some logical content, i.e. as determinate concepts. Kant’s point is that having intuitive fulfillment is not itself a predicate.
more conceptual content than the concept itself, the concept would not be able to correspond with the object. Why? In order for a concept to correspond with the object, the concept must find itself in the object, i.e. be immanent in the object. If there were no concept immanent in the object, the concept would not have anything with which it could correspond, since the only content would be non-conceptual. In order for the conceptual to correspond with what is non-conceptual, the non-conceptual actual content cannot contain any more conceptual content than the concept by itself. Otherwise, all hope for truth is lost. This illuminates something about objective truth, namely that it is the correspondence of the concept with itself, or the self-correspondence of the concept in content foreign to the concept, in Kant’s terminology, ‘intuition’.  

Though the problem of participation appeared for the first time in ancient Greek philosophy, it has not ceased to perplex even modern philosophers. We should first note that the problem of participation, as it is formulated in ancient thought, concerns how sensible things could participate in ideal entities. Since Kant does not treat concepts as things, Kant’s transcendental philosophy is not subject to the problem formulated in that sense. Nonetheless, a problem of similar form does arise in Kant. Given the fact of the transcendental deduction, a new problem arises. Since pure concepts are not empirical, as pure concepts they cannot appear in any empirical intuition. I do not mean to claim that they do not appear in the relations of all empirical intuitions, but only that they cannot appear by themselves as categories, as the pure contents of the Understanding. Thus, pure concepts are heterogeneous with empirical intuitions. No category, as a category, can appear in the empirical

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337 See Kant’s CPR, 567, B624-628. We shall have more opportunity to discuss the Kant’s concept of the transcendental ideal in more depth when discuss Heidegger’s critique of onto-theology.
intuition. But, in order to subsume the latter under the former, they must be *homogeneous* with one another. Put succinctly, *how* is the subsumption of intuitions under concepts possible, given that they are different in kind? In order for pure concepts to apply, what it applies to must be *pure*. Yet, in order for the category to apply to empirical intuitions, that to which the categories apply must also be *sensible*. At bottom, this is another, albeit different, version of the participation paradox: how can the pure relate to the sensible? In order for the categories to subsume empirical intuitions, a third term must mediate between the two, one which exhibits the purity of the category, and the impurity of the empirical intuition.

The *Transcendental Schema* provides the representation that makes possible the application of the category to empirical intuition. Since the categories do apply to intuitions, we should look in the *Transcendental Aesthetic* for the mediating factor. Not all empirical representations are given in space, since we have inner intuition, in which we intuit ourselves. But, all empirical intuitions are given in time, which is a condition for the possibility of the givenness of phenomena. Not only are all empirical intuitions given in time, but time itself is pure: it contains an *a priori* manifold. Thus, time fulfills the conditions required of the Schematism: it is both pure and contains a sensible manifold. As we stated earlier, the *a priori* categories, in order to acquire content, require a pure *a priori* manifold in order to fulfill them with content. Since each category is distinct, each category will require a distinct transcendental time-determination by which it applies to intuition. Indeed, we have no concrete understanding of the categories, i.e. regarding their content and application, unless we grasp the transcendental time determination that gives them content.

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339 For example, causality cannot be intuited in an empirical intuition, nor can it be derived from one, following Hume.
339 For the full list of the time determinations, see Kant, *CPR*, B182-B187.
340 Since my main goal is the illumination of the concept, I will not enumerate the transcendental time determinations contained in the *Transcendental Doctrine of the Power of Judgment*, but for clarity’s sake, I will provide
It is with the Schematism that Kant completes his project of setting the limits for the proper application of categories. Unfortunately, the Schematism not only brings to light the brilliance of Kant’s system but also uncovers its greatest weakness. Kant’s solution to the problem of participation follows Aristotle’s model. Aristotle’s solution requires a rejection of self-reference. Kant’s solution is similar: because the concept is a condition for the possibility of objectivity, if we were to ask ‘what makes the concept possible?’ we would be forced to answer that the ‘concept makes the concept possible’. This is absurd, for the concept would precede itself. Thus, though we hoped that Kant’s transcendental investigation would provide a novel approach to the question ‘what is the concept?’, unfortunately, the transcendental question cannot be applied to the concept itself without absurdity. The universal is not an instance of itself. If the universal could be an instance of itself, we would be permitted to inquire into the condition for the possibility of the concept. If the concept were an instance of itself, then it could be an object of cognition. As an object of cognition, we could ask about the condition for its possibility, since we can ask about the condition of any object of cognition. As a formal condition of inner intuition, every moment of time is necessarily determined by the moment that precedes it. Given this rule, it is also necessary that all appearances in time are necessarily determined by the appearances in the preceding time. Though, following Hume, we cannot necessarily connect any one appearance with another in the object, we can necessarily connect the appearances following the formal condition of inner intuition. Each appearance is thereby assigned a place in time a priori without which it would not be consistent with time itself. See Kant, CPR, 310, B244-B246.

341 If the concept were an instance of itself, presumably we would already know the condition for its possibility: namely itself.
namely to the manifold of intuition. If they were self-referential, then they would be objects on their own independently of the manifold of intuition.

What does this restriction on the question illuminate? It informs us that there is an absolute, epistemic separation of the sources of the principles of universality and particularity. With the rejection of self-reference comes the correlate position: since the universal is not an instance of itself, in order for particulars to be subsumed under universals, we must posit a separate source of particularity that is external to the universal itself. The universal, by itself, is empty of content, and is a merely formal unity of synthesis, which has no specific content besides being a category. Like Aristotle, neither pure Form (categories) nor pure Matter (pure intuition) is generable, that is, both the principles of universality and particularity are given. Again, if the categories were objects, they would be made possible by an antecedent set of categories, *ad infinitum*, placing us square in the Third Man problem. Kant stops the regress the same way Aristotle does: he rejects self-reference and posits two logically separate, yet metaphysically co-operating principles by which objectivity is formed. Unlike Aristotle, Kant’s rejection of self-reference entails a rejection of existential implication: ‘thinking’ is not an organon, but a mere canon for thought. Existential implication is banished along with the concept of intellectual intuition.342 From the perspective of Kant’s transcendental method, Aristotle only preserves existential implication because he, like Plato before him, still confuses the concept with intuition. By working out their absolute separation, the separation of the principles of universality and particularity, reflected in the difference between concepts and intuition, ensures that Forms never propagate again.

342 Note the correlation we established earlier in the modern section between the rejection of existential implication and the adoption of formal logic.
If we learned our lesson from Aristotle, however, we would see that the strength of
his solution is also its weakness. In the Third Man regress only one possibility for grasping
the unity of universal and particular is entertained: the universal itself must be a particular.
Aristotle challenges this, showing that there is another way of grasping the unity of universal
and particular as the form of matter. Although Thinghood has been transformed into
Universal Relation, the category is still the form of the intuition, whose content cannot be grasped
independently from the intuition. Like Aristotle, we cannot say what Form (category) is
objectively, without specifying the intuitive material that is rendered objective. Still, just as in
Aristotle’s thought, this novel solution integral to Kant’s thought generates the problem of the
differentia.

From the rejection of self-reference, and correlative, the separation of principles of
universality and particularity, we find Kant’s transcendental system subject to three
objections, each of which apply to transcendental philosophy as such: i) the problem of the
differentia, ii) the charge of psychologism, and iii) the problem of self-consciousness.

(i) Let us begin with the problem of the differentia. In Kant the problem appears as a
vicious circle. The circle is implied in the propositions ‘the concept cannot be defined apart
from its application’ and ‘the content of the universal cannot be specified independently on
the particulars’. In order for the intuition to become necessarily determinate, the concept
must grant objectivity and universal necessity to the intuition. But in order to grant
objectivity to the intuition, the concept must already possess some objective content in
virtue of which the intuitions become objectively determinate. This is clear from the outset:
categories grant objectivity to the intuitions. They are that in virtue of which objectivity is
granted. Yet, in themselves they are not objective. Since all knowing is of what is objective,
categories must be objective in themselves in order to be that which grants objectivity, and
in order for them to be known as such. But the objective sense of the category is granted to it only in its application to a priori time in the transcendental schemata. If the category can only have its objective content in its application, then it cannot have any objective determinate content independently of the intuition. Thus, if the objective content of the category is only given in the temporal schemata, then there cannot be any antecedent objective content in virtue of which objective determinacy is granted. Hence, either the categories are not already empty of objective content, and are thereby able to provide objective determinacy to the indeterminate intuitions, or the intuition is always already objectively determinate and there is no need for the Understanding to render it so. In the former case, Kant must give a basic tenet of his system, since it undermines the discursive function of the categories and the separation of universal from the particular. If the latter is the case, then Kant must also give up a basic function of his system, since even the form of the intuition is given independently of the activity of the Understanding. Formal Logic never comes under critical scrutiny. Instead, it is dogmatically imported in a modified form from the Aristotelian corpus. Kant’s system forms a vicious circle in which the question is begged concerning the determinacy of the concepts.

When we ask ‘what differentiates the category?’ we are always already begging the question. Put in other words, since the transcendental schemata grant the concept objective determinate content, it is only after the intuition has been rendered objectively determinate by the category that the objective determinacy of the category can be given. Thus, we find ourselves in vicious circle: we must assume the objective content of the category as a logical requirement for the possibility of the objective content of the category. What is striking is

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that we can only grasp the synthesis of the Understanding and Sensibility, while the faculties themselves grasped on their own are objectively indeterminate. One is an indeterminate, unqualified, sensible ‘manifold;’ the other is an ‘empty’ form, i.e. a merely logical content without objectivity. Transcendental philosophy must be able to grasp the conditions for the possibility of objective experience, and this is not possible when those conditions are themselves not objective. In order to avoid the question begging, one might just argue that Kant really just posits what he puts in the form of a proof. The most charitable way to think about Kant’s problem here is to admit that Kant’s system is a result of an enormous act of stipulation. This is most evident in the ‘Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories’ wherein he simply puts forward the twelve forms of judgment and the twelve categories. But it is also evident in Kant’s ‘derivation’ of the schemata. For example, Kant writes,

This Schematism of our Understanding with regard to appearances and their mere form is a hidden art in the depths of the human soul whose true operations we can divine from nature and lay unveiled before our eyes only with difficulty.\(^{344}\)

Like Aristotle, the rejection of self-reference leads Kant into a circle: either he begs the question or he simply stipulates the content he appears to prove. The objectivity in the intuitive content requires an antecedently given objective principle. Yet, there is no objective principle that precedes the objectivity in the intuition; only upon achieving objectivity in the intuition can the categories themselves be objective principles. Kant was right to complain that Aristotle did not derive his categories systematically. Indeed, the problem of the differentia in Aristotle showed that the content of the categories had to be stipulated empirically. In Kant, the stipulation occurs in many stages, including the Metaphysical Deduction and the Schemata.

\(^{344}\) Kant, *CPR*, B 180.
Let us proceed to the second objection, (ii) the problem of psychologism. Given the ban on self-reference, as well as the temporal restrictions on experience, the logical category as such, e.g. ‘cause and effect’ can never appear in experience. For example, the logical content of the category ‘substance’ expressed in the definition ‘that which is a subject but never a predicate’ never appears except as the objective relationship in the intuition. It does not appear in its sheer determinacy as a category. Accordingly, by applying the same principle, we may better understand Edmund Husserl’s criticism of Kant. Husserl charges Kant, and other neo-Kantian thinkers with the charge of psychologism. Let us ask the following question: in what way could the category, as a category, appear to the transcendental thinker?

Since the category is a condition for the possibility of experience, the category as a merely logically determinate category can never appear as an object for the transcendental thinker. For if it did, then there would be an infinite regress of categories. Thus, the transcendental thinker cannot know the categories as logical determinations of the understanding. If the thinker could think the category in its logical determinacy as a function of judgment, then the thinker could present an object to herself that would have no empirical or objective content, namely as a non-temporal and non-spatial content. Since all experience is temporally and spatially determined, there is no way to properly grasp the formal categories as formal. To account for this, Kant would need a new term besides ‘knowing’, ‘cognizing’ or ‘representing’. Indeed, if the transcendental thinker could cognize categories as such, and cognition requires intuition, the transcendental thinker would render the categories in themselves intuitive, which as merely logical determinations, they are not. Instead, only the synthesis of non-intuitive categories and non-categorial intuitions can be cognized. Of course, this is problematic, since no deduction of the categories is possible if the categories cannot appear to the transcendental thinker. The category must appear as the
objective synthesis, but not as the formal-logical principles of synthesis. How can Kant perform the transcendental deduction if he cannot think the principles of the deduction upon which objectivity rests? The category cannot appear as an object, since it is a condition for the possibility of objects. It cannot appear as an intuition, since it is a condition for the possibility of intuitions. If the categories cannot appear as an object, how could they appear to the transcendental thinker in his deduction of them?

Despite the inevitability of this regress, since the category as a category cannot appear as an object, in order for the category to appear to the transcendental thinker as an object it could only be rendered something it is not: a temporal intuition. The circularity of the problem of the differentia seems to imply that the concept only appears as an objectively temporal content, namely as ‘some time determination’ constitutive of the Schematism. Indeed, this appears to be what Kant himself advocates, when he identifies the content of the category with a temporal determination. He goes so far as to call the Schematism a ‘pure image’. By advocating for the temporal unity of the category, Kant appears to treat the category itself as a temporal content. Yet, the category, as a category, cannot be a temporal intuition, as we showed in the previous criticism, since the category is a condition for the possibility of the intuition. Thus, we are left with a very unhappy dichotomy: either the category is not known, since it does not appear at all, or it appears as a time determination, and as such it appears as a psychological content. As a temporal intuition, Kant appears to be conflating what he makes every effort to keep separate: concepts and intuitions. If the category does not appear, no thought of the category is possible. If the category does appear, the thought of the category is possible, but only at risk of identifying the concept with an intuition,

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345 For this, Kant needs categorical intuition, in which categories as merely logically determinate objects exist.
346 Give the citation. We may speculate that Kant would not disagree with our characterization of the problem, but with our characterization of his position as problematic.
not the universal that makes that intuition possible. If the category does appear, the category is identified with a psychological content, a ‘pure image’. To be sure, the category appears as a rule of the progression of time, but not as the category ‘cause’, for example, understood as a formal-logical content. This is problematic, for, as a psychological content it is an individual, changing content that exists as long as the content exists, but the universal is not reducible to any psychological content, for it is universal, i.e. it can exist irrespective of whether any particular content exists. Indeed, the universal ‘causality’ is not just thinkable in T1, but also T2. Indeed, despite the variation of times, I think the same concept. For sure, whether the manifold is pure or a posteriori, the temporal manifold, as successive, is always changing, and no content ever remains itself as the self-same content. Thus, the category, in itself, cannot be a temporal content, but the concept is what it is irrespective of the temporal changes. Kant gives no account of the concept as that which is experienced as indifferent to time. Instead, he makes time the condition for the possibility of appearance, thereby negating the possibility of the appearance of the concept. \(^{347}\)

Transcendental philosophy, whatever its form, works on the assumption that the activity of knowing is separate from the being of what is known. Otherwise, there would be no radical methodological revolution from Metaphysics to Epistemology implied by the transcendental method. Given the separation of the activity of knowing from the being of the known, it follows that (iii) the activity of knowing cannot be known.\(^{348}\) If the activity of knowing cannot be known, we cannot know, or cognize the Transcendental Analytic or the

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\(^{347}\) The circularity of the differentia problem points not only to the psychological appearance of categories, but it also points to the general problem of transcendental thought on the whole. We shall expound upon these further in Section III.

\(^{348}\) I first learned this criticism from lectures given by Dr. Richard Winfield during my stay at the University of Georgia as an undergraduate. The recognition that problems (i) and (ii) are concrete forms of (iii) is my own, however.
Aesthetic. The transcendental method undercuts itself. In fact, problems (i) and (ii) are concrete formulations of problem (iii).

The problem of the differentia, (i), states that the categories must always already presuppose their own objective determinacy. Since concepts are only objectively determinate when they are intuitive, and concepts must be objectively determinate in order to render intuitions objectively determinate, concepts must always already be objectively intuitive. Because the category must always already be intuitive, we also never grasp the category as a merely logical content, and are thereby barred from ever thinking the logical contents necessary for performing a deduction of the categories. In addition, because that which grants objectivity is not itself objective, that which is objective is separate from that which grants objectivity. Since what is objective is known, and what is not objective is not known, the problem of the differentia entails that there is a separation of knowing from the known. As a result, the category, which is not objective, cannot be known. Indeed, in order for Kant to know the category, he must posit that it is already objective independent of its relation intuition, as we have been insisting throughout our discussion of the problem of the differentia. We never arrive at knowledge of the activity of knowing as such. If the activity of knowing were not separate from what is known, it would be possible to know the categories.

Because we infinitely approach the category, but never get to its determinacy, the only determinacy at which we arrive is some particular, intuitive content. The problem of psychologism, (ii), states that the category cannot be known as the category, but only as a psychological content. Since the category cannot be known as it is, and must be identified with some intuitive content, the category itself must be identified with some psychological content. This, of course, must be made possible by another category, ad infinitum. If the
activity of knowing could know itself, then it would not be forced to posit the non-temporal category as a temporal psychological category.

On the whole, therefore, (i) the problem of the differentia and (ii) the problem of psychologism are two sides of one problem: Given (i), we infinitely strive for an objective category that never appears. Given (ii), the problem of psychologism, objectivity of the category in intuition entails that the category as a logical determination never appears. Thus, to be more precise, we should state that (iii) the problem of self-consciousness is the abstract form of problems (i) and (ii). If the activity of knowing were itself something known, then knowing would appear as an instance of knowledge. If knowledge were an instance of the activity of knowing, knowing would be self-referential. If knowing were known, then it would be both the universal knowing and a particular. Indeed, Kant must be committed to knowing the activity of knowing in order for him to complete his project, yet it is just the denial of this that constitutes the transcendental form of his project. Thus, it is the rejection of self-reference that entails these problems (i-iii). I have called (iii) the problem of self-consciousness since it is the inability of the transcendental philosopher to be conscious of himself and his own activity. Let us briefly discuss why these problems are constitutive of transcendental philosophy, and not merely problems for Kant.

By separating the knowing from the known, Kant cannot know his own transcendental activity. This is the problem of self-consciousness. Though the problem of self-consciousness is endemic to Kant, it is unclear how Kant could help but make the error. Let us briefly state the paradox in a way that is free from particular philosophical systems.

349 We have already encountered this same problem many times, the first of which we expressed in terms of truth in our discussion of Plato and Plotinus. In order for the universal to be true in itself, it must, in itself contain a unity of the universal and the particular. Thus, in order for there to be a unity of universal and particular (a truth) between the universal and the particular, there must already be a unity of universal and particular within the universal itself.
Either thinking knows itself immediately or in a mediate way. If the former, then it is subject and object in the same respect. But it can only be both on the pain of contradiction, for as subject it is not object and as object it is not subject. Upon assuming the difference between knowing and known, Kant cannot identify them. Indeed, because Kant assumes the validity of the principle of non-contradiction, he cannot identify them with each other. Thus, consciousness must separate itself into subject and object. Upon having distinguished itself as subject from object, it has rejected any attempt to know itself directly, for this would require identifying the subject with the object. Yet, if it never encounters itself as the subject, but only as the object, then it never grasps itself as itself. If this is the case, then it cannot encounter itself as itself, but only itself as something other than what it is. Thus, in the latter case it does not know itself either. We shall not tarry any longer with this paradox, but shall return to it once we have more precisely formulated the basic paradox governing the question concerning the being of the concept. Unsolved, this paradox undermines the possibility of self-consciousness by presupposing its impossibility, and reflects in different terms the fundamental paradox governing the question concerning the being of the concept.350

In the preface to the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein is adamant that in order to set a limit to what reason can know, it must transcend those limits, since to know the limit, one must know what the limit excludes.351 Accordingly, the ‘sickness’ of the philosopher consists exactly in his tendency to transcend the limits he imposes on himself. Wittgenstein notices

350 With the formulation of the paradox that I have chosen here, I do not wish to imply that in itself the distinction between thing/activity and subject/object is the same, though there is overlap in Descartes’ thought. For him, the subject is a thing, and the activity of thinking belongs to the thing. This activity becomes an object of thought, or something that belongs to the subject, not what underlies thought, when we think about the activity. On Descartes’ stipulations, we cannot identify the thing with the activity of the thing and its thoughts without undermining the basic distinction between subject and object.

something that Kant apparently fails to see: the inherent absurdity of transcendental thought. By drawing the distinction between knowing and what is known, the limit of what is knowable must be transgressed. Transcendental thought as such posits the separation of knowing from the known, in virtue of which problems (i-iii) arise.

The criticism I have raised against Kant is raised, albeit in another form, by Sartre against Husserl in the *Transcendence of the Ego*. Husserl, though he invents a novel methodology, phenomenology, his account of knowing nonetheless falls victim to the same problem as Kant. We should note that Husserl accuses Kant of psychologism. Accordingly, he takes measures to protect himself from falling victim to his criticism of Kant by providing a critique of categorial cognition, which Kant could not do.\(^\text{352}\) By subjecting the categories to a transcendental critique, Husserl inquires into *the transcendental conditions for the possibility of categories*, a question we were banned from asking under Kant’s yoke. Instead of rejecting the duality of consciousness at work in Kant, Husserl reforms the opposition in such a way that categories can appear as ideal objects.

Still, Husserl’s account of consciousness posits intentionality, *the having of an object*, as the fundamental structure of consciousness. Unfortunately, one cannot intend intentionality without rendering intentionality an object of another intention. At every step of the argument, intentionality cannot be established as the fundamental activity and structure of consciousness, for it can only ever appear as an object of consciousness, not that which essentially constitutes it. In this way, Sartre argues that Husserl falls victim to an infinite regress in which the subject can never attribute any structure to itself. One never encounters consciousness, just objects. Consciousness itself does not appear to be anything.

\(^{352}\) In my paper “Motivating Transcendental Phenomenology: Husserl’s Critique of Kant” published in the *British Journal for Phenomenology*, I show how Husserl’s criticism of Kant as a psychologist motivates central theses of Husserl’s phenomenology, including categorial intuition, the descriptive character of phenomenology, among other elements.
Not only does Husserl’s account fall victim to the same problems as Kant, but he also fails to avoid the problem he discovered in Kant: psychologism. One cannot avoid the problem of psychologism simply by reforming the opposition central to knowing; instead one must abolish it altogether. Since categories become ideal objects, Husserl cannot assume formal logic for the sake of transcendental inquiry. Kant assumes formal judgment for the sake of establishing the possibility of experience, and for that reason cannot inquire into their possibility. Instead, the transcendental precedes the formal. Since formal logic is now the object of inquiry, we cannot appeal to formal logic in order to show the possibility of formal logic. Husserl must simply describe what he is intuiting in consciousness as such, since he cannot infer it via the application of categories. But what ensures that any description of Husserl’s consciousness has universal and necessary validity?\(^{353}\) No first-person description can provide this, for a first person description only applies to what is happening here and now, not what is universally and necessarily the case. In fact, following Sartre’s criticism of Husserl, we can see with some ease why Husserl must be committed to psychologism. Since the activity of knowing and the being of knowing are separate, the act of intentionality cannot help but appear as an object, thus rendering it external to itself.\(^{354}\) Or in other words, the act of intentionality cannot help but appear as some content of consciousness, thus undermining our capacity to grasp the activity as the activity. Instead, we only ever grasp the activity as object. The infinite regress that follows from the opposition of consciousness, or the rejection of self-reference, entails the identification of the activity of knowing with a psychological content. The opposition of consciousness entails the rejection of self-reference because it does not allow that consciousness can be both universal and particular. It seems that

\(^{353}\) Only an infinite re-iteration of the insight would ensure universality and necessity for him, but even this would be insufficient for others.

\(^{354}\) It is true that intentionality is always lurking as a condition of the object, but the problem is that we cannot know this if every appearance of intentionality is only as an object.
phenomenology must either give up necessity and universality for contingency and
 particularity (and thereby give up hope in comprehending knowing as such) or simply
 abandon phenomenology altogether. We cannot follow Husserl in his critique of logical
 cognition for the same reason that we must abandon Kant.

In order to avoid the identification of the category with a temporal content, one
could construe the conditions of Sensibility differently from the way Kant does. Still, as long
as one renders the activity of knowing and the being of the known as two separate
principles, one will not be able to avoid the basic regress problem at the center of
transcendental thought. The arguments wielded by Wittgenstein against his own account, as
well as Sartre against Husserl, provide good historical evidence that transcendental thought
in itself falls victim to the criticisms (i-iii), even if these later proponents posit a
transcendental content distinct from Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason. Moreover, the reason
transcendental philosophy continues to fall victim to these criticisms is because self-
reference is engendered in the form of thought itself. At bottom, in order to think about
thinking, and thereby achieve a Critique of Pure Reason, one must allow for self-reference. Our
historical investigations have shown us that whether we identify the category with being or
consciousness of being we cannot avoid self-reference. ‘Being is’ implies that Being itself is a member of
its own genus. Despite his own denial of self-reference, Aristotle is forced to admit this in
Lambda: God is both the genus and the instance of the genus in the same respect. ‘Self-
consciousness’ also admits self-reference, for it contains itself within itself, thereby
undermining any absolute separation of knowing and known constitutive of transcendental
thought. Being and Self-Consciousness must necessarily admit self-reference. To grasp either Being or
self-consciousness, it appears that the concept must be self-predicating. This appears to also
require us to treat the concept in itself as intuitive, i.e. as being the source of its own
particularization. This is, of course, nothing other than intellectual intuition. For the sober analyst, this is a terrible problem, since it undermines Kant’s critique of the ontological argument, because Kant’s critique of the ontological argument is contingent upon a rejection of self-reference. By re-admitting the principle of self-reference into the form of the concept, we thereby free up reason to transcend experience.\textsuperscript{355}

If the system rejects self-reference, the first principle of the system must undermine the system itself, since the system must be self-referential. Since self-reference is banished in transcendental philosophy, transcendental philosophy cannot help but systematically undermine itself. To modify the saying of Wittgenstein: by excluding self-reference, self-reference must be admitted.

\textsuperscript{355} This also raises questions concerning the possibility of truth.
It is commonplace for historical epochs to define previous eras in terms of their own categories, which though applicable in their own time, are not only anachronistic to those previous eras, but also obscure the philosophical insights other eras have to offer. In today’s philosophical climate, there is a tendency to categorize, either explicitly or implicitly, philosophers from antiquity through today as either ‘analytic’ or ‘continental’ philosophers. Though there are many proper ways of contrasting these models of philosophy, I shall focus on the differences relevant to our inquiry. Essential to the distinction between these models of thought is the way each responds to the question concerning the ‘what it is’ of the concept. Since these models encompass many thinkers, what follows is a generalization which cannot help but overlook the specific aspects of the thought of various thinkers.

In principle, the great Continental thinkers recognize the reflexive problems at the ground of philosophy. Not only do they tend to be aware of the problems, but also tend to be keenly aware of the way in which these problems have been addressed. Having recognized the problems inherent in the traditional ways of approaching the question, Continental philosophy abandons the traditional philosophical project to provide a conceptual account of the concept. Instead of solving the reflexive problems at the ground of philosophy, it is by accepting their inherently problematic nature that new insights are gleaned. At bottom, the basic, reflexive problems at the heart of philosophy lead the Continental

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356 Heidegger, *The Thinker as Poet: From the Experience of Thinking*. 
philosopher to despair about the *autonomy* of philosophy. Since the reflexive problems of philosophy cannot be answered by an appeal to classical logical methodology, yet respect must be paid to the inherent reflexivity of the problems, in respect to these basic questions, philosophy becomes modeled on other reflexive disciplines that are not constrained by formal logic. For this reason, philosophy turns to *linguistic* art, for it is reflexive, yet not constrained by formal logic. Of particular privilege in this respect is the *art of poetry*, for it is the linguistic art *par excellence*.

By contrast, the dominant traditions in Analytic philosophy, do not *in principle* despair over the impossibility of providing an answer to the reflexive problems at the ground of philosophy, though the reasons for this vary significantly. On the one hand, one might say that insofar as basic reflexive problems are recognized, the traditional answers to these questions are not well known, since the adherence to formal logic renders the study of the history of philosophy a *merely* historical and thereby un-philosophical exercise. For this reason, the characteristic answers provided by Analytic thought to the fundamental philosophical questions are isomorphic with those of the tradition. Accordingly, they fall victim to the same problems that we have enumerated in the course of this treatise. On the other hand, Analytic thought’s insistence on the absolute rule of formal logical principles (the same premise that keeps it from appreciating the history of the Western tradition) often prevents it from even recognizing the reflexive problems in the first place. Since the formal logical reliance of philosophy brings it to forget its reflexive roots, Analytic philosophy often models itself on the *sciences*, since the sciences lack the reflexive structure constitutive of authentic philosophical thought.

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357 I wish to note here that there is a significant counterexample to this principle: Wittgenstein.
In the course of discussing some of the more profound Analytic and Continental thinkers, we shall discover that the question concerning the being of the concept is not an antiquated one, but instead is just as relevant today as it was in the epoch of Plato. On the whole, both Continental and Analytic thought signal the end of philosophy as an autonomous discipline. Instead both traditions tend to advocate for the dissolution of philosophy into science or poetry. If these generalizations are even close to accurate, one who labels all thinkers in the history of philosophy as either ‘Analytic’ or ‘Continental’ philosophers not only undermines one’s own position, but also fails to recognize what the activity of philosophy is.

In contemporary discourse philosophers still find themselves impelled to identify their philosophical affiliation as either ‘Analytic’ or ‘Continental’. In one respect, being ‘Analytic’ or ‘Continental’ is merely a political designation that tells us very little about the content of a philosopher’s thought. In another respect, these labels reflect the self-awareness of philosophers about the basic problems that plague the discipline. Moreover, in the United States at least, it is obvious which tradition has won the soul for philosophy. In keeping with my assertions in the Introduction, the hegemony of analytic philosophy and the marginalization of Continental philosophy engender a great loss of self-awareness by the most active contributors in academia. This loss of self-awareness prevents philosophers from understanding what it means to inquire into the ‘what it is’ of the concept. Instead, it is exactly this question which cannot be broached. Indeed, if Analytic philosophy were to broach the question and take it seriously, it would be forced to recognize the value and importance of the contributions Continental philosophy has made to the question.

Since my aim is the illumination of particular problems plaguing the historical modes of inquiry into the concept, I shall follow the model of the analysis of the previous
chapters, and limit my focus to those thinkers and texts that provide the most direct contributions to our question. Since central paths of Continental thought are motivated by reflexive problems that are analogous, if not identical to, the problems governing the being of the concept, it is with Continental philosophy that we shall begin our analysis. Our main focus shall be the work of Martin Heidegger, since it is with him that the Continental tradition begins, and it is he who offers the most direct and unique contribution to our inquiry. Following our discussion of Heidegger we will trace the various paths continental thinking finds itself once it has accepted Heidegger’s stance on the inevitability of the problems facing the tradition.

Though I know that at this point in the inquiry it may appear peculiar, I shall suggest that Martin Heidegger’s thought points us toward one of two viable solution to the problem of the differentia and participation that we have been considering: mysticism.358 I shall employ my analysis of Heideggerian thought as a way to motivate the mystical solution to the problem of the differentia. Accordingly, my discussion of Continental thought will point to a distinct philosophy of religion that is exemplified in classical mystical thought from various religious traditions. To be sure, we have already happened upon mystical elements in the more profound thinkers we have heretofore considered. In fact, these elements have more often than not constituted the fundamental ground upon which their accounts of the concept were formulated. Thus, we may feel secure that our own historical inquiry has pointed us to this solution as one validated by the tradition, even though it has not always been acknowledged as being of central importance.

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358 At this point in the treatise, I have not yet specified the only other viable answer to the problems of the differentia and participation. The title of chapter four, *Hegel’s Logic Von Begriff: The Salvation of Philosophy*, ought to provide enough of a clue regarding the second possibility.
Martin Heidegger is the most profound metaphysician of the 20th century. One reason for this is the fact that he understands the fundamental problems plaguing the Western tradition, and offers us a way of abandoning that framework in which those problems are posed. Heidegger offers us, as contemporary philosophers, a way to connect with the thought of the Eastern Tradition and marginalized mystical thought of the Western tradition concerning totality and conceptual determination, even if Heidegger himself was not always fully aware of this. That Heidegger was occupied with the problems with which we have been concerned is clear from his Introduction to *Being and Time*. In regard to Aristotle’s treatment of Being, he claims that even Aristotle “failed to clear away the darkness of those categorical interconnections.”\(^{359}\) Moreover, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger states his intention to investigate Kant’s Schematism: “we shall try to interpret the Schematism”.\(^{360}\) As scholars know, Heidegger never completes *Being and Time*, and never fulfills his intention to interpret the Schematism, which he planned to investigate in the second chapter of Part II. As I demonstrated earlier, Kant originally introduces the Schematism in order to solve a distinct version of the participation problem. Clearly, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger is concerned with conceptual problems in close proximity to our own.

Still, we have stronger evidence that Heidegger was preoccupied with the question concerning the relation between universality and particularity, which is most definitively addressed in his critique of onto-theology. Though Heidegger is concerned with the relation between universal and particular, he does not address the question directly on its own terms. Instead, his concern is always shrouded in what is for him the more fundamental question of philosophy: *what is the meaning of Being?* Given that Being and the concept *appear* at least

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structurally analogous, we have our own independent reasons for thinking that an inquiry into the former may cull some insight into the latter. Still, since Heidegger’s approach to the question concerning universality is clothed in this metaphysical question, the best way of approaching Heidegger’s conception of the connection between the universal and the particular is to follow his inquiry into the meaning of Being. Indeed, only within the context of the inquiry into Being may we appreciate the problem of onto-theology and thereby approach Heidegger’s contribution to the question with which we are concerned.

According to Heidegger, the question concerning the meaning of Being has been forgotten by the Western tradition.361 As our own historical inquiries have shown, the question concerning the ‘what it is’ of Being fails to function as the leading question of modern philosophy, as it had in the thought of Plato and Aristotle.362 In light of this, Heidegger’s thought functions as the vehicle by which the tradition may know itself and come to terms with the question with which its original researches began. We must “destroy the content of ancient ontology”, and discover the positive possibilities of the tradition.363

I should note some methodological constraints on my approach. First, since I am interested in the question concerning the being of the concept, I will only be focusing on those aspects of Heidegger’s thought that are pertinent to that question. In connection with this constraint, we shall not have opportunity to dwell on much of the minutiae of Heidegger’s thought at various junctures in his career. Instead, our focus shall be on his inquiry into the meaning of Being, since this is the vehicle by which we shall arrive at the novel insight awaiting us in the depths of Heidegger’s thought. Moreover, since the question

361 Heidegger, Being and Time, 43.
362 Though I agree with Heidegger that the question concerning the meaning of Being has been forgotten, I do not agree with Heidegger that the history of western philosophy ought to be interpreted as a mere forgetting of the question. Instead, our own inquiry has already uncovered positive contributions to our conception of concepts: class-membership and Intellectual Intuition.
363 Heidegger, Being and Time, 44.
concerning the meaning of Being was the guiding thread of Heidegger’s thought throughout this philosophical life, we have the added benefit of having the whole breadth of Heidegger’s career before us. Second, any treatment of Heidegger that proceeds on his own terms should not attempt to get at ‘what Heidegger thought’, independently of the philosophical project of the inquiry itself. As Heidegger’s own treatment of historical thinkers such as Aristotle exhibits, we think about Heidegger insofar as his thought can be appropriated for the sake of one’s own projects. Indeed, concerning his own inquiry into the Western tradition Heidegger states the following:

The ownmost meaning of Being which belongs to the inquiry into Being as an historical inquiry gives us the assignment of inquiring into the history of that inquiring itself, that is, of becoming historiological. In working out the question of Being, we must heed this assignment, so that by positively making the past our own, we may bring ourselves into the full possession of the ownmost possibilities of such inquiry.\(^{364}\)

Accordingly, we shall proceed by appropriating Heidegger as a means for illuminating a fundamentally novel way of thinking about our question concerning the being of universality. Naturally, Heidegger’s principle ought not give one license to read him however one wishes, but it indeed justifies the appropriation of aspects of his thinking for the sake of elucidating a philosophical concept or cluster of concepts that may ultimately prove to have significance that is independent of Heidegger’s thought. Indeed, our entire inquiry thus far into the being of the concept has functioned, in some respect, along these lines; we are mining the tradition for insights concerning the being of the concept, as well as emphasizing and elucidating those elements that are most relevant for our project. With this methodological principle in mind, let us proceed to investigate the problem of onto-theology.

\(^{364}\) Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 42.
Heidegger identifies three features of Being that render it an imperative for philosophical inquiry. Being is the most universal concept, it eschews the possibility of definition, and the meaning of Being, in everyday speech, is treated as though it were self-evident.\footnote{Heidegger, Being and Time, 22-24.} We have already noted these features of Being in our previous inquiries. Still, they are worth reflecting on again, for they shall provide entry into a new line of thinking.

Although Being is the most universal concept, it cannot be a genus, for reasons already mentioned.\footnote{See our discussion of this issue in our analysis of Aristotle in Section one.} Likewise, because it is the most universal, yet cannot be a genus, we also know that it cannot be \textit{defined} by any appeal to a higher genus or by any external difference. Still, we talk about Being, and we speak about Being as though we always already know what it means, e.g. ‘the rose \textit{is} red’. As Heidegger puts it, Being is in darkness, but we live in an understanding of Being.\footnote{Heidegger, Being and Time, 23.} Far from rendering an inquiry into Being superfluous, these features of Being render it enigmatic to philosophical thought and calls us to inquire into ‘what it is’.

Onto-theology fails to recognize a difference between Being and \textit{a} being. Or better, onto-theology identifies Being with a being. In his discussion of the indefinable character of Being, Heidegger makes it clear that Being is \textit{not} a being. Indeed, Heidegger is well known for insisting on the \textit{ontological difference} between Being and beings. Being is the \textit{transcendens}.\footnote{Heidegger, Being and Time, 67.} Heidegger’s position on Onto-theology clearly delineates his position regarding the universal and the particular. Being, that which is \textit{most} universal, is \textit{not} particular. The rejection of onto-theology is also a rejection of the identity of universal and particular.

Until this point in our inquiry, the problems on which we have been focusing have been primarily limited to the problem of participation, the differentia, and psychologism. But
if we consider the problems inherent in any inquiry into Being, we should see how the
problem of Onto-theology is just as urgent as the others, and just as essential. Though I will
refrain from considering the interconnections of these four problems here, in chapter three,
the *Nihility of the Concept*, I systematically connect them in virtue of one principle. For now,
let us be content to motivate Heidegger’s rejection of onto-theology and elucidate how
urgent Heidegger’s discussion is for our inquiry.

On onto-theology Heidegger writes the following:

The Being of entities ‘is’ not itself an entity. If we are to understand the problem of Being,
our first philosophical step consists in not ‘telling a story’ - that is to say, in not defining
entities by tracing them back in their origin to some other entities, as if Being had the
character of some possible entity.\(^\text{369}\)

The identification of Being with a being is called onto-theology because it transforms
metaphysics into theology. The cosmic ‘story’ to which Heidegger is referring goes like this:

*all beings depend upon one being, whose being is just to be.* The one being upon whom all other
beings depend is called ‘God’, whose *essence is his existence.*\(^\text{370}\) Although this theological ‘story’
takes on various shapes depending on the philosophy in question, as do the arguments
employed to get there, the story has its origins well beyond the Middle Ages in the ancients.
To be sure, in the annals of Scholastic thought we do find the classic formulation that ‘God’s
essence is his existence’. But even in the thought of Aristotle we find the ground for this
formulation in his concept of God as pure being-at-work. For Aristotle, despite the fact that
God is *a* being, God’s being is *pure Being* as such.\(^\text{371}\) Thus, we find that the onto-theological

\(^{370}\) Note that I have already discussed the connection between this formulation of God’s essence with
Intellectual Intuition in my section on the Omnipotence of God.
\(^{371}\) Let us not disparage Plato in our critique of Aristotle. It is true that Plato’s problem of participation leads
him to identify Being with a being. But this is recognized as a problem, not a solution. For Plato Form itself is
appropriation of Aristotle in the Middle Ages stems from a dominant tendency in Aristotelian thought. Indeed, although we did not identify the problem as onto-theology, one main deficiency of Aristotle’s concept of Being which we have already pointed out is just this identification of a being with Being as such. Since the tradition’s inquiry into Being is rooted in onto-theology, Heidegger’s inquiry must ‘destroy’ ancient ontology, in order to uncover the primordial meaning of Being and recover it from the tradition.

The origin of onto-theology lies in the presumption that Being is in principle definable. When we inquire into Being as Being, we are inquiring into what makes each being ‘a being’. In this sense, our inquiry is into the ‘what it is to be’ of Being. If Being were in principle definable, then we could assign a genus and a difference to Being as such. But if we could assign a genus and a difference to Being, then Being would not be the most universal concept. Instead, the difference by which we divide Being would come from outside Being, since all differences come from outside the genus which they differentiate. Of course, if Being is the most universal genus, then there cannot be a genus external to being from which the difference could come, since there would be nothing outside Being to differentiate it. If Being were assigned a difference, then Being would not be the most universal concept. Thus, if Being were in principle definable, then we would be forced to give up on the universality of Being. Again following Aristotle, since only beings are defined, Being cannot help but be identified with a being. Indeed, we would be forced to identify Being with a particular being.

We see this result in the Third Man regress in Plato’s problem of participation. Our attempt to grasp the ‘what it is’ of Being leads us to identify Being, the universal, with a

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not a form and cannot be a Form. For this reason, I think the recognition of the problem of ontotheology has its roots in Plato, and Heidegger’s destruction of the history of ontology cannot touch him.

372 See our criticism of Aristotle.
Being, the particular. In the history of philosophy, thinkers who have treated Being as in principle definable, found themselves saddled with this unfortunate result. Aristotle and Aquinas, for example treat God as in principle definable, even if He is not definable for us. One finds oneself forced to claim that God is ‘in principle’ rational or ‘super-rational’. All this signifies is a commitment to a position that one cannot defend; it is an unfulfilled wish rooted in the heart of Rationalism.

In order to do justice to Being as Being, Heidegger respects the ontological difference, and warns us not to render Being a being, to keep the universal separate from the particular. If Being is not a Being, and we no longer have the right to tell theological stories about Being, what is Being? At first glance the task appears impossible. What is this universal that is not a genus? If the genus is the universal, would this not be tantamount to a universal that is not universal? Or is there a universality that is not reducible to the traditional forms of universality? Moreover, if Being is not a being, are they absolutely separate? And if so, how could Being reveal itself as Being? How could any being be? Before we lose our way, let us stop and reflect on the question ‘what is the meaning of Being?’, as well as the insight that the universal is not the particular.

If we heed the call of the question, we are lead to the ontological difference. For if we think about Being, we find that Being qua Being reveals itself as that which is differentiated from beings. Let us tarry no further than this difference. Here, in the most universal difference, we shall find, perhaps surprisingly, that the difference by which Being is held apart from beings is also that by which each is given to the other. At the outset of our investigation into Heidegger I quoted a poem in which it states that to think is to think one thought. Heidegger’s thinking begins with the question of Being and ends with the question of Being. Being is his one and only thought. The ontological difference, what is revealed to
Heidegger very early on in the critique of onto-theology, is the light by which Being itself is revealed to Heidegger in his twilight years. To understand the simplicity and power of this revelation, let us turn to two works in which the ontological difference shows itself as the principle of Being: *Die Sprache* (1950) and *Der Feldweg* (1948).

In Heidegger’s late essay entitled *Die Sprache*, Heidegger calls us to think language *qua* language. Presenting us with riddling sentences such as ‘Die Sprache spricht’, or ‘language speaks’, Heidegger insists that true speech is the speech of poetry. I do intend to comment on the speaking of speech, as well as his insistence that true speech is poetic. In order to properly appreciate why Heidegger approaches speech in this way, and why he claims that speech proper is poetic, we must look to the only argument he provides for his claims, namely his analysis of Georg Trakl’s poem ‘Ein Winterabend’. Within his analysis of Trakl’s poem we shall uncover Heidegger’s final verdict on the relation of the universal to the particular, as well as a principle by which we may begin to understand his approach to language in *Die Sprache*.

A brief analysis of Trakl’s poem shows that in *die Sprache* Heidegger is taking ‘poetic’ liberties, if you will, in the reading of this poem. Without a conceptual *Leitfaden* by which to

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373 *Ein Winterabend*, by Georg Trakl:

Window with falling snow is arrayed,  
Long tolls the vesper bell,  
The house is provided well,  
The table is for many laid.

Wandering ones, more than a few,  
Come to the door on darksome courses.  
Golden blooms the tree of graces  
Drawing up the earth’s cool dew.

Wanderer quietly steps within;  
Pain has turned the threshold to stone.  
There lie, in limpid brightness shown,  
Upon the table bread and wine.

navigate Heidegger’s reading, reading Heidegger shall bear no fruit. I would like to suggest that Martin Heidegger does not present an utterly novel revelation of Being in his mature thinking. Instead, Heidegger appropriates old masters in order to reveal the meaning of Being to a tradition that has lost its way. Indeed, this is more consistent with Heidegger’s own historiological thought: thinking never functions independently of the tradition. What it can do is re-discover and remember forgotten possibilities of the tradition and thereby make those possibilities its own. If we turn to Heidegger’s Der Feldweg, Heidegger provides the reader a Leitfaden for his mature work by invoking the thought of Meister Eckhart: “Im ungesprochenen ihrer Sprache ist, wie der alte Lese- und Lebesmeister Eckhart sagt, Gott erst Gott.”  

Let us take Heidegger’s clue and employ Eckhart as our hermeneutical guide.

In ‘The Field Path’ Heidegger calls us to reflect on Eckhart’s ‘Gott erst Gott’, i.e. the ‘God beyond God’. What is Eckhart’s God beyond ‘God’? Eckhart distinguishes between the ‘God’ that stands as one being distinct from creatures and the true God. The true God is not a being. As creatures, Eckhart points out that we tend to think of God as a different kind of entity that exists in contrast to contingent entities, such as ourselves. If we take the identification of God with Being seriously, and reflect on its honestly, Eckhart think that we should be able to grasp that God is not just a being alongside others. In essence, Heidegger’s critique of onto-theology had already been achieved by Eckhart in the thirteenth century. To put it most bluntly and radically, Heidegger’s achievement lies in having placed Eckhart’s insight into purely secular terms, which if not for Heidegger’s obscurantism, renders Eckhart’s insights more accessible than they would have been otherwise.

Let us reflect on Being qua Being. When we reflect on Being qua Being, we wish to know the very what it is of Being. As such, we want to know what differentiates Being as

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such from all other beings. By differentiating Being, we are looking to set it apart from beings, in order that we may get at Being as it is independently of that to which it is attributed. The impasse to which we arrive is familiar: there cannot be a difference for Being as such, since there is nothing external to Being by which it could be differentiated. Thus, it follows that Being as such is undifferentiated. Since it is utterly undifferentiated, Being as such is not only in fact undivided, but it is necessarily indivisible. Since unity is in its most primary and primitive sense indivisibility, Being is simply one. Not only is Being one, but it appears necessary that Being is. If Being were not, it would not be Being. ‘Being is’ appears necessary. At this point in the inquiry we find ourselves in what might be considered orthodox theological territory in regard to classical Christian theology. But if we continue to think about Being as such, we shall find ourselves transgressing that orthodoxy, and thereby ushering in a new theology beyond theology, if you will.

Being, as the undifferentiated unity is not differentiated, and thus it is set apart from all differentiated beings. Insofar as it is set apart from all differentiated beings, it transcends all differentiated beings. Accordingly, we must set Being, as the transcendent, undifferentiated, unity as distinct from all differentiated beings. Already, even one unfamiliar with Eckhart should feel the irresistible force of Being’s power, whose vigorous life is only held in check by our own blindness to that power.

Before we complete the argument, let us pause to consider the dialectical situation in which we find ourselves. As what has no difference at all, Being as such is nothing. Why is Being nothing? Being as such cannot be differentiated from nothing because Being is undifferentiated. Thus, it cannot be held apart from nothingness. Being, as the undifferentiated, fails to be differentiated from nothingness. Eckhart will at times speak of the God beyond God as nothing. Indeed, we may say that it is no being. If it were a being then
it would have a difference by which it would be differentiated from other beings. In this case, it would not be Being. The belief in the true nothingness of God is obviously a great breach of the orthodox threshold.

When we approach Being with our intellect and attempt to grasp that which differentiates Being from nothing, we find that the difference by which Being is differentiated from nothing cannot, in principle, be discovered. The simple reason for this is that *there is no difference*. Or, what is better, if we follow the common logic, we presume that Being as such cannot differentiate itself. Thus, what differentiates Being into species must have its origin outside of Being. Since only nothing is outside Being, it is the nothing which must differentiate Being into different kinds. Thus, any distinction in Being is ultimately no distinction at all. At the most universal level, this means that any distinction one makes is no distinction at all. Thus, Being and nothing are also not different from one another.

Eckhart has the tendency to identify contingent beings, beings that do not necessarily exist, but could or could not exist, as nothing ‘in themselves’. They only have being in Being itself or as Being itself. Since Being is in itself undifferentiated, no being has any Being that is separate from Being itself. The being of every particular being *is Being* itself. Thus, insofar as there are contingent beings, these are actually not contingent *as beings*, for insofar as they exist they are *necessarily*. In this sense, one might as well admit that there are no contingent beings. We may arrive at this result another way, and one that is even more compelling.

Let us pursue Being as philosophers. When we pursue Being as philosophers, engaged in Metaphysics, we inquire into the ‘what it is’ of Being. As philosophers, we assume that Being is knowable. Thus, we assume that Being has the form of categorical determination. According to formal logic, concepts do not differentiate themselves. To the
contrary, a category is only a common term, and the differences within that category are not
given by that category, but must be external to that category. If we take this assumption to be
universally applicable, which we must do if we are to be successful in comprehending Being,
then we must assume that Being is also differentiated externally. Otherwise, we shall have
admitted a counterexample to our principle. As we encounter Being in this mode of analysis,
what appears? When Being is differentiated, it fails to appear as Being. Instead, it appears as
a differentiated being, as a being. Thus, as the intellect approaches Being, Being withdrawals.
What appears in place of Being? While Being withdrawals, a being appears in its stead. The
withdrawal of Being may also be spoken of as the appearance of Being as nothing—as no
being. As long as philosophy pursues being with the form of categorial determination, Being
shall eternally withdrawal from philosophy. What appears to the philosopher in his searches?
An infinite number of beings appear, an indefinite multitude, or in ancient Chinese terms—
the 10,000 things. Philosophy is only ever on its way to Being. As philosophy is on the way to
Being, Being appears as a being, and as every and any being. Being only ever appears as that
which is absent. In the absence of Being, or in the appearing of Being as beings, what Being is
shows itself to us, that which transcends beings in its infinite withdrawal from categorial
form.

Even here we have not completed the argument. Being is not only that which
infinitely withdrawals. It is in fact quite concrete, and apparent. How is it so? Being, as
undifferentiated, is not just that which appears to us as nothing, but it is nothing. It is
nothing in its being-undifferentiated. Or what is the same, insofar as Being must be, it must
have some difference. As we mentioned earlier, since Being is undifferentiated, it is not only
nothing, but it is, in itself, differentiated from differentiated being. Insofar as the
undifferentiated must be differentiated from differentiated beings, it must be a differentiated
being that exists in contrast to other differentiated beings. Thus, Being as such must be a being. If Being is Being, then Being is a being. The difference of Being and beings carries Being towards beings. But, one might complain, how could Being be a being, if we have already rejected onto-theology? Have we not already made a point to reject the identification of the universal and the particular?

We should be very careful here. It is not that Being is a specific Being. No being has any being except insofar as it is Being. So, in what sense is Being a being? Being is that in virtue of which the undifferentiated becomes differentiated, or that in virtue of which Being empties itself of its own nothingness and gives beings. In this sense, every being is just the self-emptying, the self-negation of the undifferentiated Being as such. Here we have the infinite creativity of Being: it is that which in virtue of Being what it is, i.e. in virtue of Being, gives itself and shows itself in itself as beings. In Heraclitean terms, Being is that principle of Becoming, and is Becoming. Thus, the withdrawal of Being into the nothing and the giving of beings out of the nothing is not merely a withdrawal of Being, but it is the infinite revelation of Being. This is what we might call the play of Being: from Being to beings and back again. The one single difference of Being and beings gives Being to Being and the beings to the beings, just as it gives Being to beings and vice versa:

It exists only as this single difference. It is unique. Of itself, it holds apart the middle in and through which world and things are at one with each other. The intimacy of the difference is the unifying element of the diaphora, the carrying out that carries through. The difference carries out world in its worlding, carries out things in their thinging. ³⁷⁵

And again, the same lesson is repeated:

The difference for world and thing disclosingly appropriates things into bearing a world; it disclosingly appropriates world into the granting of things.  

What we have described is creation *ex nihilo*: from nothing beings come to be. *God reaches into his own nothingness*, and thereby creates a world. The nothing is not separate from God’s Being. Of course, one result of this is the divinity of the world. *Being is omnipotent*. As Heidegger claims, it is in the difference where Being and beings *divide themselves*.

Intimacy obtains only where the intimate—world and thing—divides itself cleanly and remains separated.

Still, in the difference, ‘the two’, world and thing, are not merely divided, but also one:

[…] the two traverse a middle. In it, they are at one.

To complete the argument, let us reflect one final time on the activity of Being in its self-revelation. As that which is differentiated from differentiated beings, Being as such has the *same determination* as that from which it is differentiated. As Heidegger tells us concerning the difference:

Being the middle, it first determines world and things in their presence, i.e., in their being toward one another, whose unity it carries out.

In other words, there can no longer be any way of differentiating Being as such from beings:

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The difference lets the thinging of the thing rest in the worlding of the world. ³⁸⁰

This unity of Being and beings is one lesson Heidegger gives repeatedly in his speech on 'Ein Winterabend':

The difference stills particularly in two ways: it stills the things in thinging and the world in worlding. Thus stilled, thing and world never escape from the difference. Rather, they rescue it in the stilling, where the difference is itself the stillness. In stilling things and world into their own, the difference calls world and thing into the middle of their intimacy. The difference stills in a twofold manner. It stills by letting things rest in the world's favor. It stills by letting the world suffice itself in the thing. In the double stilling of the difference there takes place: stillness. ³⁸¹

As undifferentiated, Being cannot be differentiated from differentiated Being. Thus, Being is itself only in virtue of not being distinguished from beings. Being is omnipresent. Insofar as Being is not distinguished from Beings, we return again to our rejection of onto-theology: Being is not a being. Being is what it is, undifferentiated unity, only in virtue of differentiating itself from itself. It is only in differentiating itself from itself that it can be what it necessarily is. The undifferentiated qua undifferentiated becomes differentiated, and it is through its differentiation that it is truly undifferentiated. ³⁸² As Heidegger states:

What is so bidden is commanded to arrive from out of the difference into the difference. ³⁸³

³⁸⁰ Heidegger, Language, 203.
³⁸¹ Heidegger, Language, 204.
³⁸² In this formulation lies Eckhart’s formulation of the Trinity. God as the merely undifferentiated Being is the Father. The Son is God the father, undifferentiated Being, in his differentiated Form, or the Logos having become flesh. The Holy Spirit is the return of God to himself through the Son, or the Undifferentiated God becoming God, through the integration of differentiation into his own undifferentiated Being.
³⁸³ Heidegger, Language, 203.
Indeed, the difference returns to itself out of itself. Since every being is given by Being, and a revelation of Being, the revelation of Being to any being is Being’s revelation of itself to itself. In this respect, Being is only engaged with itself, and is by itself. Though the infinite proliferation of Being’s beings are infinite, it is contained within itself, as the self-other. Since everything one encounters is Being, Being is concrete. Being as a mere abstraction, a self-identical category, is not Being. Being is the tree in growing in the forest. One who understands the truth of Being, the most universal category, descends back to the most mundane given-ness, moved by the necessary force of Being and with great joy. We are called therefore, as the Sufis say, to proclaim that ‘only God is’, and ‘to worship God as if you see him’.

What is the principle by which Being makes its eternal move? Being makes its eternal move only because of the single difference that lies between Being and beings:

The difference is, at most, dimension for world and thing.

It is that difference that moves the dialectic in Eckhart, and as we shall see, it is the same difference by which we shall be able to interpret Heidegger’s analysis of ‘Ein Winterabend’. Without the difference between what is differentiated and what is not, we cannot get the result that the undifferentiated is different, or that the different is undifferentiated. As Heidegger says, it is neither simply Being or beings that is called, but the difference itself, that which makes Being move:

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384 Here we may remember Plato’s cave analogy. Whereas there the philosopher is forced to go back down into the cave, the mystic returns with joy, because he must never really leave. The cave is the dwelling place of the divine.

In the bidding that calls thing and world, what is really called is: the difference.\textsuperscript{386}

Let us reflect on what follows from Being’s self-revelation. The most striking result is that Being is necessarily non-conceptual. The argument for this conclusion is quite succinct. Heidegger and Eckhart both accept that Being is non-categorial because they share basic assumptions about what it is to be a concept. The basic assumption is that universals do not differentiate themselves. With this assumption in place, concepts have quite a definite limit: they are not sufficient principles of their particulars. The particular has another origin. Moreover, connected with this assumption is the presupposition that concepts are self-identical, and do not become what they are not. Each category, or universal, is independent of the particular, and never admits what it is not.

Given that categories are differentiated externally, i.e. are not self-differentiating, in order to confer categorial form onto Being, Being must also be divided externally. Of course, we have discovered that Being is self-differentiating or self-dividing. Thus, Being contradicts the very form of categorial Being. We may go further. Any distinction that is, or has Being, must ultimately be grounded in the non-conceptual form of Being as such. All other-differentiation is grounded in a non-conceptual self-differentiation. Having lost the difference, we await Hermes, the messenger God, to bring us back into unity with Being.

Important to note here is the way that this conclusion is reached. It is not reached by any external critique of conceptual determination. In fact, Heidegger reflects on what the very self-identity of self-identity is, and through this reflection comes arrives at this result. If we assume that Being is determined categorically, then we must always posit an external difference. Thus, on this assumption we must admit that Being must also be differentiated

\textsuperscript{386} Heidegger, Language, 200.
by nothing, which is tantamount to the admission of multiple contradictions— that Being is not, and that nothing is. But if we wish to avoid the contradiction at the heart of Being, we must reject the principle that leads to the contradiction. Since the principle which leads to the contradiction is the assumption that categories are divided externally, in order to escape the contradiction, we must reject the very assumption that Being is categorial, and governed by the principle of non-contradiction. Thus, by attempting to avoid the conclusion that Being is nothing, we must negate the categorial structure of Being. Naturally, by negating the categorial structure of Being we cannot help but necessarily arrive at the conclusion we wished to avoid, namely that Being is non-categorial.

Having been bound by the God of necessity to accept this fate, we arrive at the insight that the ‘what it is’ of Being, the German So-sein recedes from our grasp, and in its stead the ‘that it is’, dass-sein appears. As we have already elucidated, when one asks the question ‘what is it to be such and such?’ one is calling for a categorial response, which specifies the necessary and sufficient conditions for that ‘such and such’. Insofar as we are no longer able to determine the ‘what it is’ of Being, since it eschews categorial determination, we are nonetheless still left with the mere presence of Being as such, for we have encountered Being as that which exceeds our attempts at saying ‘what’ it is. Being is expressed by the ‘that’ in the phrase ‘that Being is’. We know that Being is, and that the ‘what’ recedes from it. We now stand in the clearing of Being, having stepped out of the forest.

When one attempts to say what the ‘that it is’ is, one has already failed to grasp the distinction between the ‘what’ and the ‘that’ of Being. If one attempts to say what the that is, one is no longer talking about the that, but only about some ‘what’. Every time one says ‘what’ the ‘that’ is, one is not talking about the ‘that’ but only about some ‘what’. The that is
‘what’ always exceeds the ‘what’, and of course, it cannot even be that. Immediately upon grasping this subtlety, one no longer attempts to say what Being is. Insofar as what can be said is constrained by what can be thought, Being is that which, in itself, is silent, or that about which nothing can be said. Still, we cannot rest content with this, for we have been speaking about Being, and we cannot help but speak about Being, for we encounter Being, and there is nothing else about which to speak. We are forced to speak about Being in saying that it is unspeakable. Accordingly, we must not be afraid to ask: ‘what is that speech by which we speak the unspeakable?’

Let us continue to reflect on the non-categorial presence of Being. What has Being revealed itself to be that conceptual determination fails to express? Given the assumption about what the concept is capable of determining, we discover that individuality is exactly what the concept fails to grasp. Why introduce individuality here? Well, if we reflect on Being once more, we recognize that the universality of Being is not separated from its instances, or particulars. The instances of Being are each self-realizations of the universality of Being. Each particular of Being, insofar as it is just an instance of Being, cannot be individuated from Being. Each particular, in order to be individuated, must be a differentiated particular. Indeed, according to our reflections above, Being differentiates itself into its particulars, such that it is not only that in virtue of which particular beings are individuals, but it is also the one and only individual: existence per se. Self-differentiating Being presents itself as the true individual, as the individual existence. Since universals cannot differentiate their own particulars, the universal fails to express the individual. Thus, the category can neither express the true individual, existence, nor can it express any particular individual existent. It is the individuality of existence that withdrawals from the concept, and leads the philosopher on what turns out to be a wild goose chase. By recognizing that the non-
conceptual structure of Being precludes us from knowing the individual, any knowing of the individual cannot be mediated by concepts. Instead, our knowing of the individual can only be an immediate knowing of the type that we have already encountered at the base of numerous philosophical systems. The fundamental insight here concerns the relation of the universal to the individual. As long as the universal is not individual, and is not a principle of individuality, universality shall be exorcised from Being.

Clearly, there are other precedents for Heidegger’s critique of philosophy to which we could have appealed. For instance, both Nietzsche and Kierkegaard argue that because existence is individual philosophy cannot grasp existence. I do not wish to discuss the minutiae of their accounts here, but it is important to note that they establish a precedent for Heidegger’s critique of philosophy. While Nietzsche focuses his critique on the insufficiency of the concept to grasp becoming, which we have argued follows from the concept of Being, Kierkegaard focuses his critique on the insufficiency of the concept for willing. As is well known, Kierkegaard is fond of quoting the following Biblical passage:

‘For God all things are possible’. What is impossible for us, namely the contradiction, is possible for God. Faith requires us to take a ‘leap’, to believe in what, according to logic, is not possible. We must, according to Kierkegaard, believe that the impossible is possible. Does not Kierkegaard’s modal formulation of the paradox express our metaphysical situation most exactly and with the utmost precision? We have all encountered Being, as there is nothing else to encounter. Yet we, as philosophers, do not believe contradictions are possible. Hence, are we not also in an analogous situation of Kierkegaard’s philosopher who confronts the object of faith? In order to believe ‘that Being is’ we must also believe the impossible to be

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387 Consider Nietzsche’s emphasis on positivism. He advocates that we destroy the concept of ‘appearance’ and an ultra ‘super-sensible’ reality. Once it has been shown that there is no super-sensible reality, there is no ‘appearance’ of that reality either. All there is is what is given to us via our senses, and this fails to be captured by ‘universals’. For Nietzsche’s full development of this criticism see his Twilight of the Idols.
possible. But let us not be too one-sided. How can we, as philosophers, even believe in concepts? Insofar as concepts qua concepts have no Being, is it not a wonder that we ever encounter them at all? Indeed, insofar as we do encounter concepts, we may make the same claim about concepts that we made about Being: *in order to believe ‘that the concept is’, we must also believe the impossible to be possible.* For sure, each concept is a concept, an individual. But in this case, the only way the concept would have being would be as non-conceptual. As Heidegger succinctly states:

That a thinking is, ever and suddenly-
Whose amazement could fathom it?\(^{388}\)

What follows is an elucidation of one fundamental solution to the problem of the differentia that is inspired by Heidegger and contains some elements of his thought, but on the whole it is not one that I believe Heidegger endorsed.\(^{389}\) With that caveat in place, let us proceed. At the outset of our investigation into Continental philosophy I noted in advance that we would elucidate one of the only viable answers to the problem of the differentia. In one sense, that claim was fundamentally misleading. As long as we tarry with the concept, we never discover the differentia dividing Being from beings. In fact, the difference always fails to appear when we remain tethered to conceptual determination. Given the very character of conceptual determination, one might go further to say that the difference cannot possibility be. Yet it necessarily is, for Being is. What is one fundamental solution to the problem of the differentia? One fundamental solution follows from our discourse: *let go of conceptual determination and logical analysis and allow Being not only to be but to show itself.* Here,

\(^{388}\) Heidegger, *The Thinker as Poet: From the Experience of Thinking.*

\(^{389}\) I think it would make for an interesting paper to investigate why Heidegger would not endorse it. I am of the persuasion that it follows from thinking about the question of Being along the lines that he pursued it.
the ‘solution’ is not conceptual. In this respect, there is no philosophical or conceptual solution to the problem of the differentia. Instead, philosophy must come to recognize its own failure to grasp the Being of Being and the Being of the concept.

We discover that this newfound ‘solution’ to the problem of the differentia squares the blame for the problem on the assumption that being is conceptual. Christ says ‘seek and ye shall find’.\footnote{See Matthew 7:7.} This is the truth, for we find simply by seeking Being. When we seek Being, we find that Being is that which always already exceeds the concept.\footnote{Because Heidegger identifies Being and Time in his early work, he opens up the possibility that the cleavage between Being and the concept could also be pursued as a cleavage between Time and the concept.} The more we rely on our own rational capacity and our powers of the intellect to grasp the Being of the concept and the Being of Being, we fall further and further from ever grasping what it is. In fact, our striving for Being with the Intellect is not that which brings us closer to it, but that which in principle prevents us from seeing what Being is. The concept, der Begriff, comes from ‘greifen’, which means to grasp. The activity of grasping and striving for ‘Being’, to capture it with the concept, is really nihilism, for Being is never allowed to be in this space. It is Being’s self-indifference. The problem is that the logician does not know himself to be a nihilist, but be is. The philosopher now must take a skeptical posture towards himself.

From within the hell of nihilism, there is still a light, for Being cannot be utterly negated, for even logic must have some Being, even if it is the Being of self-indifference. Here, in the hell of nihilism, Being is discovered. How? As Heidegger shows us in Being and Time, when a tool breaks, that is when its function becomes most apparent. Likewise, in the case of Being, when we think formal conceptual determinacy through to its logical consequence, we find the absence of Being, just as when we think Being through we find the absence of the concept. Following Heidegger’s example, just when the concept ‘breaks’
down, and no longer captures Being, and when ‘Being’ not longer captures the ‘concept’, this is exactly when the very Being of the concept, just as the very Being of Being becomes most obvious. In what follows we shall pursue both the illumination of Being and the concept. First, let us discuss the relation of the philosopher to Being, and later we shall return to how the Being of the concept must appear.

As William James points out in *Varieties of Religious Experience*, constitutive of the religious experience is the importance of letting go and submitting to ‘God’ in his self-revelation. Why invoke religion here? Well, if we think through the relationship to Being that follows from the irreparable divorce between Being and the concept, we find the most basic ingredients for a religious life, which need not be grounded in any special revelation. One must simply seek. To know Being, we must let Being be: this means to let go of conceptual life, and to seek Being immediately in the non-conceptual given. Already in the *Bible* we find these three stages: paradise, fall from paradise, and the return to paradise. In paradise we do not know ourselves, and are content. In paradise we are as children, unknowing even that we are in paradise. Our fall from paradise arises from having eaten from the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil. How do we return to the immediate union with God which we experienced in paradise? We let go of our attachment to knowledge, to that which separates us from the divine. By separating ourselves from knowledge, we come to know. This is one interpretation of Christ’s dictum to ‘become like a child’. Each of these stages of the life of the philosopher, innocence, the lost of innocence (philosophy), and the regaining of innocence (the religious life), corresponds to one moment of the holy trinity of Being: undifferentiated, differentiated, and undifferentiated-differentiated Being. It is by dwelling in the third stage that the previous stages find their home and their fulfillment.

392 See Matthew 18:3.
This is the essential practice of the mystic: to cultivate paradise. How does the mystic cultivate paradise? The mystic cultivates paradise by not conceptualizing. When we conceptualize we create fabrications of reality and grasp. Thus, in order to escape these fabrications, we must practice not thinking qua conceptualizing. Instead, it is the mystic’s domain to attend to the non-conceptual given, and to dwell in it. Indeed, the various traditions of meditation, especially in the East, teach exactly this: to dwell in attentiveness to the immediate non-conceptual given, and to eschew conceptual fabrication.

Though I shall not elucidate all of the principles, both abstract and concrete, of the philosophy of religion here, since it is not the proper place for it, I do think it relevant to at least show what the most basic features of this philosophy are. As philosophers, we begin our inquiry in a state of wonder, in which we desire to know but do not know. One does not wonder to wonder, but to know. With the negation of the possibility of philosophical knowledge, our wonder must also be extinguished, since the goal of that wonder, knowledge, is no longer viable. What arises in its stead? Our wonder transforms itself into pure awe. One is in awe of some power. Here in this case, we are in awe of Being, for it is the omnipotence and omnipresence of Being to create itself and the beings constituting it that exceeds the most powerful capacity in us: reason. To put it in more aesthetic terms, God or Being becomes not something to be manipulated for the sake of oneself, but is in itself sublime. Upon coming to the limits of the concept, the philosopher finds himself in awe of the sublime. Experienced in awe, the philosopher learns to respect Being. Part and parcel of this respect for Being lies in refraining from technological en-framing, in which Being is regarded as merely instrumental for a self. But having sacrificed what is central to that self, reason, in this attitude it would be a great sin to treat Being merely technologically. People speak of the
belief in ‘something greater than oneself’. In the awe before Being the ontological ground of that everyday attitude is discovered. In the awe before Being we submit to Being, to God.

Immediately we discover the roots of monasticism. Given that speech is governed by the parameters of conceptual determination and principles, how ought we relate to Being in regard to our speech? Clearly, the exceeding of the concept by Being points, without equivocation, to our calling: silence. Cultivating silence is one way of emptying oneself in order that one may receive God. It is in silence, not in the word, where Being directly reveals itself. Nagarjuna, a great Buddhist philosopher in the Mahayana tradition, in *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, provides one method by which we come to see the necessity of silence. In fact, we have already reproduced the shorthand version of his argument here: if we assume conceptual determinacy, then there cannot be conceptual determinacy. What is important to note is the following: even Nagarjuna’s own use of concepts, including our own use of them, to undermine concepts must be negated. Naturally, our speech, or the speech of the mystic, cannot be rendered exempt from the argument. For this reason, the mystic welcomes and invites the reductio against his own argument. Indeed, that is the point! Once you recognize that the reductio against the mystic works in his favor, then you may begin to see the value of silence. We discover that even in the concept there dwells a great silence.

Connected with the negation of the concept, we also discover the affirmation of otherness, but not otherness ‘itself’. The concept, as that which is self-identical, has been negated. Thus, we might expect that in its place, we shall discover what is ‘just’ other. But otherness itself, insofar as it is conceived as just otherness, is nothing as well, for it is also a self-identical unity. Indeed, we come to see that no concept expresses what it is we mean to say when we talk about Being. Being is always ‘moving’ beyond our concept. As that which is always exceeding, we discover that Being is constantly arising and passing away. This is an
interminable truth of Buddhist thought. We shall have an opportunity to return to this concept in our final discussion of Heidegger’s Feldweg.

Lastly, I should like to say one final word about the relation between the philosopher and God. Mysticism cultivates the silent attentiveness to the non-conceptual given. But why? Again, the aim is so that we can Be, or in theological terminology, to be united with the Divine. We desire, as some Sufis have said “to have nothing in our robes but God”! Still, we might be skeptical that relations such as awe might imply a duality that prevents such immediate unity with the Divine. If we think about what follows from the cleavage between Being and the concept, I believe that we shall find that this is not the case.

When we contemplate Being once more, we find that all beings have their Being in Being. Nothing escapes Being. Accordingly, each being is Being. Insofar as each being is Being, each being is God. When the philosopher comes to see that everything is God, he has a new sense of his proper dwelling place. When I awaken “all things awaken with me”, as the Buddha said. The Buddha is trackless exactly because he is everywhere and nowhere. Christ gives up his family for humanity. His proper dwelling place is not with them, but with everyone. The universal dwelling of God in beings is succinctly expressed in Eberhardt Arnold’s contention that Christ’s redemption is not “from nature” but “the redemption of nature.” Accordingly, the natural state of man is that of divinity, and the goal of the religious life is to rediscover that inner divinity out of one’s falleness. Philosophy has a new place in this world: it is the means by which we come to the religious life, one which we must throw

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393 I should note that though I find it convenient to quote mystical thinkers from various traditions, I do believe there to be some fundamental differences in these traditions, such as their various views on the unity of God, our relation to God, and what we can say about God. For example, Sufi practice emphasizes tasawwuf, or practicing the unity of God. Like all Muslims, Sufis believe that there is only one God. But there mystical practice goes further. They not only worship God as if they see him, but also attempt to realize the unity of God in their lives. Clearly, this stands in great contrast to Eckhart’s trinitarianism, although he also emphasized the unity beyond these three. While Eckhart appears to reify God, Nagarjuna stridently objects to any reification whatever.

394 This is the fulfillment of the ‘pathos for things’ in Zen thought.
away upon arrival. If we continue to do philosophy, or to teach it, we do it in order that we may remind ourselves of the redemption of nature, and to point others to their own divinity. Our awe of God is an awe of ourselves. This immediate grasp of ourselves as God is the self-knowledge of God, or what is the same, God’s immediate knowledge of all beings.

Self-love, though it is usually contrasted with the love of others, can no longer be so. Because we begin by loving ourselves enough to seek God, we come to see that our self-love is the love of others. So naturally, one practiced in the Mystic life comes to obey Christ’s commands quite naturally as a result of the practice: to ‘love others as oneself’ and ‘to love God’. As it turns out, the love of others is also the love of God, and the love of God nothing other than the love of oneself. In this way, I become the vehicle of God’s self-love in which all otherness is included. Without further ado, one would not be incorrect to say that “God is love”.

Let us now leave our discussion of Being behind, and proceed to discuss what the concept is given the cleavage between the concept and Being. The philosopher, as well as anyone else, can only ever encounter the individual. What is the individual? In the individual the universal and the particular are not separated, as they are stipulated to be in the case of the universal per se. The individual, or just that which is immediately given, can be pointed to as this. We may remember that Aristotle spoke of the this as the measure of Being qua Being. As we have already noted, we cannot speak of the individual per se without speaking of the universal. When I speak about ‘this’ thing, I am still invoking the universal concept of ‘this’ in my speech, and thereby conflate the universal with the individual I mean to say.

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395 Here I have only intimated the reasons why God and man are identified and the connection between this unity and self-less love. I could develop this in more detail, but I for the sake of space and time, I must refrain from giving any more detail at this juncture.

396 My foray into classical mysticism raises a difficult question concerning Heidegger’s own personal application of this thinking, which I will not investigate here. Why did Heidegger not take the classical mystical path? Indeed, he interpreted his own work in Being and Time in terms of National Socialism. Indeed, nothing could be farther from the God of love than fascism.
Thus, I cannot help but conflate the universal with the individual in my speech about the ‘this’. As Hegel points out in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, I always fail to say what I mean when I say ‘this’. At best, I point to what I mean to say in virtue of failing to say it. Since the concept no longer gets hold of Being, truth cannot be understood as the correspondence of the concept and the object. Instead, truth is a *non-conceptual unveiling or disclosure of what remained in hiding*. Whenever we disclose the truth of Being, per our earlier analysis, we are always covering up Being. Every truth of Being, or original non-conceptual uncovering of Being is always already a covering up of Being. Or in even more Heideggerian terminology, the nearness of being is *simultaneously* its farness. As it approaches it recedes. As I approach Being, as it becomes nearer, the stretch between us elongates. We must always travel further and further along the path.

‘Where’ do we encounter the individual? It appears that we would already be justified if we said that everything we encounter is individual, so the question is moot. Still, let us reflect more deeply about why this is necessary. From our reflections we may find ourselves with a deeper understanding of the ‘whatness’ of our own speech about Being. In particular, we will find it of great use to consider how we encounter the ‘this’ in regard to abstract universality.

Ironically, we have kept our analysis at a very abstract level. As we have noted, Heidegger appears to be treating conceptual determination as *abstract* in itself. On this assumption, conceptual determination assumes the givenness of individuals from which it abstracts out content. As we proceed higher and higher up the conceptual chain, i.e. as we abstract more universally, our conceptual analysis bottoms out with ‘Being’. Note that the abstract mode negates content and isolates other contents for contemplation. Each act of abstraction gives new conceptual contents from which more acts of abstraction are possible.
Upon completion of the activity of abstracting, we find ourselves saddled with the following vertical structure: at the very bottom we have classes that are simply collections of individuals, and at the very top we have genera that are not species for any higher genera. In the middle we have universals that function as species and genera, but in different respects, such as ‘animal’. Insofar as the concepts contain other universals, they are genera. Insofar as they are themselves contained by other universals, they are species. The first abstractions, i.e. those which provide the first level of conceptual determinacy, are species, but they are not genera, since only individuals fall under them, not universals. Aristotle gives ‘rational animal’ as an example of this kind of universal.

As we climb the conceptual latter, we climb away from the merely particular and arrive at ‘Being’, what is merely universal. But here, as we noted in our argument, a very strange thing happens. We can only immediately encounter Being; we cannot think it. In the thinking of Being, universal and individual cannot help but be conflated. But we also find the same truth at the lowest levels of the conceptual latter. When we attempt to think what is merely particular, qua particular, we think the universal, and thereby conflate the universal and the particular. At the top of the conceptual rung we want to think the universal by itself, but we cannot. At the very bottom of the conceptual rung, we want to think the particular by itself, but we cannot. Thus, at the very top and the very bottom of the conceptual rung the concept is absent. To put it most paradoxically, as one proceeds further and further into the universal, one is simultaneously moving away from the universal. Likewise, as one moves toward the particular, one is simultaneously moving towards the universal. Thus, as one moves towards the universal, one moves towards the particular, and as one moves towards the particular, one moves toward the universal. Indeed, since we cannot grasp the universal as universal, or the particular as particular, we are also unable to grasp any content in the middle of the rung, i.e. we
cannot grasp any universal as a particular universal. Because the limits of the concept are not conceptual, concepts themselves lack conceptual content.\(^{397}\) As it turns out, we encounter the individual everywhere, and the concept nowhere. We shall have opportunity to follow this inference further in our discussion of mysticism and poetry.

Let us take this opportunity to reflect on Heidegger’s methodology by which he undermines the power of the concept. Earlier we quoted a poem from Heidegger in which it states that ‘to think is to think one thought’. All poetry strives to say in a line or a stanza what the prosaic cannot say but in a chapter or a book. In ‘to think is to think one thought’, Heidegger achieves exactly this. How? One of the constants throughout Heidegger’s philosophical life is his constant appeal to what has been a central theme for us: self-reference. Repeatedly, Heidegger reminds us that self-predicative propositions are not tautological. Of course, it is not easy to see why this is the case.

A very brief survey of texts over a wide range of years, both pre and post Kebr, show that Heidegger is constantly employing self-reference. For example, in the Concept of Time, Heidegger teaches us that ‘Time is temporal’.\(^{398}\) One very revealing passages shows that Heidegger connects the self-predicative being of time with the coalescing of universality and particularity:

If time is understood in this way as Dasein, then it indeed becomes clear what the traditional assertion about time means when it says that time is the proper principium individuationis. […] What is properly peculiar about this individuation is that it does not let things get as far as any individuation in the sense of the fantastical emergence of exceptional existences; it strikes down all becoming exceptional. It individuates in such a way that it makes everyone equal. In being together with death everyone is brought into the ‘how’ that each can be in equal measure; into a possibility with respect to which no one is distinguished, into the ‘how’ into which all ‘what’ dissolves into dust.\(^{399}\)

\(^{397}\) I shall make this point again once more on purely systematic grounds in Section III.


\(^{399}\) 21E, Concept of Time.
Among many other examples within *Being and Time*, we find the concept of the ‘onto-ontological’ priority of *Dasein*. This phrase embodies two concepts that render it self-predicative: the ‘ontological’ and the ‘ontic’. The former is universal, the latter particular. *Dasein* is that universal being that is particular, or the particular being that is universal. Ultimately, there are two options for *Dasein* in the course of its life: *Dasein can be Dasein or Dasein can not be Dasein.* Famously, on account of such utterances, Carnap accused Heidegger of abusing language and failing to say anything meaningful. In one sense, even on Heidegger’s own terms, Carnap is quite right. In another sense, Carnap completely failed to grasp the power of self-reference.

Even as late as *Die Sprache*, Heidegger had not given up on self-reference, as we see exemplified in his famous utterance: “language speaks”. What these references show is that self-reference is a constant throughout Heidegger’s career. When we reflect on how the method of self-reference works at the level of ontological analysis, namely of Being, we may cull at least some minimal insight into how self-reference works in Heidegger. ‘Being is Being’ may appear as a tautology. *But it is not.* ‘Being is Being’ simultaneously points us to the nullity of abstract conceptual determinacy and the concrete revelation of Being as such. When we contemplate that ‘Being is Being’ we are contemplating Being autonomously, just as we treat language in its autonomy when we contemplate it from its own side as language. As we showed earlier in our discussion of Eckhart’s ‘Gott erst Gott’, when we contemplate Being in its autonomy, just as Being, namely when we contemplate it as itself, we find that Being is not just itself by itself: it is beings. ‘Being is Being’ contemplated as independent of

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400 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pages 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 94, 115, and 128 (German Pagination). I would like to thank Joseph P. Carter for these references.

beings, renders *Being as such a nullity*, and shows that Being is only the *Being of beings*. When Being is confined to the abstract mode of just being itself by itself it disappears into the nothing, and fails to appear as Being. Or, Being in what appears to be a mere tautology, ‘Being is Being’ is nonetheless also a *pure contradiction*, and its nullity lies in how the tautology and contradiction are indistinguishable. Being only appears as the Being of beings, in the individual beings in which universal and particular are intimately related. As philosophers, when we contemplate Being from its own side, we are called to *abandon* the abstract treatment of Being, and to confront it *immediately* in the individuals in whom Being resides. Here in the entities where Being resides, in the *‘this here’*, Being reveals itself in its true individuality. Of course, we must become practiced in seeing Being as Being in its individuality and the self-referential mode of thinking is integral to that practice. In order for Being to be revealed, we must wrench ourselves from our ingrained tendency to treat all beings as though they were confined by conceptual structure. This attitude towards beings prevents us from grasping Being, and keeps it in utter darkness. Surely, the tradition has kept Being in darkness by en-framing Being in the concept. Self-reference functions as the reflexive mode by which Heidegger illuminates the nullity of the concept per se and the Being of the individuality of Being. Being reveals itself as Being from the side of beings. The difference illuminates bread and wine, as Heidegger teaches in *die Sprache*:

Where does the pure brightness shine? On the threshold, in the settling of the pain. The rift of the de-fERENCE makes the limpid brightness shine. Its luminous joining decides the brightening of the world into its own. The rift of the de-FERENCE expropriates the world into its worlding, which grants things.  

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Perhaps it is already deceptive to claim that Being as Being is contradictory, for the self-predicative mode of thought negates the conceptual being of the concept. Accordingly, there is no concept that could in principle stand in a contradictory relation to another concept. In this respect, from the side of Being it is already misleading even to say that the relationship is contradictory. Of course, if we are to speak of it from the side of the concept, this is what appears, namely the utter falling asunder of all conceptual distinctions. Whatever conceptual determinations are posited, they cannot have any absolute boundary. Their limits are ambiguous.

If we follow the self-predicative methodology further, we discover another thread that runs through Heidegger’s pre and post Kehre thought. As we developed earlier in our discussion of Eckhart, Being as Being returns to itself through its self-loss. Naturally, Heidegger reads the self-loss or self-forgetting of Being and the subsequent return of Being into the very history of philosophy. In his Seingeschichte, modern philosophy, having lost the Leitfaden given by Being, is the historical embodiment of Beings’ self-forgetting and self-loss. With Heidegger’s remembrance of Being, Being returns to itself from its self-loss. The self-loss and self-return of Being that is integral to Being’s development ultimately renders all relations into one self-relation. Being loses itself in differentiation, and returns to itself as the undifferentiated only through the self-loss into differentiation. The self-relation of the totality with itself is one of the hallmarks of Heidegger’s thought. To place this self-relation in linguistic terms, speech is a monologue. Indeed, whether the self-relation constitutive of the totality is Dasein or Being, Dasein and Being are only ever in monologue with themselves.

In the Daseinsanalytik, Being is confined to the possibilities of Dasein. Dasein has two possible relations: being its own, or not being its own. In its everyday Being-in-the-world, Dasein is not its own Dasein. The everyday Being-in-the-World explicated in the first section
of Being and Time constitutes Dasein’s mode of self-indifference. Only with the confrontation with one's own death, in being before death, does Dasein take itself as its own Dasein. We need not concern ourselves with the minutiae of his account here, since for our purposes it will be sufficient to point out that there are two-meta possibilities for Dasein in which Being is given: authenticity and in-authenticity. Dasein is always in self-relation, either as what relates to itself as itself or what relates to itself as not-itself. In Being and Time, Dasein becomes authentic when we recognize Being as mine. The mine-ness of Dasein renders every ‘what’ into some ‘how’ or possibility of Dasein. Even Being-in-the-World, in authenticity, is rendered ‘mine’ and cannot be explicated independently of Dasein’s own horizons.

After Heidegger’s turn away from the Daseinsanalytik, Heidegger reverses the roles of Dasein and Being: instead of treating Dasein as that one self relation in which Being is given, Heidegger treats Being itself as the one self-relation in which Dasein is given. In Being and Time Being is the vehicle of Dasein’s self-relation. Here Dasein is in and through its possibility. After the Kehre, Dasein becomes the vehicle of Being’s self-relation. Blumenberg appears to be spot on when he criticizes Heidegger’s thought for not being properly historical. By following the question of the meaning of Being, Heidegger insists of the historical constancy of Being’s self-relation. For Heidegger, it appears that the concern for Being cannot be discarded. Being is the God of necessity.

Once again, let us return to the same question we have been asking throughout this whole chapter. If Being cannot be thought in virtue of conceptual analysis, then what is it to think or to say Being, the unspeakable? Or what is the same, what is the character of Being’s monologue? It appears that we cannot say anything. We have been asking this question quite

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403 At this juncture it would be a great distraction for my project were I to become involved in a protracted debate about why Heidegger’s thought shifts from a focus on the autonomy of Dasein to the autonomy of Being.
often throughout our discussion, on the one hand because it arises naturally at many
junctures in the discussion, on the other hand, because it illuminates how an entire tradition
of philosophy comes to think about the universal and the particular.

Let us ask the question for the last time: what is that speech by which we speak the
unspeakable? I believe that in the question we have already equivocated on two senses of
speech: that speech governed by categorial principles, the self-indifference of Being, and that
speech which is not. Earlier we investigated how the philosophy of religion obtains a
foothold in Being’s transcendence of categorial speech. But in that case we abandoned
speech to categorial determinations. In other words, we assumed that to speak meaningfully
requires the governance of the principle of non-contradiction, excluded middle, and identity.
We might go further to say that since categories per se fail to be, any speech governed by
categorial principles is not in itself Being, but is withdrawn from Being. Speech of this sort must
be only as an aberration, or a falling away from primordial speech, or speech that is. This is
exactly Heidegger’s point: categorial speech, i.e. everyday speech, the speech of science,
logic, and traditional philosophy, is a falling away from speech that is. Ironically, what we
usually take to be unspeakable is what is speakable, and what we usually take to be speakable is what is
unspeakable. But what is the speech that is? What is our clue by which we might pursue
knowledge of speech that is?

It is hard to learn from Heidegger by reading Heidegger. Instead, it is better to
simply follow in thought the question that Heidegger pursued. By following the question
Heidegger pursued, one becomes better equipped to interpret his words. Accordingly, to
understand the more obtuse sentences of later Heidegger, let us continue to dwell on the
question of the meaning of Being.
In the essay on language, Heidegger says that “die Sprache spricht”. On the face of it, like the rest of the essay, the proposition is unintelligible. We tend to think that people speak. This is because we think of speech as a vocal utterance in words of some meaning that is given prior to the speech act. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger seems to treat speech this way. On these terms, we could not understand “die Sprache spricht”. Obviously, the vocal utterance in words does not itself utter words. If this were the meaning of ‘speech’, then Carnap would be quite correct to complain that Heidegger’s speech is without meaning.

Though I have focused on his use of self-reference, another philosophical methodology often employed by Heidegger tells of his shift in understanding language. Throughout *Being and Time*, and his later works, Heidegger engages in philology and etymological investigations in order to elucidate the structure of a category. German and Attic Greek function as the evidential base from which those determinations are lifted. For example, in *Being and Time*, he elucidates the present, der Gegenwart, as a ‘waiting towards’. Later in his work, Heidegger seems to realize that it is language itself which functions as the primordial evidential base upon which categories are illuminated. Thus, he gives up on the concept of speech as a mere ‘vocal utterance in words’. Now, language is the house of Being, that in which Being is revealed as Being. The fact that Heidegger believes philosophy can only properly be pursued in German and Greek gives us a clue concerning Heidegger’s own understanding of the speech about what is ‘unspeakable’.

Since the question concerning the meaning of Being is our Leitfaden, let us reflect on our speech about Being. In speaking about Being, we have come to the insight that *speech about Being is not* categorial *speech*. It is because we are perplexed about what speech could otherwise be that we ask our question. But if we simply allow ourselves to follow

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404 ‘Gegen’ means ‘toward’ and ‘wart’ is from ‘warten’ which is to wait. Here we are waiting towards, or anticipating the future.
Heidegger’s speech about Being, we shall have direct access to the character of that speech. Why should we contemplate Heidegger’s speech about Being? Well, all speech is, in one way or another, about Being. Since speech is about Being, Heidegger’s speech about Being is the speech that corresponds with what it is, as speech. Indeed, is this not that to which Heidegger is calling us in his injunction to think ‘language as language’? ‘Language speaks’ is not literally a claim about a subject called ‘language’ that has a voice. Instead, in the most minimal sense, we should interpret the sentence as a call for us to heed the call of language.

What is it to heed the call of language? We are called to listen to what the speech about Being says. Or, what is said in the speech about Being? Let us isolate the speech about Being to see what the inherent meaning in that speech is. We shall find that by listening to the speech about Being, we attain insight into what ‘language qua language’ is. Interestingly enough, when philosophers talk about listening to the call of Reason, or what Reason ‘dictates’, there is often much less squirming and complaining about the formulation of the command. Here, in the call to hear what ‘language’ has to ‘say’, Heidegger is asking something very similar of us. Let us take a moment to ask ourselves the following: what is it in virtue of which what is spoken in speech is said?

When we heed the call of the question, we immediately discover that the answer has always already been given, and is staring us in the face, as it were. The speech about Being, the speech that is, is in itself silent. How is it silent? There is no category qua category expressed in this speech. In respect to the nullity of the concept, speech expresses no meaning whatever. There is not even a contradiction present, for there are no concepts whatever to contradict one another. Silence is what ‘fills’ the vacuum left in the wake of the concept’s self-negation. From the side of the concept, there is nothing but silence left to
express in speech. The missing ‘difference’, the *dia-fora*, for which we seek, what ‘carries through’, is only in silence. As Heidegger states:

The verse calls the difference, but it neither thinks it specifically nor does it call its nature by this name. The verse calls the separation of the between, the gathering middle, in whose intimacy the bearing of things and the granting of world pervade one another.

The difference is not called by name, nor is it thought specifically. Still, is this really all that is expressed in the speech about Being? That speech about Being is silent is only one side of the coin. We may claim with confidence that silence fills the vacuum of the concept. But what fills the silence?

What shall supplant the speech that has become silent? The speech that has become silent is the categorial speech, the purely conceptual dia-fora. The only thing that can be spoken about, that speech which is, is the speech about what is immediate. The immediate not only is that about which we speak, but it is that which fills the void of silence. The silence of the categorial determination is fully penetrated by the entities encountered in immediate experience, for these are the only beings there are. More precisely, the pure meaning contents lost in the self-negation of the concept have been replaced by beings.

Here, so to speak, it is only beings ‘which may speak’, and is where meaning resides. Instead of a purely conceptual *dia-fora*, *dia-fora* becomes *meta-fora*, or metaphor. From Greek, metaphor is that which ‘carries over’. What is the speech that is? The speech that is is the speech of entities, which carries over into the silence left by the self-negation of the categories. Heidegger tells us that entities ‘speak.’ After all, there is nothing left about which to speak, and from which speak may proceed. Heidegger himself exemplifies this speech in

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Der Feldweg and die Sprache. In ‘Ein Winterabend’ it is the ‘Threshold’ and ‘pain’ which express the difference:

The threshold bears the between. What goes out and goes in, in the between, is joined in the between’s dependability. The dependability of the middle must never yield either way. The settling of the between needs something that can endure, and is in this sense hard. The threshold, as the settlement of the between, is hard because pain has petrified it. But the pain that became appropriated to stone did not harden into the threshold in order to congeal there. The pain presences unflagging in the threshold, as pain. But what is pain? Pain rends. It is the rift. But it does not tear apart into dispersive fragments. Pain indeed tears asunder, it separates, yet so that at the same time it draws everything to itself, gathers it to itself. Its rending, as a separating that gathers, is at the same time that drawing which, like the pen-drawing of a plan or sketch, draws and joins together what is held apart in separation. Pain is the joining agent in the rending that divides and gathers. Pain is the joining of the rift. The joining is the threshold. It settles the between, the middle of the two that are separated in it. Pain joins the rift of the difference. Pain is the dif-ference itself. Pain has turned the threshold to stone. 406

The speech about Being is not conceptual, but it is the speech of entities. It is metaphorical speech that occupies the silence of conceptual self-negation. What is this speech that can only ever appear as nonsense from the merely conceptual or nihilistic standpoint? Poetry is that speech in which we encounter the unity of oppositions in metaphor. As Hoelderlin states: but where the danger is, also grows the saving power. In Heidegger, the dialectic of self-reference has become poetry. Self-reference negates the conceptual limits of the concept and renders those limits non-conceptual. Accordingly, every content of the concept falls into silence, or what is the same thing just from another side, metaphor. The individual, in which the universal and the individual are inexorably linked, can only be expressed in poetry, not through any merely conceptual means. Just as Plato himself hinted at this in his dialogues, Poetry is the saying of Being 407 Let us heed Heidegger’s words:

407 Footnote on the poetry of the Dialogues, the compositions of Socrates in the Phaedo, the appeal to Myth at the end of the dialogues, and the necessity of the image for philosophical insight.
Language speaks in that the command of the dif-ference calls world and things into the simple onefold of their intimacy. Language speaks as the peal of stillness. Stillness stills by the carrying out, the bearing and enduring, of world and things in their presence. The carrying out of world and thing in the manner of stilling is the appropriative taking place of the dif-ference. Language, the peal of stillness, is, inasmuch as the dif-ference takes place. Language goes on as the taking place or occurring of the dif-ference for world and things.408

Earlier we developed the philosophy of religion by contrasting Being with the concept. But it became quite unclear how we could ever speak about the concept or Being, for that matter. As it turns out, *the concept only has Being as poetry*. Thus, we could say that Being and the concept are not separable in poetry, and insofar as the concept is, Being and the concept are truly not separated at all. What might the relationship between religion and poetry be? *What religion says in its quietude before God, the poet says in metaphor*. When we speak to God we do it in metaphor, in poetry, not through a philosophy that insists on their separation. So in the book of John it states that “In the Beginning was the Word”.409 Original speech is divine speech, and this is no different from poetry. In order for the concept to be at all, it must express the unity of the universal and the particular in the individual. Because it fails to do this on its own, speech transforms itself into art. We must understand art as the model of speech and thought. All thinking that is not poetry is bad poetry. Philosophy, having become poetry, has overcome the tradition on its own terms, shed it like snakeskin, and as I would suggest, should look to the East.

When we heed Heidegger’s speech about Being, we discover that instead of a merely conceptual encounter with Being, we only find *entities in their self-presentation*. Important to note that here we are not *just* playing with images, in which one image stands in the place of

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409 See John 1.
something else, such as ‘Juliet is the sun’. Instead, metaphor has taken on the radical
signification that in the silence of beings, Being itself gives forth meaning. Surely, the poet
utters the meaning given by the beings, and we call forth images when we read or listen to
the poem, but it is the entities themselves from which the content of the speech has its
origin and it is in the entities that speech has its primordial dwelling. Our task, as poets, is to talk
back to Being what it has given us, as vehicles of Being’s self-knowing. Accordingly, we
should ask the following question: if Heidegger’ speech about Being truly is, what is the status
of his speech about Being and about speech?

Upon reading die Sprache, one might infer that the poetic speech Heidegger is
speaking about is the speech in ‘Ein Winterabend’. In one sense, this is literally true. But in a
more profound sense, we have missed what Heidegger is talking about if we do not consider
that it is Heidegger’s speech about Being which is the poetry. Accordingly, we must read ‘die Sprache
spricht’ as poetry, as metaphor. When Heidegger says that ‘speaking speaks’ he is talking about
his own speech. Speech is reflexive, and interestingly enough, it is the concept which cannot
maintain itself in the reflexivity of self-reference. The paradoxes we have encountered due to
self-reference seem to indicate that if are to take the reflexivity of thinking as inherent in
thought, we must adopt poetry and give up the principle of non contradiction. It is a
profound moment in the life of a thinker when the realization dawns that the reflexive
character of thought is inherently poetic.

If we dwell on the speech about Being, we shall come to see its poetic character.
Unlike the ancients, we are no longer holding out hopes for a conceptual resolution to the
problem. Instead, all speech has been consumed by poetry. All speech is poetry. Any speech
that fails to be poetic is a falling away from speech, or what is the same, a defamation of
Heidegger’s speech. Following this line of thinking, it is no wonder that Heidegger’s
followers treat him as a kind of savior, and as a cult figure. Speech, like Being, loses itself, and can only find itself again in virtue of its self-loss. Heidegger’s speech is the self-recovery of Being. So, let us not just say that ‘speech is the house of Being’ but that ‘Heidegger’s speech is the house of Being’. In an attempt to think on Heidegger’s own terms, I have taken poetic liberties in my expression of Heidegger’s thinking.

In die Sprache, one might take a cynical point of view and say that Heidegger is just talking about his own talking, and elevating it above all other speech. In one respect, this is right. But ironically enough, it is quite honest. As Metaphysicians we take our own speech to be the speech of Being. Heidegger is not a hypocrite in this respect, for his own metaphysical speech lives up to the way the metaphysician behaves. Heidegger’s speech exhibits, in this way as well, the unity of the universal and the individual.

Following the clue that metaphor is the ‘speech of entities’, we discover that Heidegger’s very concept of Phenomenology elucidates this truth about the ‘speech of entities’ well. Even as early as Being and Time, Heidegger has already, to some extent, arrived at this disclosure. Phenomenology is to “let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself.” It is inherently descriptive, for it is not conceptualizing any entity, but is simply following what shows up. By phenomena, Heidegger means that which shows itself in itself." The logos, or word, which phenomenology elucidates, is what lets something be seen from the thing the discourse is about. The logos of the poet points to what is beyond the poet’s logos.

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410 Heidegger, Being and Time, 59.  
411 Heidegger, Being and Time, 51. Phenomena is from ‘φαινομένα’ which means ‘to bring something to the light of day where something becomes manifest.’ Logos is the ‘αποκαλύπτω’, which is the pointing out of what is spoken from the side of the thing.  
412 Being and Time, 51.
Indeed, because the self-predicative practice of philosophy, or the self-repetition of
Being points us to attend to the concretely individual, the immediately given, we must attend
thereto in order to approach Being. In *der Feldweg*, Heidegger invokes the tree as illustrative
of the truth:

Die Eiche selber sprach, dass in solchem Wachstum allein gegründet wird, was dauert und
fruchtet: dass Wachsen heißt: der Weite des Himmels sich öffnen und zugleich in das
Dunkel der Erde wurzeln; dass alles Gediegne nur gedeiht, wenn der Mensch gleich recht
beides ist: bereit dem Anspruch des höchsten Himmels und aufgehoben im Schutz der
tragenden Erde.\(^{413}\)

It is not merely by contemplating the universal in its isolation that the nothingness of the
universal shows itself. For the contemplation of Being in its concreteness also points to the
nothingness of the universal in its isolation. Growth reveals Being in its concreteness, or
what is the same, the unity of Being and beings. To grow is “to open itself to the breadth of
heaven and at the same time to root itself in the darkness of the earth”. Growth is the
motion of Being, as that which is always exceeding itself in both directions: towards the
heavens and the earth. The poet utters in his song the ‘the silent word’ of the Oak. Being, as
the Oak, is not a merely metaphysical concept, but is quite concrete and immediate. The Oak
stretches towards Being, the heaven in which the immortals dwell, and the beings (the earth
where the mortals dwell).

Just as self-reference is a common feature of pre and post Kehre Heidegger, so to
does Heidegger give us concrete examples of entities that express the self-predicative
character of Being. In *der Feldweg* it is growth. Growth expresses the contradiction at the
heart of Being’s self-reference, namely its constant self-exceeding and motion. As Aristotle said,

\(^{413}\) Heidegger, *Der Feldweg.*
It is potential that maintains itself as potential.\footnote{414} Just as the Oak exemplifies the self-referential motion of Being, so does Heidegger’s phenomenology of Dasein in *Being and Time*. Dasein is being-towards-death, and as long as Dasein maintains itself as being-towards-death, Dasein will be complete as that which is always incomplete, i.e. as that which maintains its potential *qua* potential. Let us proceed to read Heidegger’s speech about difference in *die Sprache* on the model of Eckhart’s “Gott erst Gott” as poetry that metaphorically expresses the silence of the concept.

Heidegger’s legacy is probably best measured by the thought of his students: Gadamer, Jonas, Arendt, Levinas, and others. Instead of pursuing the minutiae of their thought, which would distract us rather than push us onward, let us reflect on the conceptual moves available to thinking once it has succumbed to Heidegger’s criticism. What Heidegger, as well as Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, accomplish is the end of the Western philosophical tradition. One of the fundamental goals of the tradition, universal and necessary knowledge about the universal itself, has fallen asunder. In fact, all absolute claims concerning the universal have become moot. The universal is no longer just universal, but is indistinguishable from the particular. The shattering of totality into particularity renders any attempt to grasp ‘the universal as such’ a misguided project. As such, the universal is inexorably tied to individuality. *Post-Modern* philosophy takes this up as an assumption, and from it takes various paths. I call Heidegger and the European philosophy that happens in its wake ‘Post-Modern’ in the sense that thinking is no longer conceived on the model of the artifact, but on art and spontaneous creativity in which universality is individual.

One line of thinking which arises out of this critique is the more standard Post-Modern line of thinking. Since the universal is particular, we can no longer attempt to sort

\footnote{414} I am indebted to Joseph P. Carter for this connection.
out which ‘really is the universal’. Each is, as a particular universal, *equally valid* as a competing system of philosophy. Accordingly, we have a *plurality* of perspectives that stand in a relation of equality. In this field, plurality and diversity becomes central values, as can be exhibited in the admission policies of contemporary American universities.

Leotard perhaps provides a very close analogue to this view. From this perspective, the identity of the universal with the individual is *subjective*. ‘Subjective’ can be taken here in respect to either an individual consciousness or a culture of interpretation. Each subject propounds a point of view about what is universal, and each point of view is a competing narrative about the whole. Naturally, given the assumptions of the discourse, there is no way to get beyond the particular narratives to discover which is true. In a sense, if one narrator decides that he would like others or thinks other should share his view for whatever reason, be it ethical or aesthetic, the burden is on that narrator to *convince* the others, through an act of *rhetoric*, that it is the ethical or preferable aesthetic choice. At the most base level, the competition amongst perspectives may reduce to a mere *will to power*, and perhaps at bottom this is unavoidable.

The usual objection to this line of thinking is well known: the above view is relativistic. Because it is relativistic, yet claims that it is the universal truth, it is self-refuting. Well, I find this to be a rather naïve and silly criticism of the Post-Modern tradition. First, complaining that Post-Modern thought does not abide by the principle of non-contradiction will not save classical Western philosophy. As we have shown above, Post-Modern thought actually arises out of the assumption that thinking is governed by that principle. In fact, by appealing to the principle of non-contradiction, the philosopher only invites Post-Modernism back in through the front door without knowing it. Ironically, Post-Modern

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415 It is clear how the emphasis on hermeneutics in Gadamer’s thought may arise out of this line of thinking.
thinkers tend to be quite consistent, insofar as they are often quick to point out that the narrative they have given is itself one narrative among others that exists in a larger meta-context or narrative about and within the tradition. We must remind ourselves that even the criticisms of the classical attempts to know the universal qua universal, are particular claims that are situated within a tradition and a context, from which those claims cannot be separated. In a sense, we find ourselves having become historical thinkers, who are neither able nor willing to think the totality as totality.

Derrida, the famous and recently deceased Post-Structuralist, may only be properly understood if one approaches him from the standpoint of the German critique of the Western tradition. Each universal qua universal, is embodied in speech, and is not separable from speech. Each term in the language only acquires its meaning from other terms, and each definition points us beyond itself to other definitions. Naturally, this process leads us throughout the language such that language never points beyond itself, and only refers to itself. Why does the critique of the universal lead us here? We are lead here because we assume that the universal is particular. For this reason, our inquiry into the universal is only ever achieved at the level of the particular, and not the universal per se. Each stop is a ‘way station’ which only expresses a local context of meaning, but fails to get at the concept simpliciter. Here we are naturally reminded of Heidegger. Still, there is something more than Heidegger at work here.

Each word points beyond itself to other words. Of course, we are lead to wander throughout speech. In the process, we are liable to approach our beginning from many different sides and contexts, and fill out our understanding of our beginning this way. Our search is infinite for there is no one word or element of speech which encompasses all of speech. If one takes language as the house of the concept, one cannot find any one univocal
meaning or ‘genus’ in virtue of which each is language. One is simply lead on a linguistic adventure that circles back on itself. Accordingly, we are born in the middle and die in the middle of the discourse. To put the perspective in terms of Plato’s Parmenides, the infinite regress of the third man argument has become the very structure of meaning. There are only way stations, and no destination. When one reads Derrida one cannot help but feel that one is wandering through a field of meaning whose limits are indefinite and ambiguous. Key to the concepts at play here are ‘something’ and ‘other’. As Saussure points point, every something points to an other, and every other points to a something. Never do we arrive at the something-other which encapsulates them both.

We might also dwell momentarily on Sartre and the tradition of existentialism. Key to the development of Sartre’s philosophy is insight that consciousness is not ‘a thing’. We have already, in our discussion of Kant, pointed out the analogous structure of Being and consciousness. Sartre picks up on this, and applies Heidegger’s insights about Being to consciousness. Just as Being is not a thing, consciousness is not ‘a thing’ either. Sartre’s criticism of Husserl has a deep connection to Heidegger’s critique of onto-theology. That human beings are free to determine themselves, that ‘existence precedes essence’, has its ground in the ‘nothingness’ of consciousness.

On the whole, Continental philosophy offers a strong challenge to our inquiry. On the one hand, we are challenged to think about whether the universal per se can be known on merely conceptual terms or whether we must abandon philosophy for poetry. On the other hand, we are called to consider whether the concept ought to be governed by the principle of non-contradiction, since it is this principle which leads to the dissolution of the universal into the individual, and prevents the universal from being a principle of individuality. After our brief discussion of Analytic philosophy, in Chapter three we shall embark on a fresh
systematic inquiry into the universal with challenges offered by the Continental tradition in the forefront of our minds.
In order that we might focus our inquiry into Analytic Philosophy on the specific contributions it has made to our question concerning the concept of the concept, we must first locate the most explicit philosophical problem concerning the concept of the concept that motivates those solutions. Bertrand Russell provides our guiding thread for such an inquiry. In 1901, Russell discovered what has come to be called the “Russell Paradox”. By explicating Russell’s paradox, it should become clear to us why the reflexive problems at the ground of the traditional notion of the concept are not merely applicable to the concept of the abstract universal and the genus, but must apply to the concept of the set. In addition, Russell’s paradox also offers us a convenient way to trace the dominant response within the Analytic tradition to the problem of the differentia. Following our discussion of Russell, we shall briefly examine how his way of solving the paradox is echoed in the thought of Wittgenstein, Ryle, and Strawson.

While working on the *Principles of Mathematics* (1903), Russell discovered what is now called “Russell’s Paradox”. As is well known, Russell informed Frege of his discovery in 1902, which proved that Frege’s axioms in his philosophy of mathematics were inconsistent. In Appendix B to that same work Russell included his initial response to his paradox which later found more sophisticated explication in *Mathematical Logic as Based on the Theory of Types* (1908). What is perhaps least surprising about Russell’s response to his own paradox is the way that it parallels the traditional solutions to the participation problem. Because Russell’s solution provides an overall model for thinking about concepts in the Analytic Tradition, the
traditional problems that plague the traditional answers must also plague the Analytic tradition on the same grounds.

For the Analytic tradition, this is especially problematic, for the early impetus for Russell’s work is not to solve classical metaphysical problems, but to show that they were the outcome of a misunderstanding of language. Though proper language analysis, philosophy wished to show the absurdity of classical metaphysical questions and problems, though it is unclear whether the problem of the participation, differentia, and onto-theology were on their radar. Perhaps because of the traditions hesitancy to read the history of philosophy seriously on its own terms, it found itself in the exact place it wished to avoid. On the whole, we shall find two bright spots in the tradition which point to novel solutions to the problem of the concept: Wittgenstein and what has come to be known as ‘Paraconsistent’ logic.

Russell’s paradox concerns sets, and is formulated in terms of set theory. Sets are essentially classes upon which Russell attempted to ground mathematics. Russell grounded the natural numbers as relations between sets. For example, the cardinal number ‘1’ is constituted by the one-to-one correspondence of two sets with a single member. Because these relations between sets are not themselves empirical, we ought to recognize that Russell’s identification of concepts with sets does not mean that he is an empiricist. To the contrary, Russell was a stringent ‘logicist’. In other words, he believed in ‘abstract entities’ such as concepts. Because of Russell’s attempt to ground mathematics in set theory, without solving Russell’s paradox, the legitimacy of mathematics, as well as logic, hangs in the balance.

Early Analytic thinking, as is well known, originates as a reaction to excessive Metaphysical speculation, especially Hegelian speculation that was rampant in Britain at the turn of the 20th century. The basic methodology in early Analytic Epistemology is basically
transcendental, just as it is in early Heideggerian thought. Instead of focusing on ‘everyday Being-in-the-World’ or the ‘question of Being’, early Analytic thinkers such as Moore, Russell, and Wittgenstein employed a broadly linguistic approach. Since language is the necessary vehicle by which we think, in order to think about thinking or indeed any other subject with precision, we must think about language. Thus, the basic way the question of philosophy is posited remains the same: what are the conditions for the possibility of thinking? Because the domain of the question is delimited to speech, the question takes on a distinct flavor: what are the linguistic conditions for the possibility of thinking? Ludwig Wittgenstein, the second genius of the tradition, may be the only philosopher of the whole tradition who understood, along with Heidegger, the mystical outcome of the transcendental turn. The schools he helped to form, Logical Positivism and Ordinary Language philosophy, never really seemed to grasp this, and today they are no longer the dominant schools.

By clarifying how one ought to use language, Analytic philosophers attempted to show that many metaphysical, epistemic, and logical questions were grounded in an abuse of language. Instead of solving classical problems, Analytic philosophy inspired us to resolve them. Russell’s Theory of Descriptions, among other things, provides logical distinctions between descriptions and names in order to achieve this goal. Indeed, beyond Russell’s own use of his theory, we have already had the opportunity to mention how Quine employed Russell’s Theory of Descriptions to ‘shave Plato’s beard’ and solve the problem of negative existentials. Today this tradition is all but dead, and in its place a very naïve metaphysical tradition has arisen that has very little understanding of the basic problems of philosophy with which Russell and Wittgenstein were so well versed. Despite this, we shall see that there are some encouraging developments in contemporary Analytic thought.
Let us proceed to explicate Russell's paradox. Consider two distinct sets: the set of Picasso’s paintings, and the set of everything that is not a Picasso painting. The set of Picasso’s paintings only includes the actual paintings of Picasso. What is not included is the very set of those paintings. Accordingly, the set of Picasso’s paintings is not a member of itself. If we think back to our discussion of Aristotle, we are reminded that empirical concepts cannot be self-inclusive. Let us lay down as established the existence of a meta-set, if you will: the set of sets that are not members of themselves. Note that sets that are not members of themselves cannot be self-referential, for the self-referential set will necessarily be a member of itself, and shall thereby be existentially implicative.

Now consider the other example: the set of everything that is not a painting by Picasso. Besides the obvious members for this set, such as cups and stars, we also know that the set of everything that is not a painting of Picasso is not itself a Picasso painting. Thus, we may safely claim that the set of everything that is not a painting by Picasso includes itself as a member. Thus, there is another meta-set: the set of all sets that are members of themselves. In the language we have been employing thus far, the set qua the universal is a particular, or an extension of itself. As such, the set exhibits existential implication, for when I conceive the universal ‘the set of everything that is not a Picasso painting’ I can infer that there is at least one particular that is not a Picasso painting: the universal or the set of everything that is not a Picasso painting. The existential implication in this case is achieved as it is in virtually every case we have encountered with the exception of Aristotle: because the set is self-referring, it must exhibit existential implication, and thereby include itself as an instance of itself. In sum, we have two types of meta-sets: the self-referring set which is existentially implicative, or is a member of itself, and the non-self-referring set which is not existentially implicative, or does not include itself as a member of itself. As we can see, Russell's paradox
concerns the same basic distinctions that have perplexed us from the very start of our inquiry. Here I find it quite encouraging that at the ground of the tradition we find the motivating distinctions of my work.

Given the distinction between these two meta-sets, we have the basic ‘conceptual machinery’ in place to reconstruct the paradox. Consider the set of all sets that are not members of themselves. The set of all sets that are not members of themselves is either a member of itself, or it is not a member of itself. Let us consider the former. If the set of all sets that are not members of themselves is a member of itself, then by definition it cannot be a member of itself, since the set in question is a set of all sets that are not members of themselves. Clearly, the first option is absurd, since it would not be a member of itself in virtue of being a member of itself. Thus, one might infer that since the former possibility is absurd, one must affirm that the set of all sets that are not members of themselves cannot be a member of itself. But if the set of all sets that are not members of themselves were not a member of itself, then by definition it must be a member of itself, for it is the set of all sets that are not members of itself. Thus, the set of all sets can neither be a member of itself, nor can it not be a member of itself, for either the set is a member of itself, and therefore cannot be, or it is not a member of itself, and thereby must be a member of itself.

This paradox is supposed to obtain in ‘naïve set theory’. ‘Naïve set theory’ has an unconstrained ‘Comprehension’ or ‘Abstraction’ Axiom, in which a proposition, such as ‘x is P’ contains only those things, x (understood as a free variable), that have that property, P. Without constraining what propositions totalities are allowed to contain, ‘naïve set theory’ cannot avoid Russell’s paradox. Thus, by constraining that axiom, philosophers hope to avoid the paradox. What does it mean to constrain the Comprehension axiom? Let us take a look at Russell’s solution.
Concerning the solution to the paradox, Russell offers the following:

An analysis of the paradoxes to be avoided shows that they all result from a kind of vicious circle. The vicious circles in question arise from supposing that a collection of objects may contain members which can only be defined by means of the collection as a whole. Thus, for example, the collection of propositions will be supposed to contain a proposition stating that “all propositions are either true or false.” It would seem, however, that such a statement could not be legitimate unless “all propositions” referred to some already definite collection, which it cannot do if new propositions are created by statements about “all propositions.” We shall, therefore, have to say that statements about “all propositions” are meaningless…. The principle which enables us to avoid illegitimate totalities may be stated as follows: “Whatever involves all of a collection must not be one of the collection”; or, conversely: “If, provided a certain collection had a total, it would have members only definable in terms of that total, then the said collection has no total.” We shall call this the “vicious-circle principle,” because it enables us to avoid the vicious circles involved in the assumption of illegitimate totalities.416

What is the basic solution? At bottom, Russell has pinpointed the source of the paradox in the act of self-reference, by which a set becomes a member of itself. In order to preserve classical logic, we need to constrain the Comprehension Axiom in such a way that propositions scope may not include any object defined in terms of itself. As Russell states, “statements about all propositions are meaningless.” Naturally, statements about all propositions must include that very statement itself. Since it is the self-reference which generates the problem, the solution to the paradox is quite simple: reject self-reference and with it self-inclusion. If we were to maintain self-inclusion, we would necessarily still allow that what involves all the members could be one of the members. What Russell rejects in virtue of the rejection of self-reference is systematic connectivity, in which propositions are only definable in terms of the whole itself. Russell calls such totalities ‘illegitimate’. Still, if we reflect on Russell’s solution to the problem, we might well remember that Aristotle offered a similar answer to the participation problem: the rejection of self-reference. Russell, unlike Aristotle, does not invoke self-reference at the most universal level, as Aristotle must in order that he

416 I have cited this quote from page 37 of Whitehead and Russell’s *Principia Mathematica*, (1910) which I discovered from the entry on “Russell’s Paradox” from the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
may be able to talk about totality. Instead, he seems to deny that there is such a thing as an absolute ‘totality’, for which self-reference would be required.

Russell’s paradox appears to be a narrower version of another paradox that is broader in scope, namely that paradox which has the problems of participation and differentia as its poles. The problem of participation works from the assumption that the concept, in order to be a concept, must be a member of itself. Of course, this seems absurd, for an infinite regress is generated, rendering ‘the’ concept of the concept infinite. Yet, if the concept were not a member of itself, then it would not be a concept. Thus, there would not be ‘the concept’ of the concept. Instead, the concept itself would not be a concept, and would fail to be conceptual. Thus, ‘the concept’ of the concept is an ad hoc stipulation of what is in itself not conceptual. This ad hoc result that we achieve by rejecting self-reference is the problem of the differentia. Russell’s paradox concerns the ‘set of all sets that are not members of themselves’, not the ‘set of all sets whatever’. The ‘set of all sets that are not members of themselves’ only considers a totality within a larger totality, namely that ‘set of sets simpliciter.’

As one can see, because Russell rejects self-referential propositions, his account must fall victim to the same problem that plagued Aristotle and Kant: the problem of the differentia. Since the rejection of self-reference engenders the problem of the differentia, Russell cannot help but escape the same problems of Aristotle and Kant. Indeed, Russell’s retractors say as much, insofar as they complain that Russell’s solution appears utterly ad hoc. In the Continental tradition the problem of the differentia, in turn, leads to mysticism. Indeed, the Analytic tradition has an analogue to Heidegger in the thought of Wittgenstein, for he too also recognizes how the problem of the differentia leads to philosophical mysticism. We
shall turn to Wittgenstein’s analysis of conceptual determinacy after a brief discussion of the widespread influence of Russell’s thought.

Russell’s move to reject self-reference appears to be characteristic of the tradition through the middle of the twentieth century. A very brief look at some key texts in the tradition shows this quite clearly. For example, in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein, Russell’s most famous student, informs us that “You do not really see the eye”\(^\text{417}\) and “From nothing in the field of sight can it be concluded that it is seen from the eye”\(^\text{418}\). Obviously, he is not giving us a lesson in physiology. Instead, ‘the eye does not see itself’ is an analogy for logical structure. If we think of logic on analogy with seeing, we must conclude that logic is not self-referential. What is seen is something other than that which sees. The seeing itself is not seen. The ‘seeing’ of logic is always about something other than the logic itself. In fact, Wittgenstein’s thinking in the *Tractatus* takes Russell’s rejection of self-reference as a basic assumption. Without any metaphor or analogy, Wittgenstein explicitly states that

No proposition can say anything about itself, because the propositional sign cannot be contained in itself (that is the “whole theory of types”).\(^\text{419}\)

Indeed, as we shall see, the abolishing of self-reference is Wittgenstein’s direct link to mysticism.

*Logical Positivism* is well known for its stance that in order for a proposition to have meaning it must be empirically verifiable. Since empirical concepts are not self-referential, it follows that self-referential propositions are necessarily meaningless. A.J. Ayer, Carnap, and

other philosophers of the Vienna Circle, perhaps more than any other school of Analytic philosophy, exemplify this trait.

Ryle, a student of Wittgenstein and a logical behaviorist from the school of Ordinary Language Philosophy, in his discussion of Descartes’ ‘Ghost in the Machine’, in his *The Concept of Mind* gives another excellent example of this tendency in Analytic thought. Ryle asks us to imagine the following scenario. Imagine that if you gave someone a tour of the university, and after having showed the visitor all of the buildings comprising the university, the visitor asked ‘but where is the university?’ Clearly, the visitor has committed a category error. He assumes that there is some particular building that is the university. Here the connection with self-reference is clear. The category error consists in treating the *universal as its own particular*. Seeing categories clearly requires distinguishing the universal from the particular, and not treating the universal as though it were a particular. Here the category in question is empirical, and it would certainly be a category error to treat the empirical concept this way.

Strawson’s work also exemplifies the rejection of self-reference that is characteristic of Analytic philosophy. In his famous work *Individuals*, Strawson draws inspiration from what he calls the ‘descriptive Metaphysics’ of Aristotle and Kant, both of whom reject self-reference in their categories. In one vital respect, Strawson seems to have an uncanny awareness of the parallels between his own tradition and that of Kant and Aristotle. Still, because his account works in the spirit of a ‘descriptive Metaphysics’, it cannot help but fall victim to the problem of the differentia, as I mentioned earlier. Moreover, concerning individuality, Strawson claims that entities are individuated by space and time. But of course, this leaves completely undetermined exactly how *universals are individuated*, since they are *neither spatial nor temporal*. His allegiance to the tradition of Russell and Wittgenstein is also
evident in his claim that the existential quantifier ‘for some x’ represents individuality. As is well known, in classical formal logic, the existential quantifier ‘for some x’ cannot apply to itself. Quantifiers cannot be quantified over, yet this is exactly that to which one must commit oneself if one were to accept self-reference within a formal system. Quantifiers do not quantify over themselves. Indeed, as Wittgenstein clearly points out in the *Tractatus*, that would constitute a category error.

As is evident, the Analytic tradition through the middle of the 20th century appears to hold fast to the concept that self-reference is at worst meaningless, and at best highly problematic. Though Wittgenstein, a key contributor and founder to both *Logical Positivism* and *Ordinary Language Philosophy*, helped to instill this assumption in the Analytic tradition, nevertheless, he grasps how the rejection of self-reference, if properly thought through, must necessarily give rise to mysticism. As such, he is the analogue to Heidegger in the Continental tradition, for he provides insight into one of the only possible solutions to the problem of the differentia: mysticism.

Our encounter with Wittgenstein shall prefigure and anticipate the systematic reconstruction of the problems inherent in conceptual thinking in chapter three. In what follows I will trace, in brief outline, how Wittgenstein’s thinking about the concept helps give rise to the Logical Positivism and Ordinary Language Philosophy. Like Heidegger, if Wittgenstein has taught us successfully, then we should give up philosophy.

As any worthy transcendental logician would conceive it, the overall goal of the *Tractatus* is to lay bare the transcendental grounds for knowledge of knowledge and knowledge of the world. Let us begin with Wittgenstein’s admission that self-reference is absurd:
No proposition can say anything about itself, because the propositional sign cannot be contained in itself (that is the whole theory of types).

Not only does Wittgenstein recognize that negating self-reference is necessary for solving Russell’s Paradox, but it is also necessary for the preservation of logic and meaning. Because self-referential propositions force us into a contradiction, in order to preserve the basic principles of formal logic, self-reference must be rejected. Thinking as such cannot take itself as its own object, or fall within its own domain of referents, without either generating a contradiction, in which thinking is the universal and the particular in the same respect, or generating an infinite regress. *Any meaningful proposition is not about itself.*420

Wittgenstein is explicit about why self-reference must be rejected:

Propositions can represent the whole reality, but they cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it—the logical form. To be able to represent the logical form, we should have to be able to put ourselves with the propositions outside logic, that is outside the world.421

Propositions can represent facts. But they cannot represent logical form. If they could represent logical form, *the logical form would represent the logical form.* But that would require logical form to be outside logical form, in order to represent it. If logical form were external to logical form, logical form would not be representing logical form. Our only point of reference form which logical form could be represented is from *within* logic, and logic as such cannot be represented from within itself. Why? Well, if the whole of logic could be contained within logic, then *logic itself would be contradictory,* for it would necessarily be greater

420 In the following chapter I defend Wittgenstein’s inference that if one assumes the principle of non-contradiction, then one must reject self-reference.
than itself and lesser than itself. That within which logic is represented would not itself be represented. We would fall into the second deduction of Plato’s *Parmenides*. 

Still, why would the representation of logical form require us to transcend the world? In order for concepts to represent the world accurately in the proposition, the proposition must have some form or structure in common with the world it represents. To put it the other way around, in order for the world to be representable by the proposition, the world must have form or structure in common with the proposition. In order for the concept to represent the world, neither the world nor the thinking of the world in the proposition may lack logical form. For this basic reason, one condition for thinking the world truly is the attribution of logical form to the world:

What every picture, of whatever form, must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it at all—rightly or falsely, is the logical form, that is, the form of reality.422

What is the structure of reality in the most abstract sense? It is the form of logic.423 In order to represent logical form, logic would need to place itself ‘outside of logic’ and ‘outside the world’, precisely because the world has logical form. Accordingly, propositions neither represent their own form nor that of the world.424 Wittgenstein’s transcendental philosophy

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422 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 2.182. In the following quotes from the *Tractatus*, I will only include the line numbers.
423 See the following propositions. 2.182 “Every picture is also a logical picture.” 1.13 “The facts in logical space are the world.” 2.182 “What every picture, of whatever form, must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it at all—rightly or falsely, is the logical form, that is, the form of reality.” 5.61 “Logic fills the world: the limits of the world are also its limits.”
424 2.174 “But the picture cannot place itself outside of its form of representation.” 4.0312 “My fundamental thought is that the ‘logical constants’ do not represent. That the logic of facts cannot be represented.”
moves in two directions: given formal logic, what is the structure and limit of thinking?

Given formal logic, what is the structure and limit of the world?

A close reader will quickly see that Wittgenstein himself explicitly discusses logical form in these passages. Naturally, Wittgenstein recognizes a fundamental problem with the rejection of self-reference from which his mystical leanings arise: if we need self-reference to speak about speaking, or to think about thinking, it appears that we cannot help but speak without meaning. Of course, Wittgenstein’s project in the *Tractatus* is inherently reflexive, for one of his basic aims is to delimit the sphere of meaningful discourse from what is not meaningful. As he informs us:

> It [Philosophy]\(^{425}\) should limit the thinkable and thereby the unthinkable. It should limit the unthinkable from within through the thinkable.\(^{426}\)

Thus, Wittgenstein must answer to his own use of reflexive language. We must bear this ‘fact’ in mind, for it provides the basic clue to uncovering what is constitutive of his early thought. The uncharitable reader would simply call foul. In Wittgenstein’s terms, truth is the correspondence of the proposition with the fact, which in its basic form is the *correspondence of the logical form in the proposition with the logical form in the fact*. Since we cannot represent the correspondence of logical form in the proposition with the logical form in the fact, it follows that we cannot represent truth itself.\(^{427}\)

Wittgenstein’s rejection of self-reference explains, in large part, his conception of philosophy. Philosophers, duped by the reflexivity of thinking that is embodied in our

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\(^{425}\) ‘[Philosophy]’ is my insertion.

\(^{426}\) See 4.114.

\(^{427}\) Once again, we find ourselves with what is tantamount to the same problem of participation in Plato.
ordinary language\textsuperscript{428}, have been deceived into entertaining unanswerable questions such as the problem of participation. As long as we allow self-reference in our language and logic, we shall not escape such problems. Accordingly, in order to resolve these philosophical problems, we must revise the logic of our language. Since self-reference is one of the main culprits in this confusion, self-reference must be abolished from our language. Accordingly, all philosophy is the critique of language.\textsuperscript{429}

Most propositions and questions, that have been written about philosophical matters, are not false, but senseless. We cannot, therefore, answer questions of this kind at all, but only state their senselessness. Most questions and propositions of the philosophers result from the fact that we do not understand the logic of our language.\textsuperscript{430}

Since ordinary language disguises the structure of thought, in order to resolve philosophical problems, the task of philosophy lies in the construction of a new formal symbolic language, from which the self-referential trappings of ordinary language, as well as other errors and ambiguities, are in absolutely excluded:

In order to avoid these errors, we must employ a symbolism which excludes them, by not applying the same sign in different symbols, and by not applying signs in the same way which signify in different ways. As symbolism, that is to say, which obeys the rules of logical grammar-of logical syntax.\textsuperscript{431}

Philosophy does not solve any other problem other than the problem of philosophy itself. In the phrase of Austin, Wittgenstein has set out on a journey to teach us ‘how to do things with words’. Philosophy, by thinking what it is to think, has only one job: the logical

\textsuperscript{428} 4.002 “Language disguises thought.”
\textsuperscript{429} 4.0031 “All philosophy is ‘Critique of language’.”
\textsuperscript{430} See 4.003.
\textsuperscript{431} See 3.325.
clarification of thought. Unlike in Austin’s case, early Wittgenstein is not advising us to simply obey the superficial structure of ordinary language. Quite to the contrary, he is calling us to abandon it.

On the whole, Wittgenstein, like Russell before him, is searching for the deep logical structure that underlies the surface grammar of our language. The dream posits that if we could properly identify and reconstruct that logic independently of the surface grammar in merely formal-symbolic terms, we could solve all philosophical problems. Even today this project is still alive in the work ‘old fashioned’ logicians. At the end of the day, we should revise our language such that all meaningless propositions are syntactically precluded in the rule of the logical grammar, and all semantic content may be abstractly represented on the logical grid.

Having connected Wittgenstein’s philosophical project with his denial of self-reference, let us dwell on how the formal-logical thinking that guides Wittgenstein in his approach to thinking also motivates him to posit his picture theory of language. Dwelling on the concept of the formal-logical, we discover that logic per se is empty of content. Logic does not, in itself, offer any content about the way the world is. Logic can only be ‘formal’ if by definition it abstracts from all contents of cognition. Since thinking as such is deemed

\[4.112 \text{ “The object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts.”}\]

\[433 \text{ This project falls in the line of a long and problematic history of modern philosophy of language. Since the dawn of Modern Rationalists, e.g. Descartes and Leibniz, philosophers have been searching for a \textit{‘mathematical’} language in which to express philosophical concepts which is freed from the problems of ordinary language. Ironically there is a problem with this project that lead researchers in a circle: It is impossible to develop a \textit{‘universal language’} of reason: only through the universal language of reason can we think the pure Idea signified by the universal language, yet we must know the pure Idea before we can discover what the universal language of reason is. This logical circle prevents our entry at every point. In other words, because we begin from and within ordinary language, we cannot specify what the non-signed pure Idea is, and we could only specify it if we were employing the universal language, which we can only determine once we know the Idea.}\]
merely formal, we have no access to the content of the world a priori.\textsuperscript{434} Given that there cannot be any ordering of content a priori, logic, as pure syntax, must rely on a source that is external to logical form for the meaning-contents, or semantics. Given that to think is to think in some language it can only be in some language that the semantic contents of thought are found. Naturally, if what we said above is correct, the logic of language alone cannot suffice for semantics, for the form of language is formal-logical. Hence, we must appeal to our only source of content that we possess: sense experience and imagination. From sense experience we cull images or pictures that stand for states of affairs in the world. As Wittgenstein states “What the picture represents is its sense.”\textsuperscript{435} If semantics must be cashed out in terms of pictures, and semantics is only the semantics of some language, then Wittgenstein would not be wrong to advance a picture theory of language. In sum, the absolute separation of syntax from semantics forces us into a picture theory of language.

What is entailed in a picture theory of language? As everyone knows, pictures are not about themselves.\textsuperscript{436} The phrase ‘painting painting’ is absurd for exactly this reason. That pictures cannot represent themselves is consistent with Wittgenstein’s ban on self-reference. Note that any philosopher who genuinely thinks that metaphor is necessary in order to have any semantic content to speech and thought must also reject the meaningfulness of self-referential concepts. Since all pictures are culled from experience, and cannot be located in the abstract form of thinking, no picture is a priori true, a priori signifying a thought whose possibility guarantees its truth.\textsuperscript{437} Because what is thought is always some a posteriori content, in order to speak meaningfully, Wittgenstein claims that meaningful speech is totally

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{434} See the following: 5.634 “There is no order of things a priori”, 2.225 “There is no picture which is a priori true”, and 3.04 “An a priori true thought would be one whose possibility guaranteed its truth.”
\item \textsuperscript{435} See 2.221.
\item \textsuperscript{436} 2.172 “The picture, however, cannot represent its form of representation; it shows it forth.”
\item \textsuperscript{437} See 2.225.
\end{itemize}
circumscribed by the propositions of the natural sciences, for the description of the \textit{a posteriori} is the charge and realm of natural science. If all meaningful discourse posits some \textit{a posteriori content}, it must follow that tautologies and contradictions say nothing.\footnote{438 See 4.461.} Thus, discourse about logic cannot posit a possible state of the world.

Whether he knew this or not, with the importation of content from experience, Wittgenstein appears to have also imported the conclusions of modern empiricism, and in particular, those of David Hume. Both systematically and historically, this makes sense, for British Empiricism tends to think about thinking as \textit{pictorial}. For instance, he boldly declares that “Superstition is the belief in the causal nexus”\footnote{439 See 5.1361.}, “The thinking, presenting subject; there is no such thing”\footnote{440 See 631.}, “A necessity for one thing to happen because another has happened does not exist. There is only logical necessity”\footnote{441 See 6.37.}, and “Here we see that solipsism strictly carried out coincides with pure realism”\footnote{442 See 5.64.}. As historians of philosophy know, Hume argued that other minds and the self cannot be known, and that belief in causality is grounded in custom and habit, or what Wittgenstein more disparagingly calls ‘superstition’. One might go further and say that with his identification of logic and world, it is not just that we cannot find a subject, but that there \textit{cannot be} one. As Wittgenstein tells us, “Skepticism is not irrefutable, but palpably senseless, if it would doubt where a question cannot be asked.”\footnote{443 See 6.51.} For example, it makes no sense to doubt answers to the question ‘where is the thinking subject?’ if the question cannot be answered. As we will see, Wittgenstein later comes to reject these claims. Indeed, he does a complete about-face in his turn to ordinary

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item See 4.461.
\item See 5.1361.
\item See 631.
\item See 6.37.
\item See 5.64.
\item See 6.51.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
language philosophy. Again, his later change of heart stems, as we might expect, from his reflections on what meaning is.

Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* is senseless. Wittgenstein famously claims as much:

My propositions are elucidatory in this way: he who understands me finally recognizes them as senseless, when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them. (He must so to speak throw away the latter, after he has climbed up upon it.) He must surmount these propositions; then he sees the world rightly. 444

Why are Wittgenstein’s propositions without sense? Wittgenstein’s propositions cannot have meaning, because they are self-referential. By thinking the form of what is thinkable from within the thinkable, Wittgenstein has transgressed his own measure of what counts as meaningful. 445 Still, this does not count against him, but for him. Wittgenstein undermines the meaningfulness of all philosophical discourse when he precludes reflexivity from meaning. Wittgenstein cannot treat his own speech as an exception. Thus, one can only understand what Wittgenstein has said if one understands that his speech is meaningless. How do we grasp that speech, if we cannot represent what he has said?

As Wittgenstein says, though we cannot represent logical form, logical form can be *shown*. 446 We come to ‘see’ logical form only once we grasp that we cannot think it. As Wittgenstein writes, “the propositions show the logical form of reality”. 447 Since logic is the form of thinking and reality, and logical form cannot be said, but only shown, it follows that it is not only the form of thinking that can be shown, but also the form of reality itself.

Something is shown, not said, when it *transcends* our concepts. What transcends our concepts

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444 See 6.54.
445 See 6.13. “Logic is transcendental.” In other words, logic transcends meaning. Logic cannot be meaningfully spoken about.
446 4.1212 “What can be shown cannot be said.”
447 See 4.121.
is the mystical. Thus, when the world as such is ‘shown’ to us, or when ‘logic’ is shown to us, our insight into the world and the concept is an act of non-conceptual, or mystical seeing.\footnote{Consider the analogy with Plato: the ‘Form’ of Forms is not a Form, and we are only able to have a mystical insight into what it is.}

Since the world is, in itself, the form of logic, that the world is at all, and that it is one world, is itself mystical.\footnote{See the following propositions: 6.432 “How the world is, is completely indifferent for what is higher. God does not reveal himself \textit{in} the world.” (Mysticism) 6.44 “Not how the world is, is the mystical, but \textit{that it is}.” 6.45 “The feeling of the world as a limited whole is the mystical feeling.”} Since we cannot say anything meaningful about logic and the concept, Wittgenstein famously claims that we should remain silent about the concept itself: “whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must remain silent”.\footnote{See \textit{Tractatus}, 7.} What is fascinating about Wittgenstein is that he teaches us that the mystical is the result of encountering logic \textit{as logic}. Indeed, according to this account, this treatise is at the same time meaningless and mystical.

Instead of transforming philosophical speech into poetry, as Heidegger does, Wittgenstein endorses silence. Still, Wittgenstein must be committed to the claim that aesthetic and ethical speech is also meaningless. So, we may put to rest any questions about the unity of the good and the beautiful, as well as my question about ‘the concept of the concept’.

When we come to see the meaninglessness of the propositions about logic, that is exactly when we come to see logic for what it is, that it when it reveals itself to us.\footnote{6.522 “There is indeed the inexpressible. This shows itself; it is the mystical.”} Wittgenstein teaches us that the structure of logic, and thereby the concept, can only be shown by pointing out the meaningless of his own propositions. According to Wittgenstein, this is the only method of philosophy:

The right method of philosophy would be this. To say nothing except what can be said, i.e. the propositions of natural science, i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy;
and then always, when someone else wished to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had given no meaning to his signs in his propositions. This method would be unsatisfying to the other—he would not have the feeling that we were teaching him philosophy—but it would be the only strictly correct method.\footnote{See 6.53.}

As I said earlier, the \textit{reductio} against the mystic’s position does not undermine his position, but confirms it. Every time we conceptualize the concept we do not arrive at the concept. If we accept the principle of non-contradiction as constitutive of thought, we come to see that we cannot think the concept \textit{per se} without violating that principle. So, far from undermining him, by performing a \textit{reductio} on Wittgenstein’s propositions we only show the absurdity of constructing propositions about the concept, which is exactly what he wants to show with his propositions about logic! To put it paradoxically, which is the only way to put it, by undermining his own propositions, he shows their truth. This process of making a reflexive claim and then seeing its absurdity is structurally analogous to Heidegger’s approach, in which we make the self-referential statement, ‘language speaks’, in order to point us back to the mystical. Of course, as I mentioned earlier in our discussion of Heidegger, Nagarjuna had already made this argument a thousand years ago. Still, Wittgenstein does a service to the West by showing what Buddhist philosophy has known for thousands of years, namely the intimate connection between formal logic, positivist empiricism, and mysticism.

We may never see that the concept can never be conceptualized, and we may continue to pursue our inquiry into the conceptual determination of the concept. Of course, such a pursuit is fruitless, and we only continue it because we have not seen that it is fruitless. Once we see the meaninglessness of our propositions about the concept, we may cease to conceptualize it. In sum, though Wittgenstein’s thought, along with other Analytic thinkers, succumbs to the problems of the difference, Wittgenstein knows this, and uses it to
show that there is no answer to the problem. What is the solution to the problem of the
differentia? What is the difference by which we distinguish philosophical concepts? Those
differences are meaningless, and this is to be seen, not said.

Wittgenstein’s reflection on meaningful discourse indeed gives much credence to the
fundamental concept of Logical Positivism. Following the leading work of Wittgenstein, A.J.
Ayer, posited the verification standard of meaning. Essentially, only propositions that are in
principle falsifiable were meaningful. Indeed, this standard follows an import strain in
Wittgenstein’s early work in the *Tractatus* quite well, except of course for its complete
dismissal of the mystical element in Wittgenstein’s thought. By limited meaning to what is
empirically falsifiable, any question which could not be answered by appealing to the
experimental work of the natural sciences would be rendered meaningless. Questions about
‘the concept of the concept’, for example, would surely fail to meet the standard, since the
question cannot be decided empirically.

By rendering any discourse about ‘the concept of the concept’ meaningless, Logical
Positivism is not able to make meaningful statements about what is and is not meaningful.
On the face of it, this undermines Positivism, since they must violate their own standard of
meaning, or they must simply admit that it is quite arbitrary. Of course, Wittgenstein had
already pointed out that the meaninglessness of any claim about the measure of meaning,
and had thereby anticipated this criticism. If the mystical element is admitted, Logical
Positivism has a defense, and a quite clever one at that. As long as the mystical element is
denied, Logical Positivism falls victim to its own self-referential inconsistency. One must
admit it to be a bad day for positivism when it requires mysticism in order for it to be
coherent!
Having delimited meaning to empirical space, Wittgenstein discovered that he could not advance the theory of meaning which he advocated in the *Tractatus*. Since the only meaningful concepts are empirical, Wittgenstein embarked on a project to develop a phenomenology of language which remained true to its empiricist phenomenology. Given that his basic assumptions about the mind were taken from the British Empiricist tradition, the most fundamental contents of the mind from which all concepts arose were *sense data*. From this point of view, all experience fundamentally arises from sense data. Sense data are private to the one who has them. In addition, given his admission that there is no self, the revision of language about sense data required radical revisions. Instead of ‘I see a blue splotch here and now’, we must say something like ‘there is a blue splotch here and now’. By thinking about the phenomenology of language that must be required given his radical delimitation of meaning to the contents of the sensible world, Wittgenstein discovered that if speech were only able to take private referents belonging to the Solipsistic subject such as sense data as its object, then *meaning would not be possible*. Wittgenstein’s great achievement in his groundbreaking *Philosophical Investigations* is his private language argument. With the private language argument, Wittgenstein annihilates any pretense Logical Positivism could have had regarding the authority of the senses as the source of meaning. Since Logical Positivism assumes that the proper objects of knowledge are private sense data, and the private language argument fundamentally undermines their project.

How does the private language argument undermine Logical Positivism? The private language argument is formulated as a *reductio ad absurdum* that no term can mean a referent private to some individual language-user whether that referent is a sensation or any other mental state, such as an intention or a belief. Assume that some individual were to refer, through the use of a word, to a referent private, e.g. a sensation, to himself at the present
time or at some future time. If one were to refer to this private referent, then one would have access to this referent, for it would be private to that one. It follows that no other person will be able to determine whether or not this one has applied the word correctly, because they have no access to the private referent. Thus, only this one is capable of determining whether or not he has used the word correctly or incorrectly. But if only this one were able to check his own application, then the correct application would be that which he determined it to be. If the correct application is whatever this one determines it to be, then any application of any word upon any private referent counts as a meaningful or a correct application. If it is arbitrary to which referent that he applies the word, then the meaning of any word which refers to a private referent does not exclude any private referent whatever, and if no referent is excluded, then the application of the word is arbitrary. If the application of the word is arbitrary, then it follows that there is no correct or incorrect use of the word. But it should be relatively obvious that any meaningful word has a correct and an incorrect use. For if a word, ‘pain’, has no incorrect use, then it has no meaning particular to it, i.e. it can have the meaning of any other word, e.g. ‘pleasure.’ In other words, the meaning of a word requires that it have a correct and an incorrect application. Insofar as words which mean private referents have no correct application, it follows that they have no meaning, i.e. their referents cannot be their meanings. They are meaningless. Thus, no term can be used to refer to any private referent, e.g. any mental state whether that is a sensation or some other private referent.

That ‘meaningful language use is the use of language in agreement with the linguistic community’s use of language of which the speaker is a part’ is not a premise but the conclusion of the argument. Wittgenstein’s claim about meaning in the Philosophical Investigations is the way in which Wittgenstein fills out the content of the ‘external
criterion of meaning’ in the *Philosophical Investigations*. In sum, only that which is public can be spoken about meaningfully. Since Positivism has adopted the traditional empirical standard rejected in this argument, it becomes obvious why Wittgenstein abandoned the Vienna Circle. Assuming that the private language argument is valid and sound, I do not think that any classical Rationalist position is affected. The sophisticated Rationalist strains in the history of philosophy, such as strains of Plato, Augustine, and Hegel, have always recognized that meaning is not private. Universals do not reside in the private space of any thinker—they are accessed via the mind, but transcend each individual mind. Instead, we should think about the private language argument as representing the consequences of modern empiricism.

As we all know, Wittgenstein is a main influence of Ordinary Language Philosophy, the fine tradition of Ryle and Austin. Since the meaningful use of language is to employ words in agreement with how they are actually used in one’s linguistic community, meaning is reduced to *convention*. Without others to enforce the convention, the convention ceases to have any staying power. Now, when philosophers ask a question concerning the meaning of some concept, e.g. ‘what is it to know?’, our task at best may reside in cataloging the various ways that the word ‘know’ is used, and to use it in the proper circumstances. Since ordinary language does not specify in any exact way what distinguishes every concept, e.g. consider ‘Baldness’, philosophers must now learn to accept some basic level of *ambiguity* and *vagueness* into their concept analysis.

Concepts are no longer ‘configurations of sense-data’. Instead, they are stipulated rules. Since meaning lies in the use of the language, we only know the meaning of the word when we apply the word. We cannot teach the application of the word, or the application of the rule. Why? If one requires a rule to teach how to apply a rule, then one will need to add a
second rule to the first. Likewise, one would require a third rule for the second, *ad infinitum*. Thus, if for every rule a rule is required in order to apply it, no rule will be applied. Thus, as Kant already knew, one cannot teach the meaning of any particular concept, for that would require us to teach what cannot be taught: the application of the rule.

How do we teach someone to apply a rule? Well, when you learn a new language, you follow the *example* of a native speaker by watching and listening to them speak in various situations and *you learn how to speak by speaking*. Ordinary language philosophers teach us concepts by teaching us ‘how to do things with words’. In turn, they teach us ‘how to do things with words’ by giving us *examples*. As Halper points out in *Hegel and the Problem of the Differentia*, these thinkers advocate for a one-level or ‘single tiered’ concept. If we think back to the problem of the differentia, the problem assumes that concepts are two-tiered, namely that they require a genus and a differentia in order to be intelligible. By eschewing the two-tiers of the traditional concept, they hope to escape from the obligation of providing the necessary and sufficient conditions for distinguishing categories.

Unfortunately, I find this response to the problem of the differentia problematic in many respects. In this paradigm, understanding meaning becomes reduced to a behavior. Behaviorism, especially in the thought of the Logical Behaviorists, such as Ryle, treat meaning as though it could be learned by imitation and stimulus and response conditioning alone. From a merely linguistic point of view, this is problematic. With the rise of Noam Chomsky’s concept of *Universal Grammar*, it has become evident that learning is more than imitation and conditioning. When we learn to speak as children we do imitate our parents. So, if our parents say ‘look at the fishies’ we say ‘fishies’ too. But we do not merely imitate. Instead, we *invent* a rule that extends *beyond* the case we are imitating, and we begin to say ‘babies’, ‘bookies’, and ‘brushies’. Meaning in language is also a function of creativity and
spontaneity that is initiated and constrained by social conditioning. It is our consistent use of incorrect rules that illuminates the limits of Behaviorism.

Naturally, we would not expect Wittgenstein to teach us anything, and according to this account of meaning, he could not teach us what it is to be a concept, since this would require him to teach us how to apply a rule. Still, we might wonder: what rule in our ordinary language informs Wittgenstein *that* meaning is use? Of course, there is no explicit rule. Perhaps it is implicit. But still, the explication of the concept of ‘meaning’ that Wittgenstein gives us in *Philosophical Investigations* does not appeal to some rule embedded in ordinary language. Naturally, Wittgenstein was aware of this, and is famous for believing that philosophy is sickness, a disease. Moreover, one might wonder about the reflexivity of thinking. Ordinary language does allow for the reflexive use of words, and in some languages, such as German and Greek, this reflexivity is built into the verb structure. Wittgenstein continues to reject the concept that self-reference is absurd, though it is unclear that this wholesale rejection of self-reference is sound. Indeed, we might go as far to say that it is the natural capacity of ordinary language to be about itself that allows Wittgenstein to make the claims about language that he does.

Wittgenstein has done more than simply gut Logical Positivism of its foundation. He has also radically undermined his account of meaning and the purpose of philosophy in the *Tractatus*. Instead of advocating that philosophers revise ordinary language in order to bring it into accordance with the formal-logical syntax that lies beneath, he has reversed himself completely: philosophers ought to simply heed the rules of ordinary speech, *not* revise it. With ordinary language philosophy, Wittgenstein radically undermines the traditional Analytic project and ushers in a new austerity.

What else can the later Wittgenstein tell us about ‘the concept as such’? Following
ordinary language, we do not find any one feature that every language has in common that makes it what it is, or one character that makes every meaningful use of speech ‘meaningful’. Instead, we only find *family resemblances*. No member of the family shares ‘exactly’ the same features—my nose, mouth, and eyebrows are unique to me, as are my sister’s. Still, we can see resemblances in our features, which may provide clues regarding our relation to each other. Accordingly, we may group resembling languages into ‘families’. Family resemblance is another re-incarnation of the view already present in early empirical thought: there is no common universal, only resemblances. We have already discussed the philosophical problems with this position. Because I take ‘family resemblances’ to be another version of that same perspective, I cannot see how Wittgenstein could avoid all the calamities that affect the more general ‘resemblance’ theory of conceptual determinacy.

But we can say more. Let us return to the concept of the ‘single tiered’ concept. As Halper points out, there is something self-deceptive about thinking that there is no second tier by which we differentiate the concepts on the first tier. Even the concept of ‘family resemblance’ requires an appeal to a second tier: the heritage of the family which all of the families share. Though no sensible quality is shared by each family member, in one sense they do have something in common. It is the appeal to this second tier which allows us to categorize languages into various types. As long as an appeal to a second level is required, the problem of the differentia cannot be avoided.453

Before we close our historical analysis, I would like to make a note about the place of incompleteness in philosophy and the sciences. In the early to the middle of the 20th century philosophy grappled, as is evident in the thought of Heidegger and Wittgenstein, with the incompleteness of the fundamental philosophical sciences: metaphysics, epistemology, and

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logic. Concurrently, other sciences, such as mathematics and quantum mechanics, were also grappling with their own incompleteness. We have already located the source of philosophy’s incompleteness: the reflexivity of thinking. A brief look at the incompleteness of mathematics and quantum mechanics reveals that reflexivity plays an important role in the incompleteness of the sciences as well.

Gödel’s theorem shows that for any consistent axiomatic theory of arithmetic, which can be recognized to be sound, there will be an arithmetic truth not provable in it, but which can be proven to be true intuitively. The incompleteness is generated by sentences like “this sentence is not provable”. If the sentence is provable, then it is true, and thus ‘this sentence is not provable’ must not be provable. And if it is not provable, then it is proved to be true that it is not provable. Likewise, Heisenberg’s incompleteness theorem is generated in part by the fact that we cannot absolutely distinguish between that by which we measure and that which we measure. That by which we measure, the ‘medium-sized’ tool, obeys the principles of classical mechanics, whereas that which we measure, the electron, obeys the principles of quantum mechanics. One basic illusion of science, Heisenberg tells us, is that our tools for measuring do not interfere with our capacity to measure the object. In fact, we are not independent of what we measure: our measure of the object is, in some respect, also a measure of our own measuring capacity. In each case, the ‘reaching back’ of the proposition or the measure to itself, the palintropos or ‘back-turning’, leads us to confront a fundamental indeterminacy in the sciences.

The revelation of the incompleteness of mathematics lead Gödel to spend the rest of his life reading Plato. If my account has been anywhere close to accurate, this is not

454 See the Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy entry on Gödel’s theorem.
surprising. Indeed, it is exactly what we would expect. But it did not just turn Gödel into a
mystic; it also killed the philosophical attempt to ground mathematics in formal logic.

Since the time of these crises, philosophers in the Analytic tradition appear to have
somehow recovered from the crisis of the European sciences. Naturally, this is not because
they have any answers. Why Analytic philosophy has recovered from its own self-imposed
crisis is unclear; many attribute the return of metaphysics in Analytic philosophy to the
innovative and creative work of Lewis and Kripke in the 1970’s. Despite their ingenuity
regarding names, modal attribution, and Kripke’s distinctions between the different kinds of
*a priori* and *a posteriori* attributions, their work leaves these basic problems *untouched*. Whatever
it might be, we find today that ‘Analytic’ metaphysicians today, such as E.J. Lowe, in his *Four
Category Ontology* and *More Kinds of Being*, has no recognition of the fundamental problem of
the incompleteness of philosophy that follows from the problem of participation and the
problem of the differentia. Schaffer, in his essay *On What Grounds What* has called for
metaphysics to shift its focus from the question concerning ‘what there is’ to a neo-
Aristotelian approach that considers what grounds what, and this is connected with an
inquiry into ‘what kinds of things there are’. Yet there is not one mention of the problem of
the differentia. No one is even asking the questions Wittgenstein knew to ask.

Still, there is some hope that contemporary Analytic philosophy may still be able to
recognize the fundamentality of these logical and ontological problems. Non-classical logics,
known as ‘Paraconsistent logics’, insist on rejecting the classical assumption concerning
inference that contradictions are explosive, namely that anything follows from a
contradiction.⁴⁵⁶ Concerning semantics, ‘Dialetheism’ goes a step further to claim that there

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⁴⁵⁶ There are many different schools of Paraconsistent logic: Discursive logic, Non Adjunctive logic,
Preservationism, Adaptive logics, Logics of Formal Inconsistency, Many Valued Logics, and Relevant logics,
for example.
are true contradictions. Analytic philosophers insist that these deal with separate issues: the former with syntax, and the latter with semantics. So, some philosophers endorse the latter without the former, though there seems to be general agreement that you cannot accept the latter without the former. In the following section I will argue that both must be true in order to save philosophy from mysticism, and that any account that thinks it acceptable to accept the former without the latter is still under the sway of a thinking that is unable to see itself.

On the face of it, these more recent developments appear to recognize one basic problem at the heart of philosophy: the explosiveness inherent in law of non-contradiction. Still, the ‘paraconsistent’ logics still fall short insofar as they usually aim to maximize consistency and treat inconsistency as though it were a rare occurrence. As far as our researches have pointed, it is inconsistency that is the rule, not consistency. Inconsistency gives the whole epistemic context within which consistency may appear. Moreover, these logics tend to be highly formal. Because formal logics, however non-classical, still preclude reflexivity, we cannot rely on formal tools to solve these problems. Any proper solution to the problems plaguing philosophy cannot remain fixated on the formal. Because philosophy in the Analytic tradition still feels itself impelled to formalize its language, it will continue to fall victim to the same principle that, even in these fringe cases, it explicitly rejects. Accordingly, it will continue to fall victim to the criticism of advanced by one of its own: Wittgenstein. In what follows I argue that in order to save philosophy from mysticism, and restore rationalism to philosophy, we cannot salvage the principle of non-contradiction as a principle of thought.

Indeed, if we are to restore rationalism we cannot rely on any formal or merely technical

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457 In a recent article, for example, Graham Priest argues that self-referential paradoxes such as Russell’s Paradox give us good reason to question the dogmatic rule of the classical interpretation of the principle of non-contradiction. See Priest, Graham, Beyond True and False, Aeon Magazine, http://aeon.co/magazine/world-views/logic-of-buddhist-philosophy/, 2014.

458 The principle of non-contradiction shall be afforded a place in our thinking, but it cannot be the overarching principle of the concept.
solution that fails to give proper due to reflexivity. Indeed, I will go so far as to argue that
the salvation of philosophy may only proceed when the method is fully reflexive, and
recognizes not just that some contradictions can be true, but that the concept itself is truly
contradictory.
Herein I investigate how four dogmas underpinning the traditional concepts of universality, the genus, class, and abstract universal, generate four paradoxes of self-reference. The four dogmas are the following: (i) that contradiction entails the total absence of determinacy, (ii) the necessary finitude of the concept, (iii) the separation of principles of universality and particularity, and (iv) the necessity of appealing to foundations. These dogmas underpin the paradoxes of self-reference, and one cannot make progress on these paradoxes as long as these four dogmas are in place. Corresponding to the abovementioned dogmas are the four paradoxes of self-reference: (i)* the problem of the differentia, (ii)* the problem of psychologism, (iii)* the problem of participation, and (iv)* the problem of onto-theology.

Chapter 12 enumerates the three traditional concepts of the concept and some of the basic limitations to which they are subject. Chapter 13 elucidates the four dogmas shared by these concepts. Finally, Chapter 14 shows how four paradoxes of self-reference follow from the dogmas elucidated in Chapter 13. Though philosophers have been struggling with these problems for centuries, philosophers have never systematically connected each of these problems nor have philosophers derived them all from a single principle. It is my contention that the four paradoxes of self-reference are systematically connected insofar as they all
follow from a single principle. This principle is formal universality. Though I do not provide a solution to these paradoxes in this chapter, in Chapter 14 I suggest that the history of Western philosophy has already provided us with the only two viable ways to eschew these paradoxes.

Mostly a feature of ancient Greek philosophical systems, a ‘genus’ is a universal containing different species within itself, e.g. ‘quantity’ contains ‘discrete’ quantities and ‘continuous’ quantities. The ‘differentia’ differentiates these species from one another. The genus and the differentia together define the species. Genera, insofar as they contain species, have an internal relation to other universals, and do not exhibit a merely external relation to other universals. Since each species is a differentiation of the genus, the genus contains its particulars within itself. Each species, insofar as it is a genus for another species, also contains species, its particulars, within itself.

Although the genus immediately contains its own differentiations, within itself, and is constituted by the totality of its species, the genus itself does not provide an account of the process by which the genus is differentiated. Although the genus contains the differentia of its species without which the species would not be defined, the differentia are not themselves derived from the genus, since the genus is in common to all of it species. For example, ‘animal’ is a genus, and ‘ox’ and ‘man’ are species. Both ‘ox’ and ‘man’ are animals.

Admittedly, my argument is inspired by Hegel’s Science of Logic, and in particular the introductory material in his Introduction and With What Must Science Begin? Indeed, Hegel’s revolutionary text is grounded on the insight that the problem of the differentia follows from the dogmatic assumption of the principle of non-contradiction. Though Hegel does not explicitly draw out the connection between these four problems and dogmas, my arguments are all implied by Hegel’s critique of traditional reason. I should note that Edward Halper, in his Hegel and the Problem of the Differentia, has already connected the problem of the differentia to the logic of self-reference. Moreover, Richard Dien has devoted his career to showing the absurdity of foundationalism. For a good sampling of his arguments, see the General Introduction to his recent book Hegel’s Science of Logic: A Critical Re-Thinking In Thirty Lectures. I understand my own arguments as a way of augmenting and strengthening those arguments.

The most obvious historical example of the concept of the ‘genus’ is Aristotle, as any cursory reading of his basic readings should illustrate.
and ‘being an animal’ does not provide us the differences by which ‘ox’ and ‘man’ are defined. Hence, the genus is not a sufficient condition to derive the differentiation of the species, even though it contains them. Instead, a prior difference must be imported in order to differentiate the contents. Hence, the principle of differentiation is still missing from the genus.

Any species that is not a genus for other species, the infamous species, will not have any conceptual means for differentiating the particulars falling within it, since there is no lower species to differentiate the particulars falling within the species. In this case, the species is constituted by individuals it cannot differentiate. Hence, at the lowest differentiation, the species is a class whose members are distinguished by a principle external to the genus and species. The genus, although providing some differentiation of the particular, fails to differentiate its own species without a prior difference, and fails to differentiate is own particulars at the highest and lowest levels of universality.

Most prevalent in modern philosophy, although not at all absent from ancient Greek thought, abstraction is perhaps the most common way of thinking about universality. The most traditional construal of this kind of universal is the ‘one over many’. Since the content must be culled from some given, the universal must be discovered in and abstracted out of multifarious individuals. This process requires either discovering a common feature shared by many things and separating it from the individuals in which it inheres, or simply selecting an individual content to stand for other contents. Whether one speaks of selecting an individual content or discovering a common feature, one is engaged in a process of removing content and giving it some kind of universal significance. In a simple abstraction, the concept is thought to be distinct from a mere collection of individuals, since it specifies what

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George Berkeley’s work illustrates this concept well, as do the various adherents to the school of British Empiricism. Historical examples of such universals are quite numerous, ranging from the Rationalist and British Empiricist traditions to Phenomenology in the twentieth century.
property individuals must have in order to be an instance of the universal. Having completed the process of separating the universals from the individuals and from each other, the most abstract universals will contain all of the individuals under them as instances. Since the abstraction is only a common feature, it fails to specify how many instances, or particulars, there are. Moreover, as a common feature, it fails to distinguish particular instances from one another. Hence, for the abstract universal there is no account of the differentiated particular, or the individuality of the instances.

The concept underpinning the structure of contemporary deductive systems, the class, consists of a collection of individuals. Unlike the abstract ‘one over many’ each individual is one member of the class, and taken all together, the class is an aggregate of individuals. As an aggregate, the universal is not distinct from the totality of the particulars, as the abstract universal is, for it is neither itself a separate member of the class, nor is it distinct from the aggregate itself. The universal simply is the totality of the particulars. Since the class is not distinct from the totality of the particulars, the universality is not as divorced from particularity in class membership as it is in the abstract ‘one over the many’. On the one hand, unlike abstract universals, in the class the particular members are set into relation to each other when they are brought into the class. Accordingly, ‘membership’ signifies a relation between particulars. On the other hand, unlike the abstract universal, the identification of the universal with the aggregate precludes providing any standard by which particular members belong to any particular class or are excluded from the class. Moreover, the individuals in the class may be universal, but qua members of the class the universals are thought merely in terms of their membership. Since the class only specifies that each is a member of the class, it does not specify that in virtue of which each member is different from the others. Hence, the class does not provide any means of differentiating the
particulars within itself. Just as abstract universality fails to distinguish instances, class-
membership also fails to individuate members. Accordingly, even the most universal classes
will also be unable to differentiate the particular members from one another. Although the
class is united with the particulars, its form of unity precludes any account of what
individuates the members and the condition upon which membership ought to be granted. 462

In sum, we find three basic forms of universality enumerated in the Western
tradition: genus, abstraction, and class. Prima facia, we find a common constraint to each
conception of the concept, namely the inability to account for individuality, or the
differentiation of the particular. In the exposition that follows, we will re-construct
paradoxes systematically connected with this constraint.

462 Because this conception is more amenable to formalization, many nineteenth and twentieth century
philosophers, e.g. Mill and Tarski, prefer this conception of universality to other conceptions.
Ch. 13  Four Dogmas

(i) Contradiction and Identity

By analyzing the traditional concepts of universality, we arrive at four dogmas. Each type of universal heretofore considered has an external relation to other universals. The first dogma, that contradiction entails the total absence of determinacy, states what this external relation to others really supposes, namely a relation to self which excludes others. In order to illuminate this exclusive relation to self, we must closely consider the principle of non-contradiction.

In order to uncover the first dogma, consider the following reductio: suppose that it is possible for universality not to be self-identical. As an example, consider the universal as a ‘one over many’. If universality as such could be different itself, then the ‘one over many’ would not necessarily be one over many, or what is the same; the universal would not necessarily be the universal. Formalized, this proposition states that ‘A is not necessarily A.’ If A is not necessarily A, then A could be not A. If A could be not A, then it is possible for the proposition ‘A is not A’ to be true. Thus, if it were possible for the universal not to be self-identical, then it would be possible for a contradiction to be true.

Why is it impossible for the universal not to be self-identical? Why is ‘A is not A’ not capable of being true? Simply put, it violates the principle of non-contradiction. The principle of non-contradiction states that A as A cannot be not A. It is supposed that the PNC can be translated into the principle of excluded middle, the principle also implies that

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463 I do not choose ‘one over many’ arbitrarily. This content has been privileged because it abides by the dogmas. Though I invite the reader to take it initially as a mere example, I argue in the third dogma that it is the perennially privileged way of conceiving universality exactly because of its adherence to this dogma.

464 Analytic philosophers have a term for those thinkers who believe that contradictions can be true: Dialetheism.
everything is either A or not A. It is presumed that contradictions are explosive: if A were not A, then A would be not A. Hence, if A were contradictory, A would be A and not A, which is well, everything: a philosophy text, a hamburger, an organism, etc. This is absurd. Thus, according to the PNC and excluded middle, ‘A is not A’ cannot be true.

Why accept the PNC? Why accept that it is absurd for A to be not A? Well, since it is a principle of inference we cannot infer it without begging the question. It is just a dogma. As Aristotle pointed out, it is presumed that in ‘A is not A’ I fail to even make a claim, since I immediately take away what I posit. Of course, why do we presume that the contradiction ‘A is not A’ fails to make a claim? We assume this because we accept that contradictions are explosive, namely that ‘A is not A’ entails that A is everything. Hence, if we do not heed the principle of non-contradiction, it is supposed that no content can in principle be ascribed to the universal. Since the explosiveness of the contradiction undermines the content of the universal, and to have content the universal must exclude some content, we must accept the principle of non-contradiction in order to preserve content. Since the contradiction does not exclude its own negation, and the negation includes everything else, it is presumed that the contradiction does not exclude any content. To be sure, the assumption that ‘anything follows from a contradiction’ presumes that no content can include its own negation and still be a determinate content. Hence, in order for the concept to have content, the ‘one over many’ must necessarily be the same as itself, otherwise it is nothing. Note that the argument hinges on the unsupported suppositions that to be determinate is to be one thing, and that a contradiction of the form ‘A is not necessarily A’ generates the total removal of all content, thereby freeing it from all determinacy.

465 This is basically identical to Aristotle’s argument for the principle of non-contradiction in Metaphysics book Beta, 1005b-1006b.
466 As the paper progresses, I will show that retaining self-identity is impossible, and that the universal cannot help but fail to meet its own standard.
Given the impossibility of the contradiction, we must also accept the principle of excluded middle, such that ‘x is necessarily A or not A’. Accordingly, there cannot be a middle term between A and not A. In order to be some one determinate character shared in common by particulars, this dogma requires that any universal, including the ‘one over many’ must follow the law of identity, ‘A=A.’ In sum, we have three interchangeable principles governing universality: the principle of non-contradiction, the law of excluded middle, and the law of identity. So, universality as such is necessarily never different from itself: the ‘one over many’ must always be ‘one over many’. Presumably, one could substitute other terms for ‘one over many’, and the same reductio would apply. As universality, the ‘one over many’ constitutes its determinate being. Hence, it is not only that the universals bound together by their universality are the same qua universal, but also any universal, including universality as such, must be self-identical. The logical principle that ‘anything follows from a contradiction’ is responsible for the notion that contradiction engenders the total absence of content.

(ii) The Finitude of the Concept

Since the concept is governed by the principle of non-contradiction, it necessarily excludes what it is not. Since what is not A is excluded by A, if follows that what is not A is external to A. Insofar as what is not A is external to A, A is necessarily limited by not A. Since A is limited by what is not A, A is finite. Clearly, A cannot be infinite, since the infinite is what has no limit, and A has a limit: not A. Since there is no middle between A and not A, and the principle of non-contradiction requires that everything is either A or not A, it follows that A excludes everything there is except itself. The finitude of the concept is a very
ingrained dogma, for it stems from the basic assumption characteristic of Greek thought that Form is *itself by itself.* 467 468

(iii) The Separation of Principles of Unity and Difference 469

The results of the first and second dogmas show that universals are unities excluding difference. The principle of identity, A=A, expresses self-relation. The universal is held to be subordinate to this principle, and to be identical with itself. As self-related, the universal is not related to others, or what is the same, its only relation to the other is mere exclusion. Such self-isolation, in positive terms, expresses the independence of the universal. Any relation to what the universal qua universal is not is something totally external to the being of the universal. To express the independence another way, we may say that from the finitude of the self-relation, the universal must be utterly by itself. In Hegelian nomenclature, their being as universal is indifferent to the content of their universality. By ‘indifferent’ I mean that their being as universal does not differentiate what each universal signifies. What each universal signifies is the content of each universal. For example, A=A, or ‘one over many’ does not specify whether we are discussing the concept ‘number’, ‘quality’, or any other particular universal. The principle A=A does not specify the particulars falling under it. In other words, it does not specify what the content of ‘A’ is. Hence, these principles of identity are merely

467 The Greek phrase ‘Itself by itself’ is ‘*Autò Kath Autò.*’ What is itself by itself is what it is in virtue of itself, and not in virtue of something else.
468 This dogma has remained in place despite the abandonment of ‘Forms’, and the revolutions in our understanding of the universe which were initiated by the rise of Christian Theology and Modern Science. Though God and the universe were transformed from finite to infinite entities, the cognition of each remained a function of finitude. God, as infinite, remained unknown in himself. The infinite universe, though it has been re-conceived to be knowable in itself, is not known because it is infinite; instead it is the indefinite re-iteration of a finite mathematical principle that makes it knowable. We do not know the universe because it is infinite, but in spite of it. Instead of positing a finite universe known through finite principles, we know the infinite universe through the infinite re-iteration of a finite principle. For example, though the counting numbers are unending, they have a finite principle. Though the instances of the counting numbers may be generated from the successor function, and these are infinite, the successor function itself is finite, and is the principle of the knowledge. The concept of the ‘deductive multiplicities’ has its origin in this concept.
469 Here I am discussing the unity considered to be central to universality and the difference that is considered essential to particularity.
formal. No other information about what is unified is given by the self-identity of universality. Or, what is the same, any differences in virtue of which A is specified as ‘differentiated A’ is incidental to what A is. While the contradictory concept is deemed explosive, the concept as such is utterly empty. Contradiction and tautology are correlated. At this point I do not mean to say that abstract universals have no content whatever, only that the principles by which they have content must be separate from their universality.

If we wish to know what is united, the content of the universal, we must look outside of universality as such, for it only tells us that to be a universal is to unite a plurality. In other words, since universality is only a principle of the oneness of the particulars, the universal itself cannot account for that which differentiates the particulars or the universals from one another. For this reason, the principle by which universals are distinguished from one another, as particular instances of universality, must be sought in a principle external to unification. Given the formal unity of universality, the principles of unity and differentiation must remain distinct. To put the dogma in terms of finitude, the content of the universal is the external limit of the form of the concept. If we apply these three dogmas we shall see that the one over many has been a perennially privileged definition of the universal exactly because it abides by these four dogmas. As a one over many, it is a finite, self-same content that fails to provide a principle of the differentiation of the particulars.

Since the universal and the particular are divided in their principle, we are forever forbidden from identifying their principles. Since existential implication treats the concept as though it were sufficient for the derivation of the particular, from the third dogma, the

470 It appears that the reason ‘anything follows’ is because no content is posited in the concept in the first place. In fact, it is exactly because there is no content that nothing and everything follows. In other words, everything and nothing is engendered in the concept of this notion! If logic contained some necessary content, then the negation of that content would not engender everything and nothing—instead it would be the negation of that particular content. This would give it a determinacy of its own set into relation with the immediate content.
separation of universality and particularity, it follows that existential implication cannot be true. Since self-reference entails existential implication, it also follows that self-reference is absurd. Thus, on the assumption of the third dogma, *self-reference should be banished from philosophy*.\(^{471}\)

The main assumptions at work in the third dogma, the separation of the universal and the particular, are the first two dogmas (that contradiction excludes all determinacy and the finitude of the concept): finite self-identity necessarily precludes the universal from differentiating its content, thereby forcing a distinction between the principle of unity, what tells us what unites particulars, and the principle of difference, or what differentiates particulars. Because the universal does not differentiate the particulars falling under it, there is no account of the *individuality* of the particular instances of the universals. The universal is not a principle of individuation, and engenders a separation of universality, particularity, and individuality. Even if this principle of individuality were another universal, the differentiation of its contents would still be undetermined. To distinguish the particulars of a universal, one must eventually appeal to something external to the region of universality, otherwise the particulars falling under universals will remain un-individuated. Accordingly, it has not been uncommon for philosophers to be reproached with the inability to know the individual.\(^{472}\)

(iv) *The Appeal to the Given: Foundationalism*

Each universal is a particular universal, and the content of each particular universal cannot be determined by appealing to universality as such. Given that the principle of universality and particularity are distinct, there cannot be an account of the differentiated universal, or in other words, *the individual* universal. Hence, it is necessary to appeal to a non-conceptual, external given, e.g. experience or intuition, in order to differentiate the particular

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\(^{471}\) Though this relationship should be evident to anyone who reads Plato's *Parmenides*, I will elucidate the connection in Section IV.

\(^{472}\) Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Heidegger in *Being and Time* all offer this criticism.
universals and establish the content of each universal. This given could initially be a universal. But since this universal will also be in need of differentiation of particulars, if there are no universals to appeal to, these must be individuated by an appeal to a given source of content external to the region of universality. Indeed, since these forms of universality each requires an appeal to a foundation, one cannot uncover universality as such without taking as a starting point given universals, from which one asks ‘what is it that concepts have in common?’ This question seems to beg the question, since one must know what a concept is in order to inquire into what all concepts have in common. Accordingly, an appeal to the given is necessary to get an inquiry started, for the universal does not generate its own content. Hence, the fourth dogma, the appeal to the given, follows from the third (the separation of universality and particularity): since the principle of differentiation is external to the principle of unity, the philosopher must import something from outside universality to arrive at particularity and individuality. Applying this argument reflexively, the philosopher must reach outside of thought in order to initially determine what any particular universal is, without which the inquiry into the constitution of universality cannot begin. Hence, answering the question ‘what is the universal as such?’ relies on initially importing what is not universal.

In summary, we have laid down four dogmas: (i) that contradiction entails the total absence of content, (ii) the finitude of the concept, (iii) the separation of principles of unity and difference, and (iv) the necessity of appealing to non-conceptual givens. Important to note is the fact that the principle of non-contradiction is the locus of these four dogmas. Perhaps on their own these four dogmas do not appear so pernicious. On the contrary, when any of these three traditional forms of universality, i.e. genus, class, or abstraction, are taken as the sole form of universality, paradoxes are generated which compromise the very content of universality itself.
As stated above, four paradoxes follow from the four dogmas: (i)* the problem of the differentia, (ii)* the problem of psychologism, (iii)* the problem of participation, and (iv)* the problem of onto-theology. Though these problems deserve a proper historical analysis on account of their appearance in ancient, modern, and continental thought, we should make an effort to lay bare the systematic foundations of these problems in order that we may seek a systematic solution to them. This should make the universality of the problems clearer to all philosophers irrespective of their background. In order to achieve this I will make every effort to express the problems in a purely systematic way. I do not wish to argue that there is a one to one correspondence of dogma to paradox. Instead, I will argue that the dogmas, taken together, generate four paradoxes.

Earlier we introduced three forms of universality: genus, class, and abstraction. The four paradoxes of self-reference ought to annihilate any hope that the abstraction, the genus, or the class could be the form of universality as such. At best, each of these forms of the universal may be particular forms of the universal, but none of these can be universality as such. If this is the case, then the identification of universality with the class, abstraction, or genus is fallacious. Historically, this means that the particular forms of universality have been substituted for the form of universality as such. Let us work out the problem of the differentia to understand why this is the case.

Since the problem of the differentia results from the concept as it is taken in its mediated form, let us motivate the mediated model of universality. By advocating that the concept abide by the four dogmas, one might maintain that there ought not be a conflict
between the concept of the concept and the dogmas requiring the separation of the principles of universality and particularity. If we take the universal and the particular to be separate, we are taking up the concept in its mediated form, wherein the difference is absolute. By ‘absolute difference’ I mean that there is an unconditional difference between universal and particular that is entailed by the separation of the principles. On this dogma, the universal cannot be particular, and the particular cannot be universal.

If we assume that the universal and the particular are separate, then the universal cannot differentiate itself into different kinds of universals. We showed this in our discussion of the separation of the principles of universality and particularity: the universal, as mere self-identity, only specifies the abstract form, but not the content of each universal. Since the universal cannot differentiate itself into kinds of universals, every determinate type of universality must have its source in another universal external to it. In generic terms, this means that if a genus is divided into species, the difference by which the species is divided must come from outside of that genus, from another universal. But already we have a problematic scenario, for the difference must be simultaneously internal to the divided genus, and external to that genus, since the difference dividing the genus must be external to that genus. Why is this a problem?

Since the universal as such is a self-identical finite being, and thereby excludes everything that it is not, the universal is utterly independent. Each category, as a category, is independent of others. But if this is the case, then the universal cannot be differentiated into kinds of universals without undermining the independence of the universal. In other words,

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473 Note that the separation of principles of universality and particularity is the same as the assumption that Kant makes in his Critique of Pure Reason, namely that the concept is not sufficient for the existence of the object embodying it, where to exist is not to be a predicate, but in some respect particular.

474 Though I tend to think that the dogmas listed above prevent us from even asking the question ‘what is it to be universality?’, so that any view of universality that abides by these dogmas shall not be able to engage the question, let us assume for the sake of argument that the assumption of the duality of principles provides the necessary conditions for asking the question.
the universal cannot include the difference by which it is divided. Hence, either the universal is not independent, and differentiation is possible, or it is independent, and the universal is undifferentiated. If the former were the case, the particularized universal could have content. Unfortunately, the four dogmas preclude this as a possibility. Thus, only the latter is a plausible option. But if the latter is the case, the universal cannot have any determinate content. This is (i)*, the problem of the missing differentia.

If the universal is differentiated, then the dogmas cannot be true, since the dogmas engender the independence of the universal. If the universal is not differentiated, then the universal not only loses all content, but the four dogmas fail to be consistent with their own principles. If we assume that the universal is not differentiated by universals, and is just undifferentiated, then the concept will remain wholly formal and will lack all content whatsoever, since it is undifferentiated. If we cannot attribute any conceptual content to the universal, then we cannot attribute self-identity, finitude, and the separation of universality and particularity to the universal. Thus, if we take up the concept in the form of absolute mediation in which universality and particularity are absolutely separate, the formal concept will exclude itself from itself. In other words, every dogma must be expunged from the content of universality as such.475

At every stage of differentiation, the undifferentiated universal will fail to appear, since the universal as such cannot be differentiated. Every time some content is posited, this content will fail to signify the universal. Thus, there will be an infinite regress towards the undifferentiated universality that cannot appear.476 As undifferentiated, the self-identical concept cannot exclude from itself every negation that it purports to exclude: otherness,

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475 In his Introduction to the Science of Logic, Hegel notes that formal logic cannot be wholly formal.  
476 In fact this infinite regress is identical to the regress in the participation problem. Though I wish to acknowledge this here, I postpone a more in depth discussion of the issue until after I have elucidated the problem of psychologism.
infinitude, the identity of the principles of universality and particularity, existential implication, and self-reference. In short, *if we accept the dogmas, then we must also reject the dogmas.* If the undifferentiated universal is indeed undifferentiated, then it cannot be differentiated from differentiation.

Truth be told, the finite concept is not just that which is limited, but that which contains *its limit within itself.* What contains its limit within itself contains that which limits—its own negation, or its own non-being. The self-negation of the concept is a function of its finitude. Hence, the finite, self-identical concept turns out that it cannot maintain its self-identity, or what is the same, in virtue of being itself, it cannot be itself.

Clearly, the problem of the differentia applies to all universals that adopt the four dogmas, irrespective of where those universals fall in the classification schema. In fact, what we have here is the impossibility of having any classification schema at all. If we adopt multiple categories, e.g. ‘quality’, ‘quantity’, etc., then each will collapse into the other. If we have just one category, e.g. ‘being’ or ‘substance’, it will fail to be distinguished from nothing. The number of categories is not essential. Instead, it is their quality of independence that is problematic. What is key to notice here is that any absolute separation of form from content engenders the negation of that separation. Thus, we find ourselves in the following paradoxical situation: *if we accept the principle of non-contradiction which underlies the other dogmas, then we violate the principle of non-contradiction.* Thus, either the principle of non-contradiction engenders a contradiction, or in order to avoid the self-contradiction of the principle of non-contradiction, we must negate the principle of non-contradiction. But if we negate the principle of non-contradiction, then we shall have run back into the arms of contradiction.

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477 Note that this conceptual development is very similar to Eckhart’s dialectical concerning the relationship between the three persons of the trinity.

478 Hegel also recognizes the character of the finite as self-negating in his discussion of finitude in the *Science of Logic.*
Thus, it appears that at the heart of universality there is an inexorable contradiction.\(^4\) Indeed, that philosophy should despair of itself and become mystical appears to be the only path forward, since contradiction appears inevitable. But any move to mysticism would assume that the principle of non-contradiction is the necessary form of thinking as such, which has been undermined. Thus, it is not even clear that mysticism is a possible way out of the problem. Indeed, one could have named this chapter *The Four Nihilities* because the four dogmas fail to be what they are.\(^5\)

From the problem of the differentia we can also derive (ii)*, the problem of psychologism. The identification of the concept with a psychological state is a historical position that reoccurs quite often in the history of philosophy.\(^6\) If psychologism follows from the problem of the differentia, then it would be evident why it constantly re-appears, since the differentia problem is endemic to the very question concerning the being of universality.

According to the traditional dogmas, universality as such is external to itself. Thus, we cannot derive the content of universality on its own terms, or from any of the traditional forms of universality that abide by these dogmas by themselves. Hence, we are forced to stipulate what it is to be universal. This stipulation of a given content must appeal to non-

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\(^4\) Another way to understand this problem is in terms of finitude and infinitude. The principle of non-contradiction is that principle of the finitude of the concept. Insofar as the principle of non-contradiction negates itself, the finite is also self-negating. Indeed, this is what the finite is: what is self-negating. The result of the self-negation of the finite is the infinite, at least in terms of the indeterminate. We already acquired a glimpse of this transition into the infinite from the finite in our discussion of Plotinus.

\(^5\) Aristotle’s problem concerning the generic character of Being raised in the *Metaphysics* is another expression of the problem of the differentia. If we assume that there is just one genus of Being, then we take the category ‘Being’ to be independent. As Parmenides’ noted, if it is independent, since Being cannot differentiate itself, and there will be nothing to external to Being to differentiate Being, Being will not be differentiated. If that one Being is differentiated into species, it will be differentiated by another being, and thus will not remain independent, for it would be dependent upon an external genus. The latter option would be absurd because there are no beings independent of the genus of Being. Thus, Being will either remain independent, and undifferentiated, or it will be differentiated, yet not independent. Of course, both options appear problematic.

\(^6\) Examples are not hard to find. The whole tradition of British Empiricism commits the error, as well as its many reincarnations, from Ernst Mach to early Wittgenstein and the logical positivists. If my argument is correct, there may be good reason why the position consistently re-occurs.
conceptual content, since the conceptual as conceptual contains no content whatsoever. In other words, the stipulation of the conceptual content must flee the \textit{a priori} and appeal to what is in itself \textit{a posteriori}: a spatio-temporal or merely temporal given. That ‘universality is such and such’ can only be stipulated, since the concept \textit{excludes its own self} from what it unifies. If we stipulate what it is to be universal, we have given an \textit{arbitrary} answer. Since even universality as such is subject to the third dogma, we know that it is grounded by an appeal to something external to universality as such: an external positing. This external positing can take many forms. Psychologism, the identification of the concept itself with a psychological content, is at least \textit{one form} of this external positing. It is only one form of external positing, for one could identify the universal with a merely biological or natural phenomenon, such as neural synapses. Psychologism, as well as materialism, are various examples of a more general identification of what is not universal with what is. A more apt name for the general fallacy might be the ‘myth of the given’.

Psychologism fails for many reasons. To name one, psychologism is fallacious since it undermines the \textit{normativity} of the concept. A concept has normativity insofar as it specifies how one \textit{ought} to think it, or how one ought to employ it. Without the ought there is no way to employ logic as a guide for making inferences, for example, and all thinking is reduced to a mere description of what is happening in the mind. In this case, psychology would supplant the discipline of logic. On this model, the universal is reduced to some particular presentation, be it a particular \textit{relation}-presentation or \textit{thing}-presentation, in the mind of a thinker.\footnote{Cassirer makes this point succinctly in \textit{Substance and Function} in his critique of modern philosophy.} In this state, what the \textit{particular} thinker thinks is what the universal is. Since the universal is identified with a particular mental content, there cannot be a distinction between what the universal \textit{is} and what the universal \textit{is thought to be}. In such a case, everyone is always
correct about the being of the universal that they think. As we would expect, the stipulative nature of the universal results in a radical relativism that compromises the possibility of philosophy. Moreover, when the universal is reduced to this state, the same universal cannot be thought by multiple thinkers, or by the same thinker multiple times, for neither can the universal be separated from the temporal duration of the particular representation with which it has been identified, nor can anyone immediately experience the same presentation of another subject. Presumably, only individual subjects have immediate access to their own mental contents, for they are private to them. Unless of course, one would like to argue for the possibility of mind readers and the like.

In any case, the act of identifying the non-conceptual with the conceptual is an act of transference, or metaphor. The necessity of metaphor for the elucidation of the concept is justified on these grounds, for we possess no conceptual means to identify the concept. In itself, the concept is empty. The concept is, on this model, the result of the appropriation and transformation of some non-conceptual content into a conceptual unity. In metaphor, we ‘carry’ the ‘difference’ over483 from its original a posteriori context and give it an ideal, i.e. non-temporal, a priori significance. We think in pictures because our concepts are empty of pure conceptual content. As the empiricist will always remind us, regarding general names such as ‘table’ we all have separate pictures with which we identify those names. Formal logic, as Hegel noted long ago484, must be correlated with empiricism, in order that it have any contents to connect. Since psychologism follows from the assumption of these dogmas, as long as we accept these dogmas, we shall commit this fallacy whether we like it or not. In more self-aware thinkers, the central ‘place’ of metaphor, if you will, has become a central

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483 Metaphor, from Greek, is the difference that is ‘carried over’.
484 Hegel noted the connection between formal logic and empiricism in his introductory material to the Science of Logic.
principle. For these thinkers, it is either an act of ignorance or dishonesty when the 
intellectual fails to recognize the central importance of metaphor. But what is also important 
to recognize is that the one who appeals to metaphor as central to thinking has already 
admitted the necessity of contradiction in the heart of thinking as such. As Arendt states in *Life of 
the Mind*:

The metaphor provides the 'abstract,' imageless thought with an intuition drawn from the 
world of appearances whose function it is to 'establish the reality of our concepts' and thus 
undo, as it were, the withdrawal from the world of appearances that is the precondition of 
mental activities. With speculative concepts—ideas that transcend the world of 
appearances—the metaphor "achieves the carrying over—metapherein—of a genuine and 
seemingly impossible...transition from one existential state, that of thinking, to another, that 
of being an appearance among appearances."^485

Let us now show why the problem of participation ‘follows’ from the problem of the 
differentia. The self-identical, finite concept cannot help but fail to be what it is, and the 
mediated form of universality becomes indistinguishable from the immediate form. Since we 
cannot keep the universal separate from the particular, the universal becomes inseparable 
from the particular. Thus, the universal is in the form of immediacy: the universal is identified with the 
particular. As such, we cannot help but admit that ‘the universal is a universal’. In other 
words, self-reference appears to be the position into which the problem of the differentia 
has forced thinking.

*Prima facia*, the necessity of self-reference appears to be a helpful advance. For the 
very question ‘what is the universal’ appears to require self-reference. The question ‘what is 
universality as such?’ implores us to treat universality itself as a particular. For upon

^485 Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, ed. Mary McCarthy (Orlando: Mariner 
answering the question ‘what is the universal as such?’ we must say that ‘universality is such
and such’. To say ‘is such and such’ is to predicate a universal to the subject. Thus, to heed
the call of the question ‘what is the universal’ requires us to answer with the following
formula: ‘universality is a universal’.

If we briefly consider the four dogmas again, it becomes obvious that the four
dogmas preclude us from ever taking this question seriously, since the form in which the
answer must be posited is utterly prohibited by the dogmas. According to the first dogma,
the universal is \textit{indifferent to its particulars}, for the universality is only universal and not
particular. According to the third dogma, the principles of differentiated particularity must
come from outside of the universal. Hence, the universal itself \textit{cannot be a particular} universal
merely in virtue of itself. The third dogma precludes us from treating universality as a
particular, since universality and particularity are separate. For this reason, it is clear that the
traditional answers to the question concerning universality, e.g. genus, class, and abstraction,
fail to qualify as proper answers to the question. Instead, as we know, the third dogma forces
us to stipulate the content of universality by appealing to a non-conceptual content.
Generally stated, the traditional dogmas prevent us from justifying any claim concerning the
content of universality.

Given the internal collapse of the four dogmas, the philosopher is forced into (iii)*
the problem of participation. As we know from Plato's \textit{Parmenides}, self-reference is central to
the problem of participation. Although there are many ways of expressing the paradox, one
very clear way may be formulated in this context. Answering the question ‘what is
universality as such?’ requires that one posit what is common to all universals. Is each a
genus, or an aggregate, or an abstraction? What is the \textit{one} ‘one over many’ which all
universals have in common? By answering the question, one must posit \textit{a particular universal,}
one ‘one over many’, despite the fact that this universal is a higher order universal. Universality itself must be a universal, for it is some one element all universals share. Since universality itself is also a universal, distinct from other universals, it must be a particular universal. In other words, as a particular universal, it is an individual member of the plurality of universals just as all other universals are. Because the ‘one over many’ is a unification of all universals, it must include itself, since it is a universal.

If the universal includes itself, as immediately universal and particular, neither ‘universal’ nor ‘particular’ retain any determinate sense, for our only standard of determinacy to which we have access is the principle of non-contradiction. Instead, it appears that we are simply saddled with a contradiction. In order for the universal to include itself as a particular, it must be other than itself, or exceed itself, if you will. The immediate identity of the universal and particular expressed in ‘the universal is a universal’ appears to leave us without any determinate content, since no negation may be invoked by which either could be differentiated from the other. ‘The’ universal cannot be ‘a’ universal without ceasing to be ‘the’ universal. Likewise, ‘a’ universal cannot be ‘a’ universal if it is ‘the’ universal.

The problem of participation, in its attempt to do justice to the question concerning the being of universality, predicates the universal to itself. In so doing, it collapses the difference between the universal and the particular. Because there is no longer a difference between universal and particular, the universal is no longer in a mediated form. Instead, it is grasped in its immediacy. The immediate grasp of the universal claims that ‘the universal is universal’. This immediate grasp of the universal renders the concept indeterminate. Thus, we could represent the self-referential view of the universal as pure immediacy, in which the universal and the particular are indistinguishable, and no content is grasped. In order to undermine the indeterminacy of the concept, and achieve determinacy, it seems that self-
reference must be rejected, since it is self-reference that fails to allow for any difference between universal and particular. No determinate concept is grasped when the concept is in the mode of immediacy. Only if the concept abides by those dogmas can the concept have determinacy.

Instead of tarrying in the immediacy of universal and particular, we are forced back into the four dogmas in order to retrieve the determinacy of the concept. By the second dogma, *the universal is not a particular*, and therefore universality itself cannot be one of the particulars it unifies. If universality as such were a particular, then it would *not* be universality as such, for universality as such is not a particular, and it would be unified by another more comprehensive universal. In other words, if universality as such were a particular, it would in fact cease to be universality as such, and another universal would be posited as universality as such. If universality were treated as the *one* feature something must have to count as a universal, its *own* content would not be something that it could include within itself. Hence, another universal would be needed in order to give unity to the particulars. But insofar as this unity is *a universal*, it cannot unify all the universals, since it is also a particular, and is in need of another principle of unity to unite it with other universals. This regress continues to elude us in our search for universality as such. The paradox shows us that we must *beg the question* at every step, for if we have arrived at universality as such, *either it does not include its own content, and is thereby not universality as such, which is absurd, or it does include itself, which is absurd, since no universal is a particular universal, by the second dogma.*

Thus, we can infer with confidence that (iii)*, the problem of participation, follows from (i)* the problem of the differentia. By adopting the dogmas, we never arrive at the universal we desire to know, for any answer is precluded by the very fact that the proposed answer ought not be a particular. By treating

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486 Note that we are providing the paradoxical context in which Russell’s paradox is located, a context which does not allow us to take Russell’s solution to that paradox seriously.
any one of the particular forms as the sole form of universality, we cannot generate the content of universality as such.

Indeed, the problem of participation expresses the paradox of self-reference at its most reflexive moment. If we remain in the mediate model of universality that accords with the four dogmas, then we encounter the problem of the differentia. As a result, we are thrust into the self-preferential immediacy of universal and particular. Yet, since there is no content in the immediacy of the universal and the particular, we must abandon that immediacy for the mediate model of universality that accords with the four dogmas. Of course, this gives rise to the differentia problem, and we are forced back into the self-predicative immediacy of the universal and the particular. Apparently, the only constancy in the result is the constant flipping back and forth from the immediate to the mediate. But this is hardly a solution. Instead, it reflects the problem at its most developed level.

Given the problem of participation, we can derive (iv)* the problem of onto-theology. It was Heidegger who first brought this problem to light in an explicit way in his seminal work *Being and Time*. Here he accuses the Western tradition of identifying ‘Being’ with ‘a being’. In general, he is correct that Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Thinkers took this position in various ways. But he does not explicitly identify its conceptual origin. To identify ‘Being’ with ‘a being’ is to identify the universal with the particular. Of course, ‘Being’ and ‘universal’ are not the same thing, just as ‘a being’ and particularity are not strictly speaking, the same thing. But Being is a universal category, and ‘a being’, in respect to Being as such, is a particular. For this reason, Onto-theology implicitly identifies the universal with the particular insofar as it identifies this universal ‘Being’ with some particular being. Since at

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487 Though it was Heidegger who first brought it to light in an explicit way, Kant already discovered the problem in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, The Transcendental Ideal, (A 572/B600-A 583/B661).
every stage of the regress in the participation problem we must identify the universal with
the particular, he who has not escaped the coils of participation will not escape onto-
theology either. Whenever we attempt to think about universality as such, we force
ourselves, by necessity, into the problem of onto-theology, since we cannot help but identify
the universal with the particular.

Having derived each paradox from the basic dogma of non-contradiction, let me
take a moment to briefly summarize the derivation of each of the four dogmas in a
consolidated series of arguments.

I. The Problem of the Missing Differentia

How can we differentiate universals from each other? I cannot appeal to the genus
‘universality’ since this is only the common feature of all universals. Because the genus
‘universality’ cannot differentiate them, I must appeal to some universal that is external to
that genus. But there are no universals outside of the genus of universality, for it is the most
universal category! Thus, I cannot appeal to any genus external to universality. Thus, I
cannot appeal to ‘universality’ or ‘what is not universal’ to differentiate the various
universals. Thus, the difference by which universals are determined is missing.

II. The Problem of Psychologism

I cannot appeal to the category ‘universality’ in order to differentiate the universals. The
only way to differentiate universals is to appeal to what is not universal. But this results in
the absurdity that what distinguished each universal is something that is not universal. This is
what psychologism, as well as other fallacious views, achieves. It takes what is not universal,
such as sensory particulars, etc. as universal. By replacing the content of logic with
metaphor, we lose all normativity.
III. The Problem of Participation

Since we cannot locate any conceptual means of differentiating universals, we must admit that universality has no inherent conceptual differentiae. Naturally, this means that universality is undifferentiated. Essentially, we run into the Parmenidean position. On the one hand, if universality is undifferentiated, then it seems that there are no universals except universality. Since we want to admit that there are other universals besides universality, how is that possible? This is one of Plato’s leading questions: how do particular Forms relate to Form as such? On the other hand, if universality is undifferentiated, then there are no conceptual differences whatever. If there are no conceptual differences whatever, there is no way to conceptually differentiate universality from instances of universality or differentiated universals. It appears that the content of universality, as well as the content of each particular universal would be arbitrary. To say this another way, every time I try and differentiate what universality is, I must differentiate universality as such. Thus, universality is contradictory, for universality appears to be both undifferentiated universality and a differentiated universal. But this is absurd according to the second dogma, because universality cannot be a particular universal. As long as universality is not the principle by which the different universals are distinguished, universality will be undifferentiated and the same result will follow. Naturally, this engenders an infinite regress.

IV. The Problem of Onto-theology

Every attempt to specify what the universal is results in the identification of universality with a differentiated universal. But that is absurd, because according to the second dogma, universality and particularity are distinct principles. In Scholastic Philosophy philosophers often identify God, whom they define as Being as such, as a being. The objection here poised insists that they have equivocated on universality and particularity.
The problem of participation necessitates that the universal be a universal, and from this it is obvious that the universal as such is self-referential. Unlike empirical kinds, e.g. ‘animal’, which are not self-referential\(^{488}\), in this problem, the universal as such is self-referential. Thus, it appears that the universal \(qua\) self-referential, cannot be \(a\ posteriori\). Indeed, when we confront the principle of a totality, e.g. ‘universal’ as such, we find that there is nothing external to universality as such. Though it is the principle of the totality, it is nonetheless one member of the totality.\(^{489}\) If universality were not the principle of the totality, it could be one member of the totality without contradiction.\(^{490}\)

Indeed, participation cuts to the root of the problem: if we tarry long enough with the question at hand we see that it does not require us to merely specify universality as such, but also that universality is a particular, or an instance of itself. If it is precluded from what it unifies, we have not found what is universal as such, since there is always one universal left out, namely the universality stipulated to be true of all of them. The separation of a universal from its particulars also severs the relation between the universal and its own content.\(^{491}\) On the one hand, the universal must relate to itself as a particular instance of itself, yet on the other hand, the universal must be common to all of its particular instances. It is important to note that \(the\ problem\ generating\ the\ paradox\ is\ not\ only\ the\ lack\ of\ self-reference\), although this is

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\(^{488}\) For example, ‘animal’ is not an animal. Any a posteriori kind, insofar as it is spatio-temporal, or merely temporal, is not self-predicative. Time and space, as the form of the a posteriori, do not appear to be self-predicative. Time is not a time and space is not a space. If time and space constitute the form of whatever is \(a\ posteriori\), we should expect that the a posteriori to exclude self-reference. Moreover, here we have examples of possible a priori concepts that do not seem to be self-predicative: time and space. In Hegelian language, they are ‘indifferent to self-reference’.

\(^{489}\) This is a contradiction.

\(^{490}\) Still, this problem could be repeated at a lower level as well. If we consider the member as the whole member, and not just as a member of a larger whole, we can generate the same regress that applies at the highest level. Plato already recognized this in his \(Parmenides\).

\(^{491}\) Insofar as Plato’s problem of participation is a problem concerning the possibility of truth, we cannot with any certainty know how truth is possible without a solution to the participation paradox.
necessary to properly answer the question, but the dogmas precluding the universal from
being an instance of itself which generates the ban on self-reference in the first place.

What is generally ignored in traditional attempts to answer the question is the
reflexivity of the question, inclining us to posit a particular form of universality for
universality as such. The form of the question asks for a self-referring and self-referential
answer, yet that answer seems impossible. ‘What is universality as such?’ ‘Universality is such
and such a universal.’ Self-reference is the proper form of the answer. Yet traditional
answers either include self-reference without retaining any determinacy for the concept, or
they exclude self-reference, and lose the determinacy of the concept, all while failing to
answer the question. Whether we adopt self-reference or reject it, whether we begin
immediately or in a mediated way, we lose the determinacy of the concept. The question asks
us to provide an answer which is not indifferent to particularity, while at the same time
preserves the determinacy of the concept. This requires us to re-think the relation between
universal, particular, and individual.

On the one hand, the result is that each answer traditionally put forward may only give us a
particular form of universality, but never accounts for the thought positing these particular forms. On the
other hand, if the concept is self-referential, it appears that we have no ground on which we
may legitimately posit these various forms of universality, genus, class, and abstraction, as
forms of the universal. The thought positing these forms seems to violate the traditional
dogmas as well as the traditional forms of universality. Moreover, it invites us to re-think the
relation of universal to particular. The history of Western philosophy has already provided us
with the two possible solutions to this problem. Either we can, with Wittgenstein, admit the
meaninglessness of these philosophical propositions, or we can, following Hegel, embark on
a logic free from the principle of non-contradiction, and the appeal to givens. As Karin De Boer puts it, in purely philosophical reflection, the principle of non-contradiction is inadequate. To put it in abistorical terms, thinking qua thinking is contradictory. This is the upshot of the chapter: either thinking qua thinking is mystical, since it exceeds its own principles, or we must make a place for contradiction in our logic. I want us all to feel the pressure to make the choice; to stand in fear and trembling before philosophy. We must be courageous enough to face this problem honestly.

Because each of the traditional forms of universality is indebted to the four dogmas, each of these traditional forms of universality falls victim to the four paradoxes of self-reference. Although we must treat the universal as a particular according to the demands of the question, each traditional answer to this question precludes treating the universal as a particular. The principle unifying the particulars is not allowed to function as the same principle that differentiates the particulars. In order to save philosophy, the universal as universal ought to function as a principle of individuality, or the differentiated particular, while at the same time retaining the determinacy of the universal. Each universal posited as an answer to the question concerning the constitution of universality posits a third term transcending it which it is at a loss to identify. Accordingly, the tradition itself seems to be caught in the Euthyphro problem: instead of specifying the universal character of the universal, a particular form of universality

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492 In his bestselling book *Warum Es Die Welt Nicht Gibt*, Markus Gabriel offers what he thinks to be a third way out of this dilemma. In his forthcoming book *Fields of Sense*, he argues that because the universal leads to a contradiction, it follows that there is no universal. He thinks that we can maintain the consistency of our system by rejecting the universal as such without falling into any form of mysticism. The issue of course is the following: what principle do we employ to reject the existence of the universal? We appeal to the principle of non-contradiction. Gabriel rejects the existence of the universal exactly because it leads to a contradiction. Yet, if the very principle of non-contradiction leads to a contradiction, then Gabriel must admit that he cannot use the principle of non-contradiction to refute the claim that the universal (as well as universals) exists. He would be forced to reject his own principle by which the argument proceeds, which he cannot do.

is offered in its stead. But what we want to the universal. In order to do this it seems we
must give up on the traditional dogmas impeding our pursuit.
Section IV

Hegel's Logic of the Concept

Ch. 15 Hegel's Alternative: The Self-Determination of the Concept

In *The Notion* Hegel's *Science of Logic*, Hegel provides one solution to all four paradoxes, and provides us a place to begin searching for a way to solve these classic problems. In *The Notion in General* Hegel begins by pointing out that it is difficult to discover what others have thought about the concept. In the history of philosophy the concept itself has rarely been treated as its own object of inquiry:

But it is not easy to discover what others have said about the nature of the Notion. For in the main they do not concern themselves at all with the question, presupposing that everyone who uses the word automatically knows what it means. Latterly one could have felt all the more relieved from any need to trouble about the Notion since, just as it was fashion for a while to say everything bad about the imagination, and then the memory, so in philosophy it became the habit some time ago, a habit which in some measure still exists, to heap every kind of slander on the Notion, on what is supreme in thought, while the incomprehensible and non-comprehension are, on the contrary, regarded as the pinnacle of science and morality.  

In this passage Hegel recognizes the attraction of mysticism in his own time, and speculates that the attraction of mysticism has encouraged thinkers to ignore the issue altogether. In the history of philosophy, discussions of concepts in general are often bound up with other issues of greater import to philosophers, such as Form, God, or objectivity. Our own

494 See Hegel's *Science of Logic*, 600-622, or for the original German, see Hegel, G.W.F. *Wissenschaft der Logik II*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Velag, (1986), 273-301.


496 I do not wish to claim that the concept has no bearing on these issue, but that the issues are separate and the systematic treatment of the concept can be investigated without appealing to these terms.
investigation into the history of philosophy illustrates this point well, for in order to get at what others think about the concept, we must work through a slew of other issues that, from a purely systematic view, are often tangentially related to or indirectly concern what the concept is. By attending to what the concept is, Hegel aims to thematize a question rarely asked in its own right\(^497\), and hopes to thereby avoid the appeal to mysticism.

In the *Logic of the Concept* Hegel presents the reader with a novel answer to these classic questions. If the universal is self-differentiation\(^498\), then all four dogmas are undermined. As self-differentiating, the universal can escape the traditional dogmas, and thereby escape the problems associated therewith.

Self-differentiation is both the determiner and the determined. Insofar as self-differentiation negates any difference between determiner and determined, self-differentiation determines what it is, for it is not differentiated by any other principle external to it. Since it determines for itself what it is, it must be the source of its own content and is rightfully called 'self-determining'. For if it does not differentiate itself, it is either differentiated by another, and acquires determinacy by an external principle, or it is not differentiated at all. But in the former case, self-differentiation is not self-differentiating, and

\(^{497}\) Hegel thematizes this issue again at the very end of *The Notion in General*. He points out that neither in the critical philosophy of Kant nor in the description of Aristotle were the forms of concept ever subject to philosophical criticism. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 595.

\(^{498}\) Numerous scholars, such as Kenley Dove, Richard Dien Winfield, Edward Halper, Henrich and others, have recognized the importance of self-determination in Hegel's philosophy. For this reason, it is not unique to my account. Most recently, see Christian Georg Martin, *Ontologie der Selbstbestimmung: Eine operationale Rekonstruktion von Hegels ‘Wissenschaft der Logik’*. Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck 2012. What I believe is unique about my account is the way that I use Hegel to solve the four paradoxes of self-reference. Although Trisokkas employs Hegel to solve different, yet related problems of skepticism that stem from the ancient skeptics, his approach is similar to mine insofar as he applies Hegel to solve problems that stem from Ancient philosophy: Trisokkas, *Pyrrhonian Skepticism and Hegel's Theory of Judgment: A Treatise on the Possibility of Scientific Inquiry*, Boston and Leiden Pub., 2012.
in the latter case self-differentiation is indeterminate, for without any differentiation, there can be no relation to an other and hence no determinacy.\textsuperscript{499}

Since it contains what is different from itself, the concept is determinate only in lieu of the contradiction it contains.\textsuperscript{500} Since the universal contains its own difference, it is not simply a self-identical ‘one’.\textsuperscript{501} Since it is not simply self-identical, but contains its own differentiating principle, it is not beholden to the principle of non-contradiction. As self-differentiating, it is both the principle of its unity and the principle of its difference. Hence, self-determination does not presume the separation of the principles of universality and particularity, for it has no need to appeal to an external principle of differentiation to account for its content. Because it differentiates itself, there is no non-conceptual content to which the concept must appeal in differentiating its various aspects. Thus, it also avoids the appeal to foundations and the psychologistic and naturalistic fallacies that follow from such appeals. The self-differentiating universal only stays itself in virtue of differentiating itself into various contents distinct from it, but which it nonetheless contains within itself. To be a

\textsuperscript{499}I shall clarify, with greater precision, in this section on the outline of the argument, exactly why determinacy requires difference. This requires an appeal to Hegel’s own description of the term in the Logic of Being.

\textsuperscript{500}Earlier in the Logic of Essence, Hegel points out that contradiction is the result of the dialectical process of identity and difference. For this see Hegel, Wissenschaft der Logik II, 64. Here I use the term ‘contradiction’ because we have just showed in Section III that the concepts of identity and difference have become indistinguishable. Because this leads to a contradiction, I employ this term here as a pedagogical tool in order to maintain continuity with the problems raised in Section III as well as employ terms that are consistent with Hegel’s own description. In addition, these remarks are anticipatory. We shall later give more systematic support to the claim that the concept is contradictory.

\textsuperscript{501}In his remark on particularity, Hegel points out that as self-differentiation, the concept is just as much opposed to itself as it is self-contradictory: “The nature and the essential transition of the forms of reflection which they express have been considered in their proper place. In the Notion, identity has developed into universality, difference into particularity, opposition, which withdraws into the ground, into individuality. In these forms, those categories of reflection are present as they are in their Notion. The universal has proved itself to be not only the identical, but at the same time the different or contrary as against the particular and individual, and in addition, also to be opposed to them or contradictory;” […] Hegel, Science of Logic, 615-616. Here Hegel makes the point that unlike in ordinary logical analysis the difference between contrariety and contradiction is not a relevant difference in his system of the concept. Contrariety is usually conceived as a form of opposition in which there is a middle, such as ‘white’ and ‘black’, whereas contradictory terms signify a form of opposition in which there is no middle, such as ‘white’ and ‘not-white’. Hegel himself describes the concept in terms of contradiction as well as the unification of contraries. The concept of diversity also arises in the concept, but as we shall see, the diversity of the concept is dependent upon the self-opposing and self-contradictory aspect of the concept that is constitutive of particularity.
universal is to admit what is other to itself, and to maintain its identity in lieu of the self-differentiation. Moreover, because the difference is not external to the universal, there is nothing that limits the universal. Insofar as there is nothing that limits the universal, the universal is no longer finite. Accordingly, it is without a limit or infinite. Thus, if the universal is self-differentiating, universality is no longer beholden to the four dogmas of universality. Since the universal escapes the dogmas, it also escapes the problems that follow from them.\textsuperscript{502}

The problems of participation followed from the apparent necessity to discover the principle of the content outside of the universal itself, a necessity apparently demanded by the dogmatic requirement separating principles of unity and difference. To avoid this problem, Hegel posits that universals must provide for their own content. If the universal self-differentiates, it must be responsible for creating its own content. On the traditional model, an appeal to the given seems necessary since the content of a category is determined by something other than the category, e.g. an external category, an appeal to a given content in experience, or to beings. In our historical inquiry, we discussed the term ‘intellectual intuition’ which signifies the process whereby the content of what is thought is created by the very act of thinking that content. Because self-differentiation is nothing more than the act by which the universal itself creates what its universal content is, self-differentiation exhibits ‘intellectual intuition’. Throughout our historical analysis, we have continually pointed out that the very content of the universal is inseparable from its connection to its

\textsuperscript{502} Oddly, Julie Maybee, in her book \textit{Picturing Hegel}, does not list the self-differentiating universal as one of the senses of the concept. She has all the senses of the concept qua particular represented: abstraction, class, and set, yet leaves out the principle from which they follow. Maybee, Julie E., \textit{Picturing Hegel: An Illustrated Guide to Hegel’s Encyclopaedia Logic}. Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2009, 16-18.
particulars. Hegel develops this historical connection into a principle, by showing that the very content of the universal, its self-differentiating character, is inseparable from particularity as such. Hegel develops this principle by showing that it is in virtue of the universal’s capacity to refer to itself and to thereby make itself particular that it is intellectually intuitive, or what is the same, that it is able to create its own content from nothing but itself. The activity by which the concept gives itself its own content must be both self-referential and self-particularizing. In Hegel’s conception of universality, it is in virtue of self-reference and self-particularization that the universal establishes for itself what its content is. For this reason, self-particularization establishes the true content of the universal, or the content to which the universal corresponds. The concept must, by itself, give itself its own ‘truth’. In our analysis of the concept, we shall systematically reconstruct Hegel’s argument for the self-referential and self-particularizing features of the concept.

As we shall see, Hegel also argues that universals must exhibit self-particularization. We shall make painstaking efforts to show how the universal achieves self-particularization through self-reference. Self-reference is obvious implied in the very concept of self-differentiation. Because self-differentiation differentiates itself, its activity is not directed at anything other than itself. Its activity is only directed at itself. ‘Self-reference’ expresses the self-directed activity of self-differentiation. Self-reference does not exhaust the concept of self-

503 See, for example, our discussion of Plato and Kant. In Plato, the only content of the universal that we can in principle specify is that universal that is inseparable from the particulars. Because of this, we cannot in principle determine what the universal is apart from the particulars. Likewise, in the case of Kant, we could not determine the objective content of the universal apart from the particulars.

504 As we noted in the Introduction, self-reference is the activity whereby a concept applies its own content to itself.

505 This term signifies the activity whereby i) the universal creates its particulars by itself, and ii) the universal itself from which the particulars are generated is itself one of the particulars. ‘Self-particularization’ is, as we shall point out shortly, a synonym for ‘existential implication’.
differentiation, but self-differentiation is necessarily self-referring. The term ‘self-reference’ does not necessarily imply any connection to the structures of judgment. Indeed, judgment is the attribution of a predicate to a subject, and ‘self-reference’ neither invokes the term ‘subject’ nor ‘predicate’. In addition, the reference involved in ‘self-reference’ does not appeal to a mind or another principle in virtue of which something is pointed out, for it is the universal that refers to itself. Finally, because Hegel himself uses this term throughout his analysis of the concept, (the original German is ‘Beziehung auf sich’ or ‘sich beziehen’) I find it a relatively uncontroversial way of communicating the overall structure of the Logic of the Concept.

Hegel has many ways of expressing the logical structure constitutive of self-reference. In the Encyclopedia Logic Hegel employs various terms such as ‘having turned back into itself’ (Zurückgekehrte in sich selbst), ‘withdrawing inwards’ (insichgehen), ‘sinking deeper into itself’ (ein Vertiefen desselben in sich selbst), ‘return into themselves’ or ‘back turning into themselves’ (ihrer Rückkehr in sich).

The self-referential aspect of the universal is already evident in chapter three: when we think the self-identity of self-identity, we cannot help but encounter non-self-identity. In our analysis of the history of philosophy we have traced the way the concepts of self-reference and existential implication have been employed throughout the tradition. Here I

506 Because one claims that ‘self-differentiation’ is self-referring it does not follow that ‘self-differentiation’ is just self-reference or reducible to it self-reference.

507 There are numerous passages in which self-reference arises. Miller sometimes translates them as “self-relation”, sometimes as “self-reference”. See for example, ‘diese reinen Beziehung des Begriffs auf sich’ (pure relation of the Notion to itself) (601, 274), ‘die einfache Beziehung auf sich selbst’ (simply relation to itself) (602, 275) ‘self-relating’ (sich auf sich beziehende) (601), and “self-reference” (Beziehung auf sich) (619). Note that “sich beziehen auf” can mean relation and reference. Miller has taken the nominal form “Beziehung” as “self-reference”, and the participle as “self-relation”, but he could have taken the participle as “self-referring”.


509 See paragraph 84 of Hegel’s Logic.

510 See paragraph 162 of Hegel’s Logic, 225.
refrain from employing the term ‘existential implication’ only because there is some concern that the use of the term may unintentionally introduce other terms from the section on Judgment in the Science of Logic.\(^{511}\) Because existential implication is that process whereby the universal gives rise to its particulars by itself, existential implication is nothing more than the process of self-particularization. For this reason, in the exposition on Hegel’s Logic of the Concept, I have replaced the term ‘existential implication’ with ‘self-particularization’ in order that the logical structure might be more effectively communicated. Because I have used the term ‘existential implication’ to mean ‘self-particularization’ all along, I understand this replacement to be a merely terminological emendation.\(^{512}\)

Since universals posit their own content, foundationalism can be avoided, for there is no need to look outside of the universals for their content or for the differentiation of the particulars. Since the participation problem is generated by an appeal to an external content, and the universal as self-determining eschews this appeal, the universal as self-determining eschews the problem of participation. For Hegel, the universal is neither an abstraction, nor a class, nor a genus. For Hegel, each of these is a determinate universal, but for Hegel the universal itself is not wholly identifiable with the determinate universal.

Each of the classic answers to the question concerning the constitution of universality precludes any derivation of the differentiated particular from universality itself. If the universal is self-differentiating, it must contain not only particularity, but also the differentiated particular or individuality. Perhaps more perplexing is the fact that the four

\(^{511}\) For example, in The Judgment Hegel writes, “The Judgment can therefore be called the proximate realization of the Notion, inasmuch as reality denotes in general entry into existence as a determinate being.” Hegel, Science of Logic, 633. ‘Existential implication’ may give the impression that at the stage of the concept we are already dealing with forms of judgment, or the existence of determinate beings.

\(^{512}\) ‘Self-particularization’ also has the benefit of expressing in what sense the universal can be a principle of particularity. Not only does ‘self-particularization’ express the concept that the universal creates particulars by itself, but it also implies that the particulars themselves that are implied by the universals are nothing but the universal themselves. In other words, it expresses that the universals are their own particulars.
dogmas, as well as the four paradoxes of self-reference that follow from them, must also be contained in the structure of the self-differentiating totality. In this chapter I reconstruct Hegel’s text in *the Nation* to show how universality, particularity and individuality are all constituents of the self-determining universality. By removing the dogmatic limits on conceptual determination, the universal as self-differentiating must individuate its own particulars. Since the universal as self-differentiating creates its own content, and must be its own particular, it must also determine itself to be self-determining. It must include self-differentiation as such in the forms of its own self-differentiations. In other words, insofar as self-differentiation can account for its own content, unlike other forms of universality, the universal as self-determining individuates itself.\textsuperscript{513}

Since we are now systematically inquiring into self-differentiation for the first time in our discourse, we must investigate whether the universal individuates itself as self-differentiation and if so, and exactly how does it accomplish this? If it fails to become its own individual, then it would not be properly self-differentiating. But since the text indicates that the universal also differentiates itself into the other forms of universality as well, must we view the self-differentiating universal as the privileged form of self-differentiation? If so, how is this established? If self-differentiation individuates itself into other forms, how are these forms related to self-differentiation as such?

On the one hand, since abstractions, classes, and genera do not differentiate their own individuals or generate their own content, it is unclear how the self-differentiating universal could derive these, since they are not self-differentiating. On the other hand, it

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{513} Though it cannot be made fully clear at this point, the self-particularization of the universal results in the creation of the universal as individuality. The universal’s self-particularization results in the creation of itself as individuality. As individuality, the self-particularization of the universal transcends particularity. Yet, because this individuality is distinct from particularity, and Hegel identifies the particular with the determinate universal, individuality itself must also become a particular universal.
\end{footnote}
seems that the self-differentiating universal could help in providing the other forms of universality with the source of their content, given that the universal as self-differentiating eliminates the assumption which generates the problem of the differentia and the problem of participation in the first place. As a principle of unification and differentiation, the universal, construed as self-determining, must be both a universal and a particular and should thereby be able to function as the universal that puts forward the traditional forms of universality: abstraction, class-membership, and genera. On the one hand, this would only work if the other forms of universality, i.e. abstraction, class-membership, and the genus, could be viewed as distinct forms of universality. As we shall see, Hegel argues that abstraction, class-membership, and the genus are all particular forms of universality. If these are forms of the self-differentiating universal, they should also exhibit, in some respect, the structure of self-differentiation. On the other hand, this would mean that each form of universality, e.g. abstraction, class membership, and genus, could not each be treated as the sole form of universality as they have been traditionally viewed.

Before we embark on our reconstruction of Hegel’s argument, let me first communicate the way that I shall be approaching Hegel’s text. As every reader of Hegel knows, because the text is a systematic unity, any reconstruction of a portion of Hegel’s text cannot be achieved in total isolation from the other sections. Fortunately for my purposes, I do not intend to give a mere commentary on Hegel’s text. This is not the purpose of my work. For this reason, I will not motivate the concept of the concept by reconstructing the dialectical stages that precede its appearance. The history of philosophy is only of interest to us insofar as it sheds light onto the inquiry into the ‘what it is to be’ of the concept. We are mining Hegel’s text in order to better elucidate what the truth of the matter is.
Still, I shall not have the luxury to ignore other portions of Hegel’s text entirely. The reason for this is the fact that Hegel appeals to other categories in his *Logic* such as ‘being in itself’, ‘illusion’, etc., in his description of the features of the concept. Accordingly, in order to properly relay the argument to the reader, I will take the liberty to discuss these concepts to the extent to which it illuminates Hegel’s argument. Perhaps unsurprisingly, our analysis of the concept will lay bare not only the conceptual character of the other categories in Hegel’s *Logic*, but the motivation for the *overall division* of the *Logic* into three sections. We shall make a special effort to note the differences between the concept and other categories with which the concept has traditionally been identified.

Hegel is notoriously hard to read. It is quite difficult to get away from jargon when discussion Hegel. Despite the necessity to appeal to Hegel’s terminology in order to properly reconstruct the argument, I will make every effort to construe the position in philosophical language that ought to be intelligible to the generally educated reader. By translating Hegel’s work into more accessible language, it is my hope that we might better appreciate his philosophical contribution.

Having placed some methodological parameters on my inquiry, I must also be honest about the way I am employing Hegel to make an argument about what the concept is. Already I have commented on the role of history in our inquiry. In chapter three I noted that either we must adopt a *mystical* orientation to the concept or we must radically re-think the structure of the concept along Hegelian lines. In this work I do *not* intend to further develop the philosophical implications of the mystical orientation. Indeed, it has been thoroughly developed by many in the various religious traditions of the globe and in the life of thinkers such as Meister Eckhart, Al Ghazali, and Nagarjuna. We ought not be too crass in our identification of such figures, for the various traditions cannot always be very easily
reconciled with each other. Despite such differences in the traditions, there is a common philosophical root to the various orientations that deserves the name of ‘mysticism’. The mystical orientation is always being rediscovered, and deserves more attention than I have given it here. In my analysis of Heidegger and Wittgenstein, I have attempted to, albeit briefly, motivate the mystical resolution to the problems at hand.

On the one hand, philosophical mysticism assumes that the concept is the universal and is opposed to the principles of particularity and individuality. Accordingly, to achieve a connection to the individual, (this includes the individuality of the concept!) the mystic rejects the conceptual orientation for another orientation in which the individual may show itself. On the other hand, Hegel’s principle of self-differentiation rejects the mystic’s assumption that the universal and the particular are separate principles. Still, the mystic ought not take it for granted that the concept is thoroughly abstract. The mystic must investigate Hegel’s *Logic*. Even so, how do we decide, we philosophers, which approach is true?

Let me be clear about what we cannot say. We cannot say that the mystical solution is false because it undermines its own assumptions. Again, I have emphasized that in fact mysticism is only successful in the case that it does so! By pointing out the self-refuting character of mysticism we only serve to *embolden* it. Mysticism supports its claim to the impossibility of conceptual intelligibility by undermining the intelligibility of its very own concepts. Accordingly, I do not wish to *categorically* claim that Hegel’s way out of the problems is the only legitimate way. Mystics take themselves out of the conversation—and if successful teachers they help others take themselves out of the conversation too. This requires the mystic to see that the concept is self-annihilating. In mysticism philosophy

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*514 I am inclined to think that Hegel’s philosophy is similar. To contradict it is to embolden it.*
becomes a practice of self-annihilation, one of the purposes of which is to demonstrate the nothingness of philosophy. Accordingly, philosophy becomes a practice, not a knowing, in which the thinker undermines his own assumptions to intuit what is.

But I will make a more restricted claim, one that is motivated by the form of this treatise. In order to preserve the conceptual determination of the concept, the concept must be self-determining. Put roughly, in order to save rationalism, we must adopt Hegel’s solution to the problem. In this sense, Hegel’s solution is the only solution to the problem. Indeed, we may not want to call the mystical way out of the problem a ‘solution’. Instead, it really is a resolution, for it shows us that what we thought were problems really were not problems at all. The problems are no longer problems once we give up on our attempt to conceptualize the concept. For the mystic, once we give up our assumption that whatever we encounter must be consistent with itself, or that the concept must be conceptual, we no longer have the problem that the concept is not identical with itself. In this sense, there is only one real philosophical solution, namely Hegel’s solution, to the problems of differentia, participation, ontotheology, and foundationalism. Here, philosophy is not the practice of self-annihilation; instead, it is knowing that is self-preserving.

In sum, the following reconstruction of Hegel’s solution is thoroughly hypothetical. If we adopt the assumption that the concept is self-differentiating, then we can solve all of these philosophical problems that have compromised the possibility of metaphysics and epistemology since the dawn of the tradition. Indeed, although Hegel’s logic is not presented as a hypothetical argument, my argument in this treatise cannot help but be hypothetical. At one level, the hypothetical nature of my argument is simply a function of the narrow limit of this project, namely to elucidate what it is to be a concept. We could build upon this project by offering an internal motivation of the concept of the concept by re-constructing the
development of the concept of the concept from mere ‘Being’ at the outset of the *Science of Logic*.

Although the appeal to Hegel’s self-differentiating universal appears hypothetical, there is a sense in which our own historical investigation has provided some internal motivation for Hegel’s posit. If we look back at the Platonic and Neo-Platonic traditions we find that some eminent thinkers in these traditions want to say and indeed feel themselves forced to say what their own treatment of concepts does not allow them to say. Let us briefly consider, for instance, Plotinus and Meister Eckhart.

Plotinus appeals to emanation, in which the One goes out of itself to create the world, while fully maintaining its unity as the One. Yet, Plotinus continues to insist on a division of universality and particularity that renders any account of that emanation unintelligible. If the universal were self-differentiating, the One could indeed remain itself and go out of itself to create the world without any absurdity. For in the self-differentiating universal the self is the other. Indeed, Hegel’s account of the concrete universal seems to have a precedent in Plotinus’ theory of emanation. To put Hegel’s account in historical terms, we might go even further and say that Hegel’s concrete universal is *the conceptual rendering of emanation*. This is simultaneously the perfection and overcoming of Neo-Platonism.

In the case of Meister Eckhart, Being, in virtue of what it is, leaves itself, and only returns to itself in virtue of having abandoning itself. Indeed, this Neo-Platonic story of the birth of Christ in the soul and the simultaneous return of Christ to God in the Holy Spirit is not yet Hegelian, for it is not yet conceptual. Still, this story becomes a conceptual movement, and ceases to be a story once we adopt the universal as the self-differentiating principle. As Hegel himself realized, his account of universality is the Christian narrative put
into conceptual form. Again, this is the perfection and overcoming of (at least Neo-Platonic) Christianity. One might just as well say that Hegel has incorporated the history of philosophy into his logic by giving it the conceptual form that it demands, in spite of the fact that thinkers have never been able to properly express this form in language.

On first glance, it appears that our inquiry into the history of philosophy has only brought despair. For at every turn, regardless of the peculiarity of the system, the same problems arise. But in another way, it is exactly in the brokenness of the concept in the tradition where the being of the concept is allowed to show itself. Indeed, the failure to grasp the concept in the history of philosophy, has pointed to what the concept must be. In grasping that our concepts fail to get ahold of emanation, for example, we come to grasp what is absent. Moreover, the speech of philosophers in their descriptions of such processes implicitly appeals to self-differentiating. For these reasons, our inquiry into some far reaches of the tradition is justified. In Hegel’s concept of the self-differentiating universal, the history of philosophy is appropriated in a new way that both illuminates that history and gives it a new significance. In sum, the history of philosophy, in this text, prepares the way for the systematic treatment of the concept in Hegel’s thought.

Still, an objection to my treatment of Hegel immediately presents itself. This text itself seems to point both toward Hegel and mysticism. Let us begin with the latter. Hegel’s philosophy is an attempt to save the rationalism that lies at the heart of the tradition and stave off the necessity of the mystical resolution. Because the argument in favor of Hegel’s solution is itself hypothetical, we cannot help but fall into the dogma of foundationalism. Accordingly, our own argument must negate itself. Thus, as long as we remain in the hypothetical mode of presentation, we cannot help but affirm the mysticism that Hegel’s thought so direly wishes to elude. In this way, this text, although it lays bare the possibilities
regarding the solution to the problem, cannot stay neutral within itself, and through its own self-refutation, points away from Hegel’s solution towards the mystical resolution. Less eloquently, there is nothing philosophical about an argument to the best explanation, especially in an area where what is to be explained must itself be accounted for by the argument.

On the one hand, this concern simply implores us to read the whole of Hegel’s *Science of Logic*, which as we know, begins without presuppositions. So long as we accept Hegel’s claim that the concept of the concept develops within a pre-supposition-less logic, this criticism may be met without further ado. On the other hand, although I do not reconstruct the previous categories in the *Science of Logic*, this treatise still offers a different type of internal motivation. Let us keep in mind the results of the previous chapter. So long as we accept the self-identity of the concept, we cannot help but think contradiction. What is self-identical cannot help but be what it is not. When we think what is self-identical, we think what is not self-identical in virtue of self-identity. The self-negation of the four dogmas itself posits the universal as self-differentiation, and as the unity of opposition that is characteristic of Hegel’s concept of the concept. Thus, Hegel’s posit that the universal is self-differentiating is in fact not hypothetical at all. Instead, it is necessarily what the self-identity of self-identity gives. In this respect, all that is needed in order to provide an internal motivation for the claim that universality is self-differentiation is the analysis of the self-identity of self-identity in the previous Section.

Following this reasoning, whenever the mystic thinks, self-differentiation presents itself with the force of the truth. Since the self-differentiation of the concept presents itself with the force of the truth, the mystic can no longer simply accept that the universal and particular are separate. If this is no longer a valid supposition, then the mystic has no right to
abandon the conceptual determination of the concept for a non-conceptual determination. Indeed, what is supposed to motivate the move to silence actually undercuts it: the very thought that the concept is what it is not, that it is self-differentiating, undercuts the move to silence. Said another way, if the mystic resolves the question in silence, then it appears that she never properly thought through the self-differentiation of self-identity. It may be that what the mystic thinks she can only meet in silence, she should have already met, and can meet, in the very concept of the concept. Indeed, as we investigate, in close detail, the way Hegel himself develops the concept of the concept, we shall have plenty of opportunity to return to this point, and develop it further.

515 We might put this another way. Often thinkers have insisted, for example, on the un-knowability of God or the first principle. One might appeal to a similar principle here, and claim that the universal itself is super-rational or beyond reason. This move makes sense if one appeals to intellectual intuition as the divine faculty of knowing. Yet, I think there is a fundamental mistake in this move. Upon attempting to think the principle one arrives at a contradiction. From here one claims that universal is super-rational, as though God’s thought, or the universal, would not be contradictory. Quite to the contrary: to intellectually intuit is to think the contradiction. Or said another way, it is absurd to expect what is super-rational not to be contradictory. To think the contradiction in the idea of the universal is to encounter the universal itself, not to miss it.

516 Nonetheless, the mystic may still have a response. The mystic may admit that what is thought is a contradiction. But for the mystic this may simply mean that there is nothing thought, or that what is encountered in thought is nothing. If the mystic responds this way, philosophy itself ceases to be a knowing of the concept, and instead is a practice in unknowing. Philosophy may become practice in seeing the contradiction in everything.
Ch. 16. The Outline of the Argument

In what follows, I shall reproduce an English translation\footnote{Hegel, G.W.F. *Science of Logic*. Translated by A.V. Miller. Amherst: Humanity Books, 1969.} of many paragraphs of Hegel’s text from *Chapter 1: the Notion*. In order to stay close to the original German, I shall insert the German\footnote{G.W.F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik II*, Werke 6, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft.} into the text where I see fit, in the case that it may be of some assistance in reading the text. Following the presentation of every paragraph, or every few paragraphs, depending on the content, I shall provide elucidation and commentary on that section of text.

*Understanding /[Verstand]/ is the term usually employed to express the faculty of notions /[Begriffe]/; as so used, it is distinguished from the *faculty of judgment /[Urteilskraft]/ and the faculty of syllogisms /[Vermögen der Schlüsse]/, of the *formal reason /[formellen Vernunft]/. But it is with *reason* that it is especially contrasted; in that case, however, it does not signify the faculty of the notion in general, but of *determinate* notions /[bestimmten Begriffe]/, and the idea /[Vorstellung]/ prevails that the notion is *only* a notion. When the understanding in this signification is distinguished from the formal faculty of judgment and from the formal reason, it is to be taken as the faculty of the *single* determinate notion /[Vermögen des einzelnen bestimmten Begriffs]/. For the judgment and the syllogism or reason are, as formal, only a *product of the understanding /[Verständiges]/ since they stand under the form of the abstract determinateness of the Notion. /[abstrakten Begriffsbestimmtheit]/ Here, however, the Notion emphatically does not rank as something merely abstractly determinate; consequently the understanding is to be distinguished from mere reason only in the sense that the former is merely the faculty of the notion in general.\footnote{Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 600.}

In the opening passage of “the Concept” Hegel is explicit that in his explication, “the Concept” does not rank as something merely “abstractly determinate”.\footnote{Though I do not have major qualms with Miller’s translation, and shall employ it as my main translation of Hegel’s *Logic*, I find Miller’s translation of ‘Begriff’ as ‘Notion’ stilted and does not connect Hegel’s discussion to any of the accounts we have heretofore considered. In order to maintain continuity with our discussion thus far, I shall translate ‘Begriff’ as ‘concept’ instead of ‘notion’.} The faculty of
concepts, the understanding is usually thought to stand in contrast with reason, not as the faculty of the concept in general, but as the faculty of determinate notions. In this case, the concept itself is grasped as a single determinate concept. In contrast, Hegel points out that the understanding is just the faculty of the concept in general. In sum, Hegel distinguishes the usual treatment of the concept as an abstract determinacy that is contrasted with formal reason, and his own account in which the understanding is not limited to abstract determinacy, and merely signifies the faculty of the concept in general.

Without some clarification of ‘determinacy’ and ‘understanding’, this comparison, at first glance, helps very little with clarifying Hegel’s position. The term ‘understanding’ is Kant’s term for the faculty of a priori concepts or categories. Accordingly, Hegel’s comparison of the way the concept is usually understood with his own account is meant, at least in part, to distinguish himself from Kant. Hegel will nonetheless appropriate the term ‘understanding’, but with the proviso that it has the general signification of the ‘faculty of the concept in general’.

At this point our explication of Kant shall come in handy. For Kant, each category of the understanding has a determinate content. As we noted, the objective content of each category is some form of merely intuitive content: categories without intuition are empty, intuitions without categories are blind. What is relevant here is the basic fact that all the categories of the understanding necessarily have some content. In this sense, the categories are ‘determinate’ and the understanding is posited as the faculty of ‘determinate concepts’. For Kant, reason stands in contrast with the determinacy of the understanding. The Ideas of reason—God, the World, and the Soul—possess no intuitive content. For us, this is tantamount to an absence of content simpliciter. In this respect, the Ideas of reason are indeterminate. At best, the legitimate activity of reason is limited to its merely ‘logical use’,
namely the organization of the categories of the understanding. Any attempt to arrive at any true content simply by reason alone rests upon the fallacious application of categories beyond their proper domain of content, namely *a priori* intuition. When we infer that ‘the soul is a substance’, we have engaged in what Kant calls ‘dialectical reasoning’ in which we have mistaken the principles of formalism as principles of truth.

The formal reason, for Kant, is *the faculty of syllogisms*. Whereas the faculty of judgment *connects individual concepts*, namely the predicate to the subject, the faculty of syllogism *connects judgments* to one another (premises) in order to construct new judgments (conclusions). Reason, as a faculty of syllogisms, is a merely *abstract rendering* of determinate categories. It is an abstract rendering because it subtracts the content of intuition from the categories, and thinks them independently thereof. Of course, the original categories of the understanding are originally discovered as the original functions of synthetic unity in *formal* judgment. When we separate out the formal judgment, as well as the categories that work as synthetic functions, from the original *a priori* intuitions, we only possess the capacity for a formal-logical operation. Indeed, as Hegel puts it, “For the judgment and the syllogism or reason are, as formal, only a *product of the understanding* [Verständiges] since they stand under the form of the abstract determinateness of the Notion. [abstrakten Begriffsbestimmtheit] [...].” Formal Reason is “something-understood” [Verständiges] only because it stands under the “abstract determinacy” of the concept.

Because categories without their corresponding intuitions are empty, the judgments of which the categories are logical functions are themselves empty. In addition, the theory of syllogism, which connects judgments to one another, must also be empty of content, for the judgments it connects are themselves formal. Because the form of the category is external to the content, or what is the same, the faculty of form and content are separate, the
determinacy of the concept in Kant is abstract. The indeterminacy of the theory of judgment and syllogism in formal reason corresponds with the abstract determinacy of the categories of the understanding. One of our questions going forward must be the following: can there be any determinate concepts that are not abstract?

Hegel’s language properly expresses his attitude toward this perspective: “the idea [Vorstellung] prevails that the notion is only a determinate notion.” Note that Hegel does not write that “the concept prevails that the notion is only a determinate notion”, but instead uses ‘Vorstellung’. ‘Vorstellung’ in Hegel is diminutive. A ‘Vorstellung’ is not a proper concept. Instead, it is a ‘before-putting’, if you will, or what is a more usual translation, a ‘representation’. As such, it is a psychological phenomenon, one that has a temporal existence in the consciousness of a subject. Any theory of concepts that reduces concepts to this state falls victim to what we have called ‘psychologism’. Here in this passage Hegel implicitly connects the proposition that the concept is merely determinate with a mere ‘idea’, with something less than conceptual. Though it may only be a representation that the concept is only a determinate notion, Hegel is obviously not here claiming that the concept is merely indeterminate.

Another conspicuous aspect of this passage is Hegel’s claim that the idea prevails that the concept is only the single determinate concept: “But it is with reason that it is especially contrasted; in that case, however, it does not signify the faculty of the notion in general, but of determinate notions [bestimmten Begriffe], and the idea [Vorstellung] prevails that the notion is only a determinate notion.” More directly to the point, Hegel writes that “it is to be taken as the faculty of the single determinate notion [Vermögen des einzelnen bestimmten Begriffs].” What is curious here is Hegel’s emphasis on the singularity of the determinate concept. Clearly, here Hegel is pointing out a relationship between two concepts that arise together in the usual
understanding of ‘understanding’: determinacy and singularity. If we take a moment to dwell on Hegel’s own specification of determinacy, we shall achieve some insight into why this identification is made.

One way of understanding what we have achieved in Section III concerns the principle of determinacy. One reason, as we noted, that the principle of non-contradiction has enjoyed such a long and prosperous reign in philosophy is the concern that without the absolute rule of the principle, nothing could be determinate. Aristotle tells us that if the principle of non-contradiction were not applicable to beings, wells would be battleships.\(^{521}\) His point is well taken: without the principle of non-contradiction, it appears that everything would be what it is not, and we would not be able to render anything distinct from anything else. Indeed, Aristotle’s argument teaches us what is central to the concept of determinacy: that what is determinate be in principle distinguishable from what it is not. Naturally, if the principle of non-contradiction is what preserves determinacy, it only makes sense to protect her reign.

Unfortunately, the story cannot be so simple. In Section III we pointed out the basic problem with assumption that the principle of non-contradiction is the principle of conceptual determination per se: the very determinacy of the principle of non-contradiction cannot be preserved by the principle of non-contradiction.\(^{522}\) If we hold fast to the principle of non-contradiction as the absolute principle of conceptual determination, the principle undermines its own determinacy. In fact, the result can only be atrocious for she who has adopted the principle of non-contradiction as her guide: the principle, when taken as absolute, turns out to render all determinations indeterminate.

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521 See Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, Book Gamma, chapter 4.
522 See my discussion of the missing differentia and participation in chapters 15 and 17 of Section III.
As it turns out, in order to protect the determinacy of the concept, we cannot begin with the principle of non-contradiction as the absolute principle of the concept. The principle of non-contradiction is a guise. The loyal servant of determinacy will not adopt the principle as the absolute. Instead, what becomes all the more clear is that the principle of non-contradiction, as it has traditionally been interpreted can at best have relative value. As we shall see, although Hegel rejects the principle of non-contradiction as an absolute principle, he introduces the principle of non-contradiction as a relative principle.

Let us make an important distinction that will be determinative for our reconstruction of Hegel. On the one hand, our previous chapter shows that insofar as contradictions are explosive\(^{523}\) the principle cannot be absolute.\(^{524}\) As long as the principle of non-contradiction is interpreted on the traditional model as explosive, then we must reject it as an absolute principle. On the other hand, Hegel will show that some contradictions, in virtue of the particular character of the contradiction, are not explosive, but create new categories. On the whole, we may distinguish between two senses of the principle of non-contradiction. On the one model, anything follows. On the other model, from particular contradictions particular results follow. Hegel re-works the principle of non-contradiction such that the latter interpretation acquires dominance over the former. In our reconstruction of Hegel we must pay close attention to how the latter sense of the principle is developed. Indeed, if Hegel accepts that determinacy is generally non-contradictory in the traditional sense, then we would expect him to treat the determinate concept as a relative concept. This would mean that the principle would not range over the concept as such, but only over restricted domains of the concept, such as particular elements of the concept. If the principle

\(^{523}\) An explosive contradiction is one from which everything follows. Such a contradiction does not produce specific results, but every result.

\(^{524}\) See chapters 15 and 17 of Section III.
were restricted to particular elements of the concept, then the principle of the determinate concept, the principle of non-contradiction, would not be absolute. For this reason, Hegel would not reduce the concept as such to a determinate concept. Accordingly, he could integrate the traditional concept of non-contradiction into his account of the concept in general.  

Systematic philosophers tend to put Hegel’s move another way: determinacy cannot be accounted for by positing anything determinate. Indeed, that would beg the question. Determinacy can only arise from what is not determinate. Notoriously, Hegel’s *Science of Logic* does just this insofar as Determinate Being (*Dasein*) arises out of Being, Nothing, and Becoming, each of which are in themselves indeterminate. Of course, what is of central interest to us is not the way these give rise to Determinate Being, but exactly how Hegel characterizes determinacy. Indeed, one of Hegel’s basic concerns with limiting the concept to the determinate concept is the very issue concerning the origin of the determinate concept. Without giving due countenance to the indeterminate concept, no account of the determinate concept can be given.

When Hegel employs the word ‘determinate’ he has something very specific in mind. Indeed, the concept ‘determinacy’ is developed very early in the *Logic of Being*. Hegel’s specification of determinacy is not far a field from Aristotle’s sense. Unlike Becoming, determinacy, in Hegel’s initial characterization, is the *stable unity* of Being and Nothing. For Hegel, determinate being *qua* determinate is something. Something is the unity of reality and negation, but understood *as a reality*. Every determinate being is a something. As a something, it is opposed to some other. The other to which something is opposed is the inverse of something: the unity of reality and negation understood *as a negation*.

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525 If this is Hegel’s approach, a natural question arises concerning the determinacy of universality itself, which is not merely a determinate concept.
When Hegel claims that the understanding is usually grasped as the single
determinate concept, he is pointing out that the concept is taken up as a generic ‘something’. When the concept is grasped as a something, it is posited as having its own reality, apart from what is other to it. This independent qualitative being, to which the other is opposed, is what Hegel calls ‘being in itself’. Insofar as the something is not the other because of its own independent reality, it is ‘being for another’ in virtue of its being in itself. Likewise, the other, in itself, is not the something, and is ‘being for another’. Yet, insofar as it is in itself not the something, the other also has its own ‘being in itself’ in virtue of its being for the other. When we grasp conceptual relations in this way, the only relation of the categories to one another is one of exclusion. Indeed, the exclusion of each by the other is what constitutes their determinacy. Of course, Hegel argues that the categories ‘something’ and ‘other’ are not mutually exclusive, and in fact each is something and other. The something is the other to the other, and the other as the other is something. When concepts are taken up as ‘somethings’ they have no relation to each other except as realities that exclude each other. Their relation to each other is characterized by a negation, by an act of exclusion. Each is by itself and related to the other only by not being what the other is. Unlike many of the other terms Hegel introduces here at the outset of The Concept, the general rendering of the concept as the single determinate concept, or as a ‘something’ does not begin with Kant. Indeed, we have been tracing this assumption from the very beginning of the Western tradition, namely in Plato’s dictum that the Form is itself by itself.

The concept of the determinate is a very bare concept with very little content. To illustrate, consider again Aristotle’s example. The wall is something. It has its own being ‘in

526 Plato already developed the relation of these categories in the second deduction of the Parmenides.
itself. In virtue of its own independent reality, it is not a battleship. Its relation to the battleship, as a mere something, is one of exclusion. Sure, it stands in other relations to the battleship, but not as a mere something. The same point can be made about the battleship. The battleship, qua battleship, has its own independent being. Insofar as the battleship qua battleship is not the well, its relation to the well is that of exclusion. Each is a something insofar as it has some reality, and each is an other, insofar as it is the negation of some reality. Thus, the terms ‘something’ and ‘other’ are relative terms that signify one determinate relationship. When the understanding is grasped as the single determinate concept, it is grasped as the concept of the something and the other.

On this view of the singularity of the determinate concept, the principle of non-contradiction, according to which the contradiction is explosive, is adopted in order to preserve the content of every reality against its negation. The principle of non-contradiction ensures that the well is never the battleship, and that the battleship is never the well. Each is its own something and other to one another. Formal logical principles and the concept of determinacy are wedded: the relativity of non-contradiction is reflected in the relativity of something-other. Their unity is expressed in the concept of the abstract. The abstract universal is what it is and is not what it is not. Its relation to what it is not is defined by negation: it relates to its other by failing to be the other. It is an other to other abstract universals, each of which are also somethings. Of course, one does not properly relate to the other by not being the other.

As we can see from Hegel’s terminology, to overcome the abstract universal means to overcome the view that the universal is only the single determinate universal. Accordingly, it falls on us to investigate how Hegel can introduces the determinacy of the concept and the principle of non-contradiction while at the same time reject the view that the concept is
merely a determinate concept and the principle of non-contradiction as an absolute principle.

In the second paragraph of the section, Hegel offers the first succinct description of what he takes the concept of the concept to be.\footnote{The universal Notion \textit{[Dieser allgemeine Begriff]}, which we have now to consider here, contains \textit{[enthält]} the three moments \textit{[Momente]}: universality \textit{[Allgemeinheit]}, particularity \textit{[Besonderheit]}, and individuality \textit{[Einzelheit]}. The difference \textit{[Unterschied]} and the determinations which the Notion gives itself in its distinguishing \textit{[Unterscheiden]}, constitute \textit{[macht aus]} the side of which was previously called \textit{positedness \textit{[Gesetztein]}. As this is identical in the Notion with being-in-and-for-self \textit{[Anundfürsichsein]}, each of these moments is no less the \textit{whole} Notion than it is a \textit{determinate} Notion and a \textit{determination} of the Notion. Hegel, \textit{Science of Logic}, 600, 273. (From here on forward, the second page number cites the passages from the German edition.)} Hegel writes that the concept gives itself its own difference and determinations. Accordingly, the concept is that which \textit{self-differentiates}.

In the passage, we cannot tell from the English that the two terms ‘difference’ and ‘distinguishing’ are related. In German, these terms are ‘Unterschied’ and ‘unterscheiden’. The latter is the verb form of the former. Thus, we might as well have translated the latter ‘differentiating’ instead of ‘distinguishing’. Indeed, we can form the noun ‘Unterschied’ from the past participle ‘unterschieden’. My only point here is that the two terms are much closer than the translation indicates. The concept differentiates (\textit{unterscheiden}) and thereby gives the difference (\textit{Unterschied}).

In the following paragraphs that precede \textit{A. The Universal Concept}, Hegel introduces those various characteristics into which the concept differentiates itself. In these sections Hegel is not making an argument. Instead, he is \textit{preparing} us for what is to come. We are told that the ‘universal’ concept contains three ‘moments’: universality, particularity, and individuality. By ‘universal concept’ Hegel means the concept as such, or the ‘what it is to be’ of a concept. In this signification, ‘universal concept’ identifies that which makes any concept a concept. The universal concept, we are told, is not just universal; it is particular and individual. What is striking here is the fact that Hegel does not exclude the particular and the individual from the universal concept, as is commonplace in the tradition. Moreover,
Hegel is careful to distinguish the particular from the individual. Historically, as our studies show, philosophers have not always been careful about making this distinction. Often, the particular and the individual are lumped together, as though they were the same concept, both of which are subsequently opposed to the universal. Instead, for Hegel the universal itself has particularity and individuality as its ‘moments’. In order to better understand what Hegel means, let us specify this term ‘moment’.

In Hegel ‘moment’ is a very general term. On the face of it, what makes the term difficult to define is the fact that within the *Science of Logic*, ‘moment’ does not show up as one of the categories.\(^{528}\) What we can know about the term we must cull from Hegel’s use. Here, it appears to have the significance of ‘element’ or ‘constituent’ without further specification. Hegel himself employs the verb ‘ausmachen’ to describe the moments that the universal concept gives itself, a term which signifies constitution. Accordingly, the universal concept is constituted by three elements: universality, particularity, and individuality. At this point in the text, it is unclear in what sense they are related to one another. Here, the term is ‘contained’. There may be some concern that with such a term Hegel is importing the concept of the ‘whole’ and ‘part’ in order to elucidate the concept. ‘Whole’ and ‘part’ are categories in the *Logic of Essence*, which Hegel thinks is not sufficient to determine the content of the concept as such. For this reason, we must be very careful when interpreting Hegel’s use of ‘whole’ in these passages.

At this point, we must not put too much stake in the sense of moment as ‘element’, for we do not yet have an account of what this containment is, namely how the universal is related to its moments. Indeed, Hegel elucidates the being of the universal, particular, and

\(^{528}\) Nonetheless, I tend to think that although it may not appear as an explicit category, the category ‘moment’ does develop within the system—at the stage of the Absolute Idea. Here each of the thought determinations becomes categories or ‘moments’ of the logical system itself.
the individual in the subsequent sections: A. The Universal Concept (601-605), B. The Particular Concept (605-618), and C. The Individual (618-622). Interestingly, Hegel has more to write about particularity than each of the others. We shall have the opportunity to investigate why this is the case, as well as elucidate each in turn.

Hegel states that “the difference [Unterschied] and the determinations which the Notion gives itself in its distinguishing [Unterscheiden], constitute [macht aus] the side of which was previously called positedness [Gesetztsein].” Moreover, Hegel goes on to say that “this is identical in the Notion with being-in-and-for-self [Anundfürsichsein].” To understand what he means here, we must say something about the term ‘positedness’ and ‘being in and for itself’. As is characteristic of Hegel, much of his descriptions of the categories in the Logic of the Concept employ terms and categories from the Logic of Being and the Logic of Essence. Because Hegel continually contrasts the Logic of the Concept with these other sections of the Logic, we will shall have the opportunity to continually return to these categories.

*Gesetztsein*, literally ‘being set down’, is the logical relation constitutive of the Logic of Essence. Allow me to illustrate the relation of positing with an example from an author we have considered in some depth: Aristotle. Aristotelian Essences posit their *per se* attributes. For example, the form of the human being, though not itself posited, posits the capacity of laugh. Moreover, in another weaker sense, insofar as every attribute, e.g. qualities, quantities, etc. depends on the existence of an underlying thing for its existence, the form of the human being posits those attributes. The capacity to laugh is that which is posited by the form, the positor. Indeed, every positing is a relation between a positor and what is posited. Still, the relation has a particular structure, which distinguishes it from others. Although the form posits qualities, and is that in virtue of which the qualities exist, the very content of quality, or the what it is to be of quality, is not itself accounted for by the act of positing. In other
words, though the quality is ‘put forward’ by the thing, and *exists in virtue* of it’s positing, the thing does not account for *what* it is positing. Accordingly, we may indeed know that qualities and quantities depend on things for their being, but that is very different from accounting for the qualitative or quantitative content of the qualities and quantities themselves. Colors, for example, have their own independent being, their own ‘what it is to be’ white and black, etc. and this is perfectly compatible with their being posited by things.\(^\text{529}\)

In what respect is ‘positing’ relevant here? Hegel points out that the self-differentiation of the concept constitutes what was previously called positedness. Indeed, Hegel is explicitly not claiming that the concept is an act of positing. Instead, he is claiming that the act of self-differentiation has an *analogous* function to positing. Positing is responsible for *the difference*, by putting forward and setting down *the difference* between what posits and what is posited. Without the positing of the thing, there would be no difference between the essential (the positor) and the unessential (the posited). The act of positing posits that what posits and what is posited are different and it characterizes the way in which each is distinguished from the other, namely that one posits and the other is posited.\(^\text{530}\)

Though positing accounts for the difference, wherever there is positing, *a difference* between positing and posited *remains*. In the act of positing, the relation between the determiner and the determined is *not equak* the latter reflects the activity of the former but is not identical to the former. The posited is not what posits and what posits is not what is posited. Hegel is pointing out that, despite the differences between positing and self-differentiation, just as positing accounts for the difference constitutive of its relationship, so the self-differentiating...

\(^{529}\) Properly speaking, this example best eliminates external reflection or external positing. Later we shall draw a significant difference between determining reflection and external reflection.

\(^{530}\) At this point in my discussion of positing, I do not intend to reconstruct the entire dialectical sequence of stages of positing constitutive of the *Logic of Essence*. Instead, I only intend to introduce these terms to the extent that they illuminate the text of concern to us.
universal accounts for its differences: universality, particularity, and individuality. Still, one might be under the impression that self-differentiation is like positing in another respect, namely that it preserves the difference between determiner and determined. Hegel’s comment on the identity of positing with ‘being in and for itself’ in self-differentiation functions to dispel this view.

Hegel goes on to point out that the self-differentiation of the universal, what constitutes what was called ‘positing’, is identical to being-in-and-for-self [Anundfürsichsein]. We have already discussed what ‘being in itself (ansichsein) signifies. What remains to be clarified here is what ‘being for itself’ (fürsichsein) means. Unlike positing, being for itself is a category from the Logic of Being. Being for itself develops out of the true infinite, a category that arises from the self-negation of finitude. Being for itself signifies the transcending of otherness. In this respect, what has ‘Being for itself’ is what Hegel calls an ideality. Being for itself is not being for another, as is the case with something and other. If we reflect on self-differentiation, it becomes immediately clear why Hegel uses Being for itself in the description of the self-differentiating universal. As is the case when importing any term from another section of the Logic, we must be careful not to identify the terms in question. What is self-differentiating must not appeal to any external category in order to possess its differences. Insofar as it differentiates itself, that which is other to the self-differentiating universal does not fall outside of the self-differentiating universal. Indeed, it is its own other, if you will. As its own other, there is no way to differentiate it from what it is not. Since what it is not cannot fall outside of it, there is no other external to the self-differentiating. Thus, in this respect self-differentiating is Being for itself.\footnote{Again, there are other respects in which self-differentiation is distinct from Being for itself as such. Hegel points out these differences in section A. The Universal Concept.} All differences fall within the self-
differentiating universal. Accordingly, the independent being of the self-differentiating universal, it’s ‘being in itself’, is nothing other than its ‘being for itself’. It is \( \text{Anundfürsichsein} \).

What is self-differentiating cannot posit any difference, for that would imply that there would be a difference between what posits and what is posited. Instead, self-differentiation is a process of development, in which the determinations it creates are no different from itself. Insofar as it transcends all otherness in Being for itself, it cannot maintain any separation between determiner and determined. In self-differentiation, there cannot be any difference between what differentiates and what is differentiated. Naturally, this would imply that although self-differentiation accounts for the difference between itself and what is other to it, just as positing achieves in the act of positing, the former renders equal what the latter makes hierarchical. The transcending of otherness in self-differentiation means that “each of these moments [universality, particularity, and individuality]\(^{532}\) is no less the whole Notion than it is a determinate Notion and a determination of the Notion.” Hegel briefly indicates how we ought to interpret this in the following paragraph.

We may begin to make sense of what Hegel means when he claims that the unity of the self-differentiation of the universal (what was called positing) and the being in and for itself of the universal implies that “each of these moments is no less the whole Notion than it is a determinate Notion and a determination of the Notion.”\(^{533}\) Since the self-differentiating universal must be indistinguishable from its differences, each difference posited by the concept must be the whole concept. In other words, each is just the universal. Because all otherness has been transcended, all otherness between all differences posited by the universal must be overcome: the universal is individual and particular, the particular is universal and individual, and the individual is universal and particular. Indeed, insofar as each

\(^{532}\) The brackets are my insertion.
\(^{533}\) Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 600.
of these is its own determinate concept that is opposed to the others, each of the moments is a determinate concept.\textsuperscript{534} In other words, each is a \textit{particular}. Insofar as each is a constituent of the concept as such, each is also a \textit{determination} of the universal \textit{per se}. In other words, each is an \textit{individual}. In the following three paragraphs, Hegel provides a \textit{preview} of his argument that each of the moments is no less the whole concept, a determinate concept, and a determination of the concept.

It is a peculiarity of the second paragraph\textsuperscript{535} that Hegel includes universality as a moment of the universal concept. Accordingly, the universal concept is a \textit{moment of itself}. In the coming passages, Hegel gives an argument for this claim. But here, he simply states it. Hegel goes to some length to indicate why this is the case.

In the first instance, it is the \textit{pure Notion} or the determination of \textit{universality}. But the pure or universal Notion is also only a \textit{determinate} or \textit{particular} Notion, which takes its place alongside other Notions. Because the Notion is a totality, and therefore in its universality or pure identical self-relation is essentially a determining and a distinguishing [\textit{Unterschieden}] it therefore contains within itself the standard by which this form of its self-identity, in pervading and embracing all the moments, no less immediately determines itself to be only the \textit{universal} over against the distinguishedness [\textit{Unterschiedenheit}] of the moments.\textsuperscript{536}

Again, let me note one more time that the term ‘distinguishing’ and ‘distinguishedness’ may be better exchanged for ‘differentiating’ and ‘being-differentiated’ or ‘differentiatedness’. In this passage Hegel re-iterates what he says earlier: the universal concept is not only universal, but also a determinate concept or particular concept. Here Hegel uses ‘determinate’ and ‘particular’ interchangeably. As we go further, we must investigate why this is the case. In any case, the identification provides us with a clue for

\textsuperscript{534} At this point in the argument, we have not yet arrived at any determinate concept. But insofar as each is distinguishable from the other, each is a determinate concept.

\textsuperscript{535} Hegel, \textit{Science of Logic}, 600, 273.

\textsuperscript{536} Hegel, \textit{Science of Logic}, 600, 273-274.
interpreting the previous passage: when Hegel claims that “each of the moments is no less the whole concept than it is a determinate notion” we must interpret the latter, ‘a determinate’ as the moment of *the particular*. With this in mind, let’s consider why self-differentiation implies that every moment of the universal is the whole concept, a determinate concept, and a determination of the concept, as well as what each of these distinctions means.

Initially, Hegel points out that the universal is just the concept, or universality itself. As such, we would initially expect the universal not to simply count as one more universal among others, since it is the very what it is to be of universality. But Hegel goes on to say that it is also the particular or determinate concept. Immediately this indicates to us that the concept, or mere universality, is *not in itself determinate*. Indeed, because self-differentiation as such has no other with which it can be contrasted, it would be *improper* to attribute determinacy to self-differentiation as such. This fits well with Hegel’s concern that the concept has been wrongly identified as the determinate concept. Moreover, what this indicates is that for Hegel, the tradition has had the tendency to uncritically identify the universal concept with the particular concept, or what is the same, not to recognize the universal concept at all.

Let us note that if the universal concept, the concept per se, is also a particular concept, then it is just another universal among many. Why is this obvious? First, we already noted the meaning of determinacy in Hegel, in which the determinate concept is a self-identity that is its own something, and stands as an *other to* another self-identity. Accordingly, the determinate concept would be a self-identical concept opposed to other concepts. From the traditional perspective, it is also clear why the particular or determinate concept would
stand among other concepts. Traditionally, to be a particular is to be *one in number*. Accordingly, each particular concept *qua* one in number can be *counted as* one concept.

At the end of this paragraph, Hegel gives a very brief *summary* of the transition from universality to particularity that he elucidates in greater detail at the end of his discussion of universality. Let us analyze our starting point: *the universal is self-differentiation*. When we say that the universal is self-differentiation we do *not* initially have two concepts. Before the attribution of ‘self-differentiation’ to the universal, we do not know what the ‘universal’ is. The ‘universal’, by itself is an empty term. Indeed, it is only in virtue of the determination that the term has some meaning. What is the universal? It just *is* its determination: self-differentiation. Naturally, the ‘is’ establishes the identity of the universal with the self-differentiation, or what is the same, the identity of self-differentiation with itself.

Accordingly, we only have one concept here: self-differentiation. If we wish to be precise, and avoid confusion, we would simply say: self-differentiation *is* or the universal *is*.\(^{537}\)

When Hegel writes about concepts in their ‘immediacy’ or ‘in the form of being’ this is what he means: the form of mediation is one in which we understand one concept *through another*. Propositions such as ‘self-differentiation is’ do not yet achieve this, since it only posits the one content ‘self-differentiation’ by itself. The very absence of the determination indicates the indeterminacy of self-differentiation. What is it? When we see that what we have given at the outset is just self-differentiation, we see that *all we have* at the outset is a simple self-identity\(^{538}\): *the self-identical content ‘self-differentiation’*. That we posited the universal as self-differentiation in the first place, in contradistinction to what is not self-differentiating,

\(^{537}\) By no means do I wish to imply here that self-differentiation has already developed into judgment. I only wish to express what Hegel sometimes means when he says that something is ‘in the form of being’. By ‘self-differentiation is’ I mean that self-differentiation has not yet been determined, indeed, it has not yet differentiated itself.

\(^{538}\) Note that I do not mean that we have ‘self-identity’ itself given at the outset but the self-identity that is ‘self-differentiation’. 
already implies this: insofar as we take self-differentiation for granted in distinction from what is not self-differentiating, we assume the simple self-identity of self-differentiation from the outset.\footnote{In what follows I shall give a brief account of the self-removal of the \textit{Logic of Essence} in virtue of which the content \textquote{self-differentiation} is given at the outset of the \textit{Logic of the Concept}.} Still, this does not mean that we know what we are saying when we claim that self-differentiation is. It is, at the outset, indeterminate.

We might also illuminate the initial status of self-differentiation as the universal moment by reminding ourselves that self-differentiation is \textquote{Being in and for self}. As Being in and for itself, it transcends all otherness. Insofar as it transcends all otherness, there is no other but self-differentiation. Self-differentiation is the \textit{only one} there is. As the only one there is, there is no other to which self-differentiation may be contrasted. For this reason, it is easy to see the connection between self-differentiation as one and its indeterminacy.

Indeed, early in the \textit{Logic of Being}, Hegel shows that Being for self is the One. Insofar as self-differentiation is Being for self, it is just One as well—the only one. At the outset there is \textit{just this} one self-differentiating universal, the immediate indeterminate One. As always, we must be careful not to simply identify these categories. One of the big mistakes of the tradition, for Hegel, is the mistake to universal for the One. The universal incorporates the determinacy of the One, but is not merely the One, for it has a richer content.\footnote{Although we can say with confidence that self-differentiation is not the One, we can say with equal confidence that self-differentiation is one in virtue of its very content: self-differentiation.} Unlike the mere One and Being for self, the immediate unity of self-differentiation is the \textit{immediate identity of all of its differences}, not the \textit{absence} of any difference whatever. In the \textit{Logic of Being}, it is the very absence of any difference whatever that characterizes the One and Being for self. We shall return to these distinctions again when Hegel discusses the \textit{Logic of Being} again for comparative purposes.
From this claim that ‘self-differentiation is’ we may immediately infer that it is the totality of differences, and in this sense, universal. *The universal is self-differentiation.* The sense of universality that we expect from the term is immediately acquired with we think about self-differentiation as such. As self-differentiation, the universal is the *totality*, for it contains differences that it gives itself, and none of these differences may subsist externally to self-differentiation. Thus, self-differentiation is *universal as totality*; for it is what pervades every difference.

But insofar as self-differentiation is, in its identity, a *differentiation* of itself, the universal moment, what is self-differentiating, *must differentiate itself* from what it is not, namely other concepts. If the self-differentiating universal did not differentiate itself from what it is not, it would not be what it is, namely self-differentiation. So just in virtue of “pervading and embracing all the moments”, that is, “because it is the totality” it also “determines itself to be only the universal”. By differentiating itself from what it is not, the universal stands opposed to what it is not, fully determinate in its opposition to what it is not, and countable insofar as it is one in number. Here Hegel already specifies the concepts from which the self-differentiating universal distinguishes itself: the other moments of particularity and individuality.

*Secondly, the Notion is thereby posited as this particular or determinate Notion, distinct from others.*

Here Hegel has given us a mere *glimpse* into why the universal, as self-differentiation, must be a particular concept. But it is merely a glimpse and the details remain missing. For instance, why are particularity and individuality the concepts from which the universal

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distinguishes itself? Also, why must the universal differentiate itself? Indeed, why is it not possible for the universal to just remain universal? Perhaps what is most problematic is the following: if the universal is one of its own particulars, then the universal is a moment of itself. If the universal is a member of itself, then it seems that we have set up a new third man regress. If we cannot avoid the third man regress, then it would appear that positing the universal as self-differentiation simply puts us back into the same dilemma we hoped to avoid by positing the universal as self-differentiating in the first place. If the third man argument cannot be avoided by positing self-differentiation, then Hegel's solution not only appears impotent, but another source of the problem it meant to solve. For this reason, we must first recognize that our initial answer to the problem of the differentia and participation was too clean. It is not enough to posit self-differentiation as the universal. We must say more.

In the following section Hegel indicates the third stage of the argument in the Concept:

_Thirdly, individuality_ is the Notion reflecting itself out of the difference into absolute negativity [*absolute Negativität*]. This is, at the same time, the moment in which it has passed out of its identity into its otherness [*Anderssein*], and becomes the judgment [*Urteil*].542

When the self-differentiating universal is grasped just as the self-differentiating universal, _itself by itself_, it is just the self-identical one. As the particular, when it differentiates itself, it differentiates itself from its own differences. At this stage of particularity, the self-identical one is divided into particular differences ‘particular’ and ‘universal’. Here, in this paragraph concerning individuality, Hegel describes the last stage of the development of the concept. In individuality the concept “reflects itself out of the difference into absolute

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542 Hegel, _Science of Logic_, 601, 274.
negativity”. Let us make some effort to understand what is meant here by ‘absolute negativity’.

At the stage of the determinate universal, or the particular universal, the universal is defined by its negative relation to the other. The determinate universal is not what is other to it. Accordingly, at the stage of particularity, the self-differentiating universal is divided from what it is not, and negation constitutes the relation of self-differentiation to its other. The stage of individuality, the last moment of the universal, is an ‘absolute negation’. ‘Absolute’ signifies not only what is universal, but also what is unconditioned. In order to achieve the absolute negation, negation itself must be negated. At the stage of individuality, the negation constituting the difference between universal and particular must be negated. This is what is signified by ‘absolute negation’. Accordingly, the stage of individuality unites what is separated at the stage of particularity: the self-differentiating universal and what is other to it. The individual is the unity of the self-differentiating universal and that from which it differentiates itself, namely the other moments of the universal. This is why Hegel writes that the concept is reflected “out of the difference” and into absolute negativity.

In sum, in these initial paragraphs Hegel outlines three stages of development that the universal as such undergoes. First, as the universal element, it is merely the self-identity of self-differentiation. As such, it is the immediate unity of all of its differences. This is the stage of the whole. In virtue of its self-differentiation, it differentiates itself into differences or moments of itself. This is the stage of particularity, or the determinate concept. Given the way that this stage develops, the specter of the third man regress arises. Without indicating how this individuality arises, Hegel claims that out of particularity, individuality arises, in which the self-differentiating universal is united with its differences. Let us note that in good Hegelian fashion the end of the process is identical with the beginning, insofar as we have a unity of
the self-differentiating universal with all of its differences. But there is, as always, a
fundamental difference between the end and the beginning. Individuality is a unity that is
mediated by the process of self-differentiation and the stage of particularity. Unlike mere
universalism, individuality is not just the immediate unity of the various differences posited by
the self-differentiating universal. To the contrary, it is the mediated unity of these
differences—a unity that results from the differentiation of self-differentiation in the process
of particularity.\footnote{1}

It is important for us to discuss, in some detail, the connection between truth and
individuality, since Hegel treats individuality as the \textit{truth} of particularity and universality. The
\textit{return of the category to itself}, what in Greek was called the \textit{παλιντροπός}, is what Hegel will
often describe as the \textit{truth} of the category. What does it mean to say that individuality is the
‘truth’ of the universal? The idea is simple: universality, insofar as it is self-differentiation, is
not itself insofar as it has not differentiated itself. In other words it is not truly universal if it
does not differentiate itself. Only in the \textit{act} of self-differentiation is self-differentiation itself.
Indeed, Hegel calls us to simply think the universal by itself or what is the same, the
universality of universality, and see what follows.\footnote{2} Accordingly to Hegel, if we simply think
the universal, or self-differentiation, as such, we shall arrive at particularity and individuality.
The isolation of the universal is exactly what connects it to the other moments of
particularity and individuality. Hegel will argue that individuality just is the self-differentiation

\footnote{1} Naturally, this signifies that both the universal and the individual are ‘negations of negations’. The difference
lies in the fact that the former is an immediate ‘negation of negation’, whereas the latter is mediated by the
process of particularity.

\footnote{2} In order to elucidate Hegel’s concept of the ‘truth of a category’ we must distinguish truth from \textit{tautology}. If
truth is just the self-correspondence of the category with itself, how is the ‘truth of the category’ to be
distinguished from the tautology? In addition, insofar as the self-differentiating universal is contradictory, we
must also investigate the connection between the ‘truth of a concept’ and contradiction. Indeed, we shall see
that tautology and contradiction are ingredients in formulating the concept of the ‘truth of a concept’. Here,
our reflections come close to Heidegger as well, who in his late phenomenological metaphysics recognized the
intimate connection between tautology and truth.
of self-differentiation: the correspondence of universality with itself. It is our task to elucidate why this is the case.

When Hegel uses the term truth in this way, he means something like what people say when they tell others to “be true to themselves”. The universal, in virtue of what it is, is individual. The universal is only being ‘true to itself’ when it is individual. This is Hegel’s sense of the term in this context. Because individuality is the truth of the concept, the truth of any concept as a concept is its individuality. Indeed, since our main concern here is what the concept is, it naturally concerns us to also elucidate what ‘the truth of the concept is’.

As is evident from these reflections, and Hegel’s comments elsewhere, by ‘truth’ Hegel means the self-correspondence of the category with itself. If we remember our formulation of the problem of participation in Plato and Kant, the problem of participation concerns the possibility of truth. For this reason, insofar as individuality is that moment of the concept which overcomes the third man argument, it is with the concept of individuality that the problem of participation may be solved. Without an account of how the particular connects to the universal, we fail to have an account of truth, for truth relies upon the correspondence of the universal with the particular. Indeed, we discovered that the universal, in order to be a true universal, required that it itself already be a unity of universal and particular. Likewise, the

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545 When one is not being oneself, and one is told ‘to be oneself’ the implication is that it is possible for me not to be myself, and that when I fulfill this possibility of not being myself I am not corresponding to what I am. In this case, my being is a false being. Of course, here there is also a normative element. Truth, in general, is a normative concept. When I am not being myself, I am being someone other than who I ought to be. Here, who I truly am, and who I ought to be, are identical. In truth there is a fulfillment of the normative ‘ought’. Although in the Logic of the Concept, Hegel does not discuss the normative element in truth, we can still make normative judgments about the concept and treatments of the concept. We can say this account of this concept ‘x’ does not live up to the concept of the concept proper. Likewise, we can say of moments of Hegel’s development, when they are isolated from one another, such as the element of particularity, that they do not live up the concept of the concept. Although the normative aspect of truth as such is not yet worked out, we may still make normative judgments that take the full development of the concept as the measure.

546 For Hegel the unity of the universal and the particular is one truth, not truth itself. Still, as Hegel describes in the introduction to the Logic of the Concept, the unity of the universal and the particular constitutes the truth of one side of truth: subjectivity. In this sense, even if Hegel does not identify truth as the correspondence of the universal with the particular, the possibility of truth still hangs in the balance. For without an account of the unity of the universal and the particular, Hegel will be impotent to develop his own account of truth.
particular, in order to be true, required the unity of the universal and the particular. As we shall see, it is just this unity of universal and particular in the Logic of the Concept that constitutes the concept of individuality. Indeed, in the Logic of the Concept, Hegel systematically develops what we have already recognized as necessary for truth, which we have not yet been able to work out systematically.

Now I should note that in this treatise we are not concerned with truth per se. Truth for Hegel, involves more than just the universal and the particular; more exactly, it is the correspondence of subjectivity and objectivity. Indeed, Hegel treats this concept only after he has elucidated the logic of subjectivity and objectivity. Nonetheless, the subject and the object are each constituted (though not exhaustively) by the moments of the concept: universality, particularity, and individuality. As we shall discuss at a later point in some detail, the truth of the concept, individuality, is necessary to the constitution of subjectivity. As we investigate the individuality, or ‘the truth’ of universality, we must be prepared to discuss in further detail what it means to speak of ‘the truth of the concept’ in general. At this point in our reconstruction, some questions naturally arise: how could individuality arise from particularity? Indeed, the third man regress seems to undermine any attempt to unify the self-differentiating universal with its other moments.\(^{547}\)

At the outset of these outline of the argument, Hegel noted that “the judgment and the syllogism or reason are, as formal, only a product of the understanding [Verständigen] since they stand under the form of the abstract determinateness of the Notion.” In one sense, we may read this as Hegel’s admission that formal logic, namely the theory of judgment and the theory of syllogism, simply follow from the development of the understanding, or the

\(^{547}\) In addition, one might wonder how does individuality pass into judgment? At this point, the development of judgment or literally the ‘original partition’ [Urteil] is left to the imagination. This question shall become of central concern of us in our attempt to distinguish the way the forms of determinate universality plays a role in the concept.
concept *per se*. Since the theory of judgment and syllogism stand under the abstract determination of the concept, the outcome of Hegel’s account of the concept must be the abstract aspect of the concept. Insofar as the concept, or individuality, is not in itself merely abstract, the fulfillment of the concept, namely individuality, gives rise to what is *other* to the concept. As Hegel writes, the concept is “passed out of its identity into its *otherness* [*Anderssein*], and becomes the *judgment* [*Urteil*].” As we reconstruct the development of universality, particularity, and individuality, we must also reconstruct the way that what is other to the concept, abstract universality, develops out of the individuality of the concept.

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548 Exactly how individuality gives rise to what is other to the concept is the subject of our reconstruction of individuality. At this point, it stands as a question: given that the concept includes its own otherness, how is it possible for the concept to become other to itself?  
550 To be clear, abstract universality is both what is other to the concept *qua* self-differentiation, and it is a kind of universality that has something other to it. What abstract universality is shall be clarified in more detail as the account proceeds.
In the opening paragraph of his analysis of universality, Hegel claims that we must “look back once more at its genesis.” In what follows, Hegel imports terms from the Logic of Being and the Logic of Essence to illuminate the determinacy of the universal. Regarding Being and Essence, he claims that “the Notion is the interfusion [Durchdringung] of these moments […]” Indeed, we have already anticipated this move, for we have already labored to elucidate how the self-differentiation is a unity of being-in-itself and positedness. Nonetheless, Hegel offers a more detailed characterization of the universal in terms of categories that belong to the Logic of Being and Essence. Later in his analysis of universality, Hegel compares the content of universality with the logical processes constitutive of the logics of Being and Essence. It is a common strategy of Hegel’s to compare the logical category under discussion with categories that have already been developed in the course of the Logic. In these later paragraphs, Hegel’s main concern is to show that the universal is not reducible to any categories in the Logic of Being and Essence. On the whole, these paragraphs analyze the universal in two ways: firstly, the universal is the interfusion of the Logic of Being and Essence, and secondly it has its own content independent of the moments of which it is the interfusion. Given that these paragraphs are systematically connected, we shall elucidate them together, even though they are not contiguous in the text.

Instead of beginning our analysis with a comparison of the universal with previous logical categories, it would be of more benefit to us to know what the universal is; otherwise

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551 Hegel, Science of Logic, 601, 274.
552 ‘Durchdringung’ might also be translated as the ‘pushing through’ or what ‘thoroughly penetrates’. ‘Dringung’ has a connotation of force.
553 See the last full paragraph in Hegel, Science of Logic, 602, as well as the first paragraph of 603.
such a comparison shall do more to confuse than to illuminate. Though Hegel employs previous categories to describe the universal, Hegel himself nonetheless strives to explicate the what it is to be of the universal independently of such categories. Moreover, for those readers not well acquainted with Hegel’s *Logic*, it is more sensible to begin with an independent analysis of the universal than a comparison with other contents from the logic. In any case, our main emphasis should not be so much on the origin of the universal as the initial content of universality as such that Hegel posits, and this can be achieved with some clarity without having to bog down the reader with technical terms.  

In the section *Hegel’s Alternative: The Self-Differentiation of the Concept*, we briefly showed how the concept entailed the infinite. As we pointed out earlier, what is self-differentiating must not appeal to any external category in order to possess its differences. Insofar as it differentiates itself, it is its own other. As that which transcends the other, as Ideality, there is no way to differentiate it from what it is not. Since what it is not cannot fall outside of it, there is no other externality to the self-differentiating. Or what is the same, every attempt to find the ‘outer boundary’ of self-differentiation fails. The ‘outer boundary’ could only be formed by that which is not the universal. But since the universal includes that which it is not, every attempt you make to go beyond the universal places you right back in it. Because all differences fall *within* the self-differentiating universal, the universal is not finite, for there is no limit to the universal. Thus, the universal is *infinite*.

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554 I should also note that the opening paragraph of Hegel’s analysis of universality is the most difficult to explicate, mostly on account of his introduction of numerous categories from other places in the *Logic*. For this reason, it will be better to work out some initial determinations of the universal before we make an effort to understand those determinations in light of other categories.

555 “The pure Notion is the absolutely infinite [Unendliche], unconditioned [Unbedingte] and free [frei]”. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 602, 274. Let us note ahead of time that the finite is not just what ‘has a limit’, though up to this point we have contented ourselves with this description of the category. Instead, it is what has an internal limit. What has an internal limit negates itself, or contains its own ceasing to be. For this reason, we must be prepared to develop the contrast between the finite and infinite on these terms as well, if we wish to grasp the full sense in which the universal is infinite, and not finite.
Naturally, the transcending of otherness or ideality is necessarily connected with the infinite. Still, here Hegel fails to specify the sense in which the universal is infinite. There are many senses of the infinite, the variety of which we explored in our discussion of Plotinus. In the course of the exposition we shall have an opportunity to elucidate the kinds of infinity that Hegel is attributing to the universal.\(^{556}\)

Even though Hegel does not explicitly name the kind of universality he is referring to here, if we simply follow the argument it should be clear. Earlier in our discussion of Plotinus we laid out three kinds of infinity: indeterminateness, the quantitative infinite, and the intensive, or qualitative infinite.\(^{557}\) Since the self-differentiating universal immediately contains all differences, it cannot be quantitatively infinite, for the quantitative infinite is that for which something is *always outstanding*. Thus, we might expect that Hegel means either the indeterminate or the intensive infinite.

Earlier we noted that what we have given at the stage of mere universality is just self-differentiation. Because *all we have* at the outset is the self-identical content ‘self-differentiation’ the universal as such is indeterminate. The content ‘self-differentiation’ stands in no contrast with another content and has no determination. As such, the given content self-differentiation appears to be infinite as the indeterminate. But the self-differentiating universal, at the stage of universality, is only indeterminate in virtue of the self-identical content that it is, namely self-differentiation. Indeed, the self-differentiating universal as the

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\(^{556}\) Hegel notes three kinds of infinity in the *Logic of Being*: the non-finite, the bad infinite, and the true infinite. The non-finite, insofar as it is contrasted with the finite, becomes finite. The constant flipping back and forth of the finite and the non-finite constitutes a new kind of infinity, what Hegel calls the ‘bad infinite’. This kind of infinity corresponds best with quantitative infinity, in which there is always some outstanding term. Lastly, Hegel argues that the ‘true infinite’ arises out of the bad infinite. The true infinite is a synthesis of the finite and infinite in which *nothing is outstanding*. Accordingly, the true infinite corresponds best with what we have called the intensive infinite. We shall develop these senses further in some detail when we contrast the *Logic of Being* and *Essence* with the initial determinacy of the universal.

\(^{557}\) Hegel himself develops various senses of infinity earlier in the *Logic of Being*, each of which shall be thematized as we progress in our analysis.
self-differentiating is complete insofar as there is nothing outstanding. It is only in virtue of its completeness that it is indeterminate, that it stands in no relation to an other as self-differentiating. For this reason, it appears that we would be justified in attributing the intensive infinite to the concept *qua* universal. Because the self-differentiating universal just as self-differentiating excludes nothing, it appears to lack no difference, and thereby no content, whatever.

Yet it would be premature to attribute the intensive infinite to the universal as such. At the stage of universality we only encounter self-differentiation as such, or the immediate identity of the differences contained therein. What we do not yet possess in any meaningful sense, is the distinction between self-differentiation and what is *not* self-differentiation. This difference is not yet at hand. What is more, the indeterminacy of self-differentiation precludes it from being complete. At the stage of universality, self-differentiation has not yet differentiated itself into its various moments, e.g. ‘particularity’ and ‘individuality’. Indeed, the immediate identity of self-differentiation as being-in-and-for-itself, as the immediate totality, excludes this as a possibility. To put it simply, at the stage of universality, self-differentiation stands alone, *itself by itself*. Indeed, the fact that the universal stands by itself as the universal is the very premise that seems to undermine the possibility that the universal could differentiate itself into the various kinds of universality we have been investigating in the history of philosophy: class-membership, abstract universal, and genus-species.

Our analysis of the infinity of the universal provides an opportunity to discuss Hegel’s initial description of the concept:
Thus the Notion is, in the first instance, the absolute self-identity \( \text{[absolute Identität mit sich]} \) that is such only as the negation of negation or as the infinite\(^{558} \) unity of the negative with itself \( \text{[unendliche Einheit der Negativität]} \). This pure relation of the Notion to itself, which is this relation by positing itself through the negativity, is the universality of the notion.\(^{559} \)

Hegel identifies the ‘negation of negation’ with the ‘infinite unity of negative with itself’ and the ‘absolute self-identity’. What is the connection between negation of negation and infinity? Earlier in the Outline of the Argument we noted that the individual is the negation of negation. But here, Hegel claims that the universal is the negation of negation. The difference, as we will see, is that the universal, as such, has not yet differentiated itself. The individual, on the other hand, is the result of a process, and therefore involves some form of mediation. The universal is not yet a result of its own process, whereas the individual is the result of the activity of concept. The universal per se is just self-differentiation \( \text{in the form of being} \), as Hegel likes to put it. What does this mean? It means that we are looking at self-differentiation \( \text{insofar as it is} \), not insofar as it is determining itself. Let us briefly dwell on why the given content ‘self-differentiation’ entails the negation of negation.

Self-differentiation differentiates itself. As that which gives differences, it is the principle of its own determinacy. Each of the differences that result from the differentiating process is constituted by a negation. Each difference has its own being in itself and is contrastable with another. Each difference is itself and \( \text{not} \) the other. Yet, each of the differences \( \text{is self-differentiation itself} \). Since self-differentiation is that which it differentiates itself into, it is itself insofar as it is different from itself. For this reason, the negation that

\(^{558}\) The italics are my emphasis.

constitutes the differences must necessarily be negated. Accordingly, the conceptual content of ‘self-differentiation’ engenders the negation of negation.$^{560}$

What follows from the universal as negation of negation? First, the negation of negation excludes no negation whatever—it is itself whatever negation that it creates, or what is the same, it negates the difference between itself and any negation that it creates. Because no negation is excluded, it is infinite. It is an unending unity of negation with itself. In this sense, the universal is the unity of negation with itself. Moreover, the negation of negation, insofar as it is the unity of negation with itself, is self-identical. The negation of negation is an absolute self-identity, for there is no negation conditioning its unity as a negation of negation. It is the self-identity of negation with itself, and as such it is unconditioned, or absolute.

In the last sentence of the paragraph, Hegel gives us a brief formula for the universal: “This pure relation of the Notion to itself, which is this relation by positing itself through the negativity, is the universality of the notion.” The universal is that which gives itself its own content, it is a ‘negation of negation’, in virtue of its differentiating activity, or its negativity. In this sense, it is a self-relation that relates the negative to itself.

At this point in our analysis of universality, we would be well served to point out the essential feature of the universal that will better illuminate the infinity of the universal in contrast with its traditional finite counterpart. In Hegel’s contrast of the universal to the categories in the Logic of Being we discover the essential feature of the universal that has only been implied in the previous paragraphs:

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$^{560}$ Thought the universal engenders the negation of negation, it is important to emphasize that the concept itself is not identical to the negation of negation. Already in the Logic of Being negation arises and is negated. For this reason, the negation of negation is already given early in the Logic, and the concept of the concept cannot be reduced to it. Still, that does not mean that the negation of negation is not itself an aspect of the content of self-differentiation, or that self-differentiation is not a negation of negation.
The universal, on the contrary, even when it posits itself in a determination, remains therein what it is. It is the soul [Seele] of the concrete which it indwells, unimpeded and equal to itself in the manifoldness [Mannigfaltigkeit] and diversity [Verschiedenheit] of the concrete. It is not dragged into the process of becoming, but continues itself through that process undisturbed and possesses the power of unalterable, undying self-preservation. [Selbsterhaltung]\(^561\)

Hegel illuminates the ‘soul’ or indwelling principle of the universal by contrasting it with becoming [Werden]. Becoming is the ceasing to be of Being into Nothing and Nothing into Being.\(^562\) When one thing becomes another, what becomes ceases to be what it is and comes to be something else. For example, when wood is removed from the living tree and used as lumber, it ceases to be an organ in an organic unity, and comes to be something else: a non-organic natural kind with a particular chemical composition. In the process of becoming, the wood does not maintain itself in its becoming. As becoming it ceases to be what it is and becomes something else: lumber. In a moment we shall investigate why the example of becoming is actually indicative of all categories of the Logic of Being, and exemplifies why the concept ought not be classed with such categories. For now, let us focus on the specific contrast between becoming and the concept.

In contrast to becoming, the concept maintains what it is in its differences. In other words, it does not lose itself in the process of differentiation, as the wood loses its being as an organ of a living being in the process of becoming. Instead, it ‘holds itself’ to itself [Selbsterhaltung], and remains ‘equal to itself’ in the many-foldedness [Mannigfaltigkeit] and diversity [Verschiedenheit]\(^563\) of its differentiations. That Hegel attributes this feature to the

\(^{563}\) In passing I would like to point the reader to the etymological connection between ‘difference’ and ‘diversity’ in German. ‘Diversity’ is ‘verschiedenheit’ and ‘difference’ ‘unterschied’. What varies here are the
concept ought not be too surprising, given what we have already uncovered. Insofar as self-differentiation is itself only insofar as it is united with what it is different from, self-differentiation can only be itself insofar as it maintains itself in what is different from it. Indeed, it is the very being of self-differentiation to be its other and to maintain itself in what is other to it. To use the language of genus and species, the self-differentiating universal is the difference and the genus, what is differentiated.

Hegel hints at this feature earlier when he writes that the universal is an ‘absolute self-relation’. Indeed, the concept of self-differentiation entails what Hegel claims. As self-differentiating, the concept must differentiate itself. As we noted earlier in our brief summary of the argument in *The Concept*, self-differentiation, in order to be self-differentiating, must differentiate itself from itself. Thus, it must differentiate itself into what is self-differentiating and what is not self-differentiating. In these differentiations, it might appear that self-differentiation has lost itself in its differences. Indeed, empirical concepts such as ‘bald’, ‘leaf’, etc. all involve non-self-differentiating differences. In the manifold differences into which self-differentiation differentiates itself, even the content ‘non-self-differentiating’ is nonetheless a differentiation of self-differentiation. Because it is one of the differentiations of self-differentiation, every difference that is not self-differentiation is nonetheless united with self-differentiation and inseparable from it. The universal is free power or free love.

We might do well to remind ourselves that here we are just noting what is immediately contained in the concept of self-differentiation. Indeed, it is unclear at this point how the universal could be an instance of itself, and how in fact the self-differentiating universal maintains itself in what is not self-differentiating. We have not yet worked out, in

prefixes: ‘unter’ and ‘ver’. The prefix ‘ver’ often has a negative connotation. In the case of ‘verschiedenheit’, the prefix indicates a loss of unity to the differences, in the sense that they are merely scattered.
detail, what follows from the self-differentiation of self-differentiation. But we can already see in advance that whatever it is into which self-differentiation differentiates itself, self-differentiation shall remain what it is in each of the differences that it puts forward. In a way the universal *per se* is like a potency that is about to realize itself. Here in the ‘potency’ we have contained all that self-differentiation ‘is’ in terms of what it will do, as it were. Yet as long as we hold back in our analysis, and tarry with the universal, we have not experienced its power or seen it unfold that potency into a reality. The ‘potency’ of the universal, the promise of the universal, that it remains what it is in its other, implicitly promises to work out the details for a solution to the problem of participation. Surely, the third man regress is nothing more than the self-loss of the universal in a sea of differences, the unity of which has gone on holiday. The universal is the promissory note that this unity will be recovered, or better, that it has always already been recovered in the activity of the concept. One of Hegel’s great talents is to not rush ahead and to work out the details of each category; he tarries with each category until there is nothing more to say, and then allows it to unfurl itself. One of the challenges we face in explicating Hegel is not to run ahead too quickly.

This feature of the universal, that it remains itself in its differentiations, enriches our grasp of the infinity of the universal. Until now I have been treating the universal as infinite because it has no limit. But as it stands this is an insufficient way to characterize the universal. We need to emphasize that the universal is infinite because it does not cease to be what it is. Indeed, it is what it is irrespective of the changes—this makes it infinite. In

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564 There are two things to note here: first, that we have a glimpse into how the third man problem can be solved. The third man problem tends to be understood on analogy with Russian dolls in boxes. The regress is like a series of boxes in boxes. Each box is like the other, only some are larger, others smaller. Like the boxes, each of the universals is contained by other universals, some more inclusive, others less so. The problem with this analogy is that each universal is conceived *as fully determinate*. Without the initial stage of universality that we have posited here, there can be no account of the determinate universals. Second, our potency analogy fits quite nicely with Hegel’s own analogy: life. The acorn is the potency, and the mature tree the actuality. The acorn has its own actuality, but contains the mature tree as a potency, not as an actuality. It is not as though there is a smaller tree inside the acorn.
contrast, the finite is that which has an internal limit—namely that which, in virtue of what it is, cease to be. The mortality of the human being is the finitude of the human being. Unlike the human being, the concept does not cease to be what it is when it is differentiated into what it is not. Instead, the concept is infinite exactly because it maintains its identity in its self-loss. For this reason, we can see that the concept of the ‘undying’ and ‘unchanging’ are attributes of the infinity of the concept, and provide contrast to the finite as something that can die and change. The finite concept, for example, that we investigated in chapter three, insofar as it is governed by the principle of non-contradiction contains its own ceasing to be. Self-differentiation amends the concept by freeing it of its finitude, and by doing so frees it of the possibility of its non-being.

Because the universal differentiates itself, it is not differentiated by what is other to it. Indeed, it is the source of its own content. Because it gives itself its own content, and is not determined by an external principle, it is self-determining, or free power. It is a power because it is the source of change—the source of differentiations. Yet, it is free, for it is determined by itself, differentiated by itself. Accordingly, it is free power. Whatever it is it is in virtue of itself. As Hegel points out, this free power is nothing other than free love. Why call the universal free love?

Love in this context harkens back to the golden rule: to love one’s neighbor as oneself. To love one’s neighbor as oneself means that one does not distinguish the benefit of the other from the benefit of the self. The benefit of the other is the benefit of the self. In this sense, when I love my neighbor as myself, I am selfless. In reserving no benefit for myself

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565 "The universal is therefore free power [freie Macht]; it is itself and takes its other within its embrace, but without doing violence to it [Gewaltsames]; on the contrary, the universal is, in its other, in peaceful communication with itself. We have called it free power, but it could also be called free love [freie Liebe] and boundless blessedness [schranklose Seligkeit], for it bears itself towards its other [Unterschiedenen] as to its own self; in it, it has returned to itself." Hegel, Science of Logic, 603, 277.
apart from the other, I have no self apart from the other. In this sense, I am selfless. On the other hand, though I have lost my total self in the other, I have also thereby acquired a new self. I am no longer the self who is opposed to the other. In the act of love, the other is not forced to assimilate to my form. Indeed, I freely give myself to the other. Although I lose the self that is separate from the other in the act of love, I do not thereby become nothing. Instead, I am more concrete. I am now the self who is constituted by the unity of the self and the other, or what is the same, the other who is constituted by the unity of the self and the other. If love had a formula, this would be it.

The concept is free love because it “bears itself towards its others as to its own self”.

In the concept the other is not excluded from the concept. Instead, as we have already shown, the concept can only be what it is in virtue of being its other. The self-differentiating universal, as we shall see, gives its whole self, as it were, to the other. In the act of self-differentiation, it differentiates itself into what is self-differentiating and what is not self-differentiating. In creating the difference between itself and what it is not, it abandons itself as the self-differentiating universal. In the act of self-differentiating, each difference is posited as excluding the other. Since the concept is divided into two opposing differences, the concept is no longer the simple self-determining universal, for it is no longer a unity of opposites. Accordingly, the universal abandons itself, and is irrevocably identical to the other: what is not self-differentiating. Far from violating the concept, or assimilating it to itself, it is the very source of the other, and that which grants determinacy to the being of the other. In this act of self-loss, the other, what is not self-differentiating, must nonetheless be a differentiation of the concept. Through its loss of self and utter identity with the other, the concept “returns to itself”. To put the lesson in Christ’s terms, one must lose oneself to find oneself.
Indeed, we have yet to work out in detail how the universal loses itself and ‘returns to itself’ out of its ‘self-loss’, but we can at least recognize at the outset that the universal ‘self-differentiation’ is only itself in virtue of being united with what is different from it. Indeed, the remainder of our analysis consists in just this: to show how the concept is free love. In the section on particularity we shall work out how the concept “loses itself” and in the section on individuality we shall work out how it “returns to itself” out of its “self loss”. At the stage of universality, the process of particularity and individuality has the status of immediacy, because the universal has not yet “lost itself” or “found itself”. The universal is just that which must lose and find itself.

To begin, let us not just say that the universal is free, but that the universal is freedom itself. It is freedom itself, because it is self-determination, the very definition of freedom. If the universal were not free, it would be determined by something other than itself. In this case, the differentiating principle would be distinct from the universal. If the differentiating principle were distinct from the universal, the universal would not be that which self-differentiates. Thus, insofar as the universal is what it is, self-differentiation, the universal must be free.

When Hegel claims that the universal is free, he does not mean to claim that the universal has free will. Free will introduces more content than mere freedom per se, for the concept of the ‘will’ adds something over and beyond mere freedom or self-determination. In particular, the will is usually understood as a faculty of the mind. At this stage of the logical analysis, we have not yet reached the stage of ‘mind’, though Hegel does appropriate the understanding as the ‘faculty’ of concepts. Still, in the concept of free will, freedom as such is obviously an integral and necessary element of the concept.
When Hegel identifies the universal with freedom, he also does not mean mere indeterminacy. Sometimes freedom is identified with simple indeterminacy or as something that is indeterminate. But Hegel means more than mere indeterminacy. Instead, ultimately freedom is determinate, for it gives itself its own content. But of course, in order to do this, it cannot already possess this content in a determinate way at the outset. If it did, it could hardly be said to give itself its own content; instead it would merely repeat itself. It makes itself what it is. Indeed, it becomes what it determines itself to be. It is not merely indeterminate.566

We should be careful to note that at the outset, universality just is self-determination. At the stage of universality we are not considering universality insofar as it has determined itself, just self-differentiation as it is immediately given. In this respect, though the universal is still indeterminate, this does not mean that it is identical to indeterminacy itself. Many concepts can be indeterminate without being indeterminacy itself. At the stage of universality we are considering the universal independently of its activity upon itself, namely independently of its self-differentiation.567

One reason philosophers sometimes identify the indeterminate with freedom is the presumption that determinacy is governed by the principle of non-contradiction. If we assume that only that which is consistent is possible, then freedom cannot be possible. The reason is simple, but compelling: if what is self-determining is simultaneously that which is differentiated and that which differentiates, then freedom is logically inconsistent. Thus, freedom is impossible. Freedom, it appears, would belong with the round circle in the pantheon of philosophical examples of the absurd. From an epistemic point of view, freedom would

566 I find it necessary to make this point, if not for the fact that philosophers sometimes try to salvage the possibility of freedom by appealing to indeterminacy. For example, see the recent work that attempts to co-opt quantum indeterminacy for this purpose.

567 This is a reduction, as we shall see, of universality to just one of its moments, for it neglects to consider its own determinations.
be unintelligible. Regarding metaphysical matters, if one were to posit that the totality of existence is governed by this principle, then freedom could not exist.

As should be evident by now, we could have listed another aporia in our previous list of problems that follow from the assumption of the principle of non-contradiction: if the universal were governed by the principle of non-contradiction, freedom would be logically impossible. Perhaps it is not really a problem, just a consequence of the principle. Nonetheless, if the universal is self-differentiating, freedom is intelligible and possible, for the former just is freedom itself.

On the one hand, it is true that the self-determining universal as self-differentiation is contradictory. On the other hand, since the principle of non-contradiction is not operative, it would be inane to object that self-differentiation ‘violates the principle of non-contradiction’. Such an objection would merely indicate the introduction of an external principle, whose introduction not only undermines itself, but also itself justifies the initial posit that the universal is self-differentiation.

The concept is not only free and infinite, but it is also unconditioned. In order to illuminate the unconditioned, let us consider simplicity of the universal. Hegel claims that university is a simple determination. Its simplicity is evident from its character as self-differentiation. As we have stated, self-differentiation, in virtue of being self-differentiation, is just one. Self-differentiation just is, and stands by itself. Insofar as it stands by itself as the self-

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568 “As universality is the utterly simple determination [bōchst einfache Bestimmung], it does not seem capable of any explanation [Erklärung]; for an explanation must concern itself with definitions [Bestimmungen] and distinctions [Unterscheidungen] and must apply predicates to its object, and to do this to what is simple, would alter rather than explain it. But the simplicity which constitutes the very nature of the universal is such that, through absolute negativity, it contains within itself difference [Unterschied] and determinateness [Bestimmtheit] in the highest degree [bōchst]. Being is simple as immediate being; for that reason it is only something meant [Gemeinte] or intended and we cannot say of it what it is; therefore it is one with its other, with non-being. Its Notion is just this, to be a simplicity that immediately vanishes [verschwindet] in its opposite; it is becoming. The universal, on the contrary, is that simplicity which, because it is the Notion, no less possesses within itself the richest content.” Hegel, Science of Logic, 601-602, 275.
differentiating one, there is no other besides the one. Insofar as there is no other, there is no difference given at all. Thus, as the mere universal, the self-differentiating one is simple. The simplicity of the one is necessarily connected to its indeterminacy. The absence of the other, that in virtue of which it is simple, is the same reason, if you will, for its indeterminacy. So again, the ideality of the universal is virtue of which it is one and simple is also the reason for its indeterminacy. In sum, there is just this one: self-determination. To put the point another way, all that we have is the following claim: self-differentiation is. ‘Self-differentiation is’ is the concept in the form of universality, or being. If we were to add a determination, we would undermine the simplicity of the universal as the content that merely ‘is’.

Although the universal is one, simple, and indeterminate, that does not mean that the universal is identical to Being. The universal is not, as we have already pointed out, the indeterminate itself. If it were, the universal would be identical to Being. If it were identical to Being, it would not be self-determining, since Being as such does not have that content. Instead it would be the simple immediate:

Being is simple as immediate being; for that reason it is only something meant [Gemeintes] or intended and we cannot say of it what it is; therefore it is one with its other, with non-being. Its Notion is just this, to be a simplicity that immediately vanishes [verschwindet] in its opposite; it is becoming.\(^{569}\)

To put it briefly, if the universal were identical to Being, it would be Becoming. As we have already point out, the universal is not at all identical to Becoming, for it maintains itself in its differences, it does not lose itself in them. Being, as the indeterminate itself, has no content at all. It is in virtue of having no content that it becomes its opposite: Nothing. Unlike Being, the universal is not absent of all content: its content is self-differentiation. It is simple,

indeterminate, and one on account of its content: self-determination. Hegel says as much at the end of the paragraph: “The universal, on the contrary, is that simplicity which, because it is the Notion, no less possesses within itself the richest content.”\(^{570}\) The rich content to which Hegel refers here is self-differentiation: “But the simplicity which constitutes the very nature of the universal is such that, through absolute negativity, it contains within itself difference \([\text{Unterschied}]\) and determinateness \([\text{Bestimmtheit}]\) in the highest degree \([\text{höchst}]\).”\(^{571}\) To put it ironically, it is because the universal is differentiated by itself that it has no differences. When we say that ‘self-differentiation is’ that is not the same as ‘Being is’. At the stage of the concept, categories such as ‘one’, ‘being’, etc. all exist in the form of self-determination.

Because the universal is simple, Hegel points out that the universal is not capable of any explanation. When we consider the simplicity of the one, its character as that which transcends otherness, the inability to explain the one is most evident. When we explain something, we posit some condition for it to be or to be known. Every condition conditions something else, the conditioned, and stands as a requirement for the existence or the knowledge of the conditioned thing.\(^{572}\) Because self-differentiation differentiates itself, and is the immediate unity of all of its differences, there is nothing external to self-differentiation that could in principle condition it. If self-differentiation had conditions, it would be determined by something else, and would not be self-determining. Thus, self-differentiation cannot have conditions, and is thereby unconditioned. Because it has no conditions to speak of, it cannot be explained. The universal is unconditioned, simple, and beyond explanation. Instead of claiming that the universal is explained by something else, one might claim that it

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\(^{572}\) One could employ otherness here instead of condition, but condition is more closely connected to explanation than otherness.
explains itself. If this is the approach towards explanation, we must revise our understanding of conditions, in which there is a difference between determiner and determined.

The inability to explain the universal raises another interesting point regarding philosophical methodology. For the same reason that self-differentiation cannot be explained, it also cannot be the conclusion of an argument. The truth of the self-differentiating universal, as well as its justification, could not in principle depend upon premises. Premises are a type of foundation. Self-differentiation, insofar as it determines itself, cannot have its truth dependent upon premises. For this reason, we cannot argue for self-differentiation. Instead, it establishes its own truth. We do not secure the truth of the universal. Instead, our role is to merely dictate to ourselves and other minds what the universal is and its activity. In this respect, the philosopher writing about the universal is much like the prophet Muhammad receiving God’s command: dictate!

In order to properly demarcate the structure of the universal against other categories of the logic, Hegel makes an effort to compare the concept with categories from the *Logic of Being* and *Essence*. Let us begin with *Being*, and proceed therefrom to consider his comparison of the concept with *Essence*. Because the comparisons between the various forms of logic are very abstract, if you will, I will give an example of the kind of logical process from each of the divisions of the logic, in order that the reader might have a concrete reference with which to compare the *Logic of the Concept*. On the difference between the *Logic of Being* and the *Logic of the Concept*, Hegel writes the following:

By virtue of this original unity it follows, in the first place, that the first negative, or the determination, is not a limitation [Schranke] for the universal which, on the contrary, maintains itself therein and is positively identical to itself. The categories of being were, as Notions, essentially these identities of the determinations with themselves in their limitation or
otherness [Anderssein]; but this identity was only *in itself* [an sich] the Notion; it was not yet manifested. Consequently, the qualitative determination as such was lost in its other and had for its truth a determination *distinct* [verschiedene Bestimmung] from itself. The universal, on the contrary, even when it posits itself in a determination, remains therein what it is. 573 It is the soul [Seele] of the concrete which it indwells, unimpeded and equal to itself in the manifoldness and diversity of the concrete. It is not dragged into the process of becoming, but continues itself through that process undisturbed and possesses the power of unalterable, undying self-preservation. 574

Already we possess the necessary conceptual resources to unpack this paragraph.

Earlier we pointed out that Being, as the indeterminate itself, has no content, and is only in virtue of having *no* content that it becomes its opposite: Nothing. Unlike Being, the universal is not absent of all content, for its very content is self-differentiation. Although it has the content ‘self-differentiation’, it is still simple, indeterminate, on account of that content.

Hegel is clear that in the *Logic of Being* categories *transition* into their otherness. The qualitative determination by which a category is identified “loses itself” in its other, or better, becomes the other. In transitioning into the other, the category does *not* maintain itself in its other, but is now the very determinacy of the other. As the determinacy of its other, the category is no longer the determinacy that it once was. For this reason, the new determination is a ‘distinct determination’. The distinct determination into which the category has transitioned is not simply another aspect, side, or moment of the original category prior to the transition. Because the category in the *Logic of Being* becomes a new categorical content in virtue of its transition, Hegel claims that such categories have their being ‘in their limitation or otherness’.

At the outset of this paragraph, Hegel refers to the ‘first negative’ or the ‘determination’. We have already noted that the concept *qua* determinate is the concept in the moment of *particularity*. Although we have not yet arrived at the particular in our

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discourse, we have indicated the basic structure of the particular. The universal is just universal insofar as it is the inert content ‘self-determination’. I say ‘inert’ here because it has not yet determined itself to be self-determining. Indeed, it is a content that has its origin from a series of determinations from the Logic of Essence. As we shall see, the universal cannot be itself and maintain its inertness, and immediately develops into the particular upon retrieving itself from its inertness, or what is the same, in determining itself. Accordingly, in this passage Hegel is concerned to point out that when the concept determines itself it does not thereby fail to be itself in that activity. Unlike the categories of Being, the concept ‘preserves itself’ and ‘continues itself’ in the ‘manifoldness’ and the ‘diversity of the concrete.’ In the moment of particularity, the concept determines itself into what is and what is not self-differentiating. These are the concrete moments, or what is the same, the particular elements of the universal as particular. Hegel’s point is that even when the universal has differentiated itself into what is and what is not self-differentiating (the concrete diversity), it has not thereby ceased to be itself. Each element of the differentiation is a further enrichment, if you will, of the universal concept of self-differentiation. Instead of simply becoming a new category in the act of determining itself, as would be the case if the concept belonged to the category of Being, the concept has more content, and a qualitatively enhanced content. The new elements, that into which the universal concept differentiates itself, are new elements of the concept per se. For this reason, it is better to think about the differentiating of the concept in terms of the development of one content, in contrast to a transition into another content.

Hegel writes that in the Logic of Being “this identity was only in itself [an sich] the Notion; it was not yet manifested.” Hegel’s meaning is simple. In the Logic of Being there is a process of self-differentiation, for this is evident in the immediate self-othering of categories.
By ‘immediate self-othering’ I mean that immediately upon being what it is, the category is what it is not. For example, Being, in virtue of what it is, is immediately nothing. There is no process intervening here: Being is immediately Nothing, and Nothing Being. Still, this process of self-differentiation in the Logic of Being is not explicitly a process of self-differentiation. Self-differentiation as such does not appear in the Logic of Being. Only in the Logic of the Concept does self-differentiation as such appear. If self-differentiation as such were to appear in the Logic of Being, the very Logic of Being itself would be undermined. Instead of transition, there would be development. For this reason, in the Logic of Being the concept is not yet manifested. Instead, the categories of being are only ‘in themselves’ conceptual. This means that each of the categories of Being are indeed concepts, although their conceptual content fails to be the very what it is to be of the concept per se.

For some, the comparison between Being and the Concept may appear to be a pedantic comparison that only serves those already familiar with the Science of Logic. Still, I think Hegel’s comparison of the contents is helpful, exactly because it sheds light on how not to think about the development of particularity and individuality out of universality. It is particularly pertinent to our discourse, for it illuminates Hegel’s criticism of the history of philosophy without having to name philosophers by name. In the history of philosophy, from Plato onwards, the universal is quite often, and without much resistance, defined as the ‘one over many’. For Hegel, the concept of the ‘One’ belongs to the Logic of Being, not the Logic of the Concept. As long as philosophers conflate concepts such as ‘One’ with ‘Concept’, we shall never get any clarity on the problems that plague our attempts to know what the concept is. In order to better illuminate Hegel’s comparison between the Logic of Being and the Concept, I have included a short explication of the transition from One to Void in Hegel’s

575 We shall address the conceptual structure of other categories in the Logic in our discussion of the relationship between the Logic of the Concept, Essence, and Being.
Logic of Being. What should become most evident here is the way that the transition from One to Void happens. One, in virtue of the very absence of otherness within itself, becomes the Void. It is not in virtue of the self-differentiating content and activity of the One that it is the Void, but in virtue of the lack of all content whatever that leads it to the Void. Let us take a brief look at the transition to illuminate the difference.\footnote{In what follows I only provide a sketch of the transition from One to Void in order to give the reader a more concrete sense of the comparison that Hegel is making. It would distract from my purposes in the book to provide a full-length detailed account of the transition, which requires more categories (Such as being-for-one) than I enumerate.}

In the Logic of Being, the One follows Being-for-Self in the order of categories. We have already discussed the meaning of this term. Being-for-Self is that content which excludes all otherness. Being-for Self is that which Hegel calls Ideality. Ideality is the negation of all otherness. Being-for-Self is immediately the One, for in Being-for Self there is only this content: the exclusion of all otherness. This is, as it were, the one content. Insofar as the other is negated, and the One is an Ideality, the only other that could exist would be internal to the One. But if the other were internal to One as distinct from the One, then the One would not be the exclusion of all otherness, for it would have allowed some otherness within itself. Thus, since the determination of the One just is the negation of the other, there cannot even be an other, or some negation, within the One itself. Accordingly, the Ideality of the One is not merely a negation of some content, but it is a negation of negation. The One would not be the absolute determination ‘exclusion of otherness’ if the other were present in the One. Thus the other can only be present in the One as sheer absence. The presence of the One is immediately the absence of all others.

Because there is no otherness in the One, there is no difference within the One. Indeed, there is nothing in the One. Since the Void just is that which is the absence of all
otherness, and the One, as an absolute negation of negation, is the absence of all otherness, it must be the case that the One is, according to its own content, the Void. In other words, in the presence of the affirmative One there arises that which is the One but not as affirmative, but as negative, as the absence of all others. The One contains a Void within itself. Since the absence of all Otherness is itself the absolute determination, for there is nothing external to the Void and there is no limit to the absence of otherness, the Void must be itself the One. Since the Void is in the One and the Void is itself the One, there is an indefinite production of a plurality of Ones. Out of the One and the Void plurality arises. The One now contains another One, and the One repulses itself from itself and produces a plurality of self-excluding Ones. Not only does it repulse itself from itself, but insofar as each has the same content, each of the ones is attracted back to the same center: the one. It is from the transition from One to Void that the categories of repulsion and attraction arise. 577

The movement from Being-for-Self to the Void shows how a category such as the One becomes what it is not, the Void. The Void is that which renders the One self-external, while Being-for-Self is not yet self-external. The transition to the Void is a transition, which accounts for the content of the Void. The transition, as a transition from One to the Void, is a development of Being-for-Self’s own content. Since it is the development of the content itself, the content of the Void is accounted for in the transition from one thought determination to another, for the content just is what Being for Self has become in virtue of what it is.

Here in the Logic of Being there is not yet a distinction between determiner and determined. The immediate content, the determiner, of itself becomes the Void, and Being-for-Self now only is as the Void, until the Void of itself becomes what it is not. The

577 Hegel, Science of Logic, 164-165.
movement of One into Void is representative of the Logic of Being as a development of Ideality. Although Ideality makes its first appearance in the Logic of Being, it does not make its last appearance there. As we shall see, the Logic of Essence is also constituted by a process of Ideality, although the way that otherness is overcome in that logic will be quite different from the process in the Logic of Being. In the Logic of Essence, a process of reflection and mediation is at work there that is absent in the Logic of Being. What counts as a transition in the Logic of Being becomes a reflection in the Logic of Essence.

Ideality in the Logic of Being, e.g. in Being-for-Self, Being-for-One, and the One, renders the negation of the other an internal absence of the other in what negates the other. This ensures the immediate unity of the One and what is other in this move to the Void, as the immediate being of the One. This shows that Ideality in the Logic of Being is integral to transition and the immediate self-determination of the thought-determinations here at hand. Indeed, each content loses itself in its transition. It is only preserved in its negation, or as its other. It only exists as its other, or that into which it has transitioned. It does not maintain itself in its othering, in its transition, as the concept does. There is a return to self in the transition, but this return to self negates the beginning and gives rise to a new determination.

Having recognized that we ought not conflate the One with the Concept, or the Logic of Being with the Logic of the Concept more generally, we are in a position to remark on the abstract universal and its relation to the concept. Indeed, the usual mark of the concept, the ‘one over many’, is usually taken to be an abstract universal, namely one which is extracted out of a series of particulars, and which cannot provide the difference by which the particulars are set apart from each other. Regarding the abstract universal, Hegel provides the following comparison:
First, therefore, it is the simple relation to itself; it is only within itself. Secondly, however, this identity is within itself absolute mediation \[\text{absolute Vermittlung}\], but it is not something mediated \[\text{ein vermitteltes}\]. The universal that is mediated, namely, the abstract universal that is opposed to the particular and the individual, this will be addressed later when we are dealing with the specific notion \[\text{bestimmten Begriff}\]. Yet even the abstract universal involves this, that in order to obtain it we are required to leave out other determinations of the concrete. These determinations, simply as such, are negations; equally too, the omitting of them is a negating. So that even with the abstraction, we have the negation of negation. But this double negation is conceived of as though it were external to the abstraction, as though not only were the other omitted properties of the concrete \[\text{ Eigenschaften des Konkreten}\] distinct from the one retained, which is the content of the abstract universal, but also as though this operation of omitting the other properties and retaining the one were a process outside the properties themselves. To such an externality in face of that movement, the universal has not yet determined itself; it is still within itself that absolute mediation which is, precisely the negation of negation or absolute negativity.\[^{578}\]

Hegel employs ‘absolute mediation’ \[\text{absolute Vermittlung}\] as another way of expressing the universal \textit{per se} as a negation of negation, or absolute negativity. Though it is an absolute mediation, it is not yet mediated \[\text{Vermitteltes}\]. The latter qualification expresses what we have already said: the universal is absolute mediation as immediately given. It is not yet the result of any process. The mediated universal is the abstract universal. Hegel informs us that the abstract universal is opposed to the particular and the individual, and will be addressed later. Our translator takes ‘bestimmten Begriff’ as ‘specific’ Notion, but the term for ‘specific’ here is ‘bestimmten’. Though the translation is not wrong, what this indicates is that the abstract universal is not only the mediated concept, but also the \textit{determinate} concept. On the one hand, because the abstract universal is not thematized in this section on the concept, we shall not have the opportunity to analyze it here. On the other hand, though the abstract universal, in one sense, is opposed to the particular and the universal, there is another sense in which the abstract universal is already present in particularity as such. Our task shall be to separate out the sense in which the abstract universal is already present in particularity, and the sense in which it is a result of the development of the concept.

\[^{578}\text{Hegel, Science of Logic, 602, 275-276.}\]
At the outset of the *Logic of the Concept*, Hegel made it clear that the concept ought not to be identified with the determinate concept. As we already suspected, he means the abstract, mediated concept. Indeed, our very move to identify the concept with self-differentiation is motivated by the inherent problems that follow from positing the universal as inherently abstract. For this reason, it is not at all surprising that Hegel opposes the abstract universal to the moments of the concept. What is perhaps more surprising is his insistence that *even* the abstract universal is a negation of negation.

In this paragraph Hegel establishes two theses: first, the abstract universal is a negation of negation, and secondly, that process of negating negation is posited as external to the content of the abstract universal itself. The opposition between the universal proper and the abstract universal is clear: universal proper is a negation of negation that the abstract universal precludes from itself. Let us begin with the first thesis. The abstract universal is formed by a process of *subtraction* or omission. The thinker pursues a plurality of properties [*Eigenschaften*][579] that subsist in some entity. By thinking one by itself, one property is separated from the others in thought. As Hegel states, this process involves two separate negations. First, each of the given properties is a negation, for each of them has its own determinate content, and negation is necessary for any determinate content. Second, in the act of omitting the various contents, the given negations or properties are negated. Thus, the act of abstracting some content from a manifold of contents is an act by which one negates negations.

Given that the act of abstracting is a negation of negation, let us proceed to the second thesis: in the abstract universal the content of the universal is separate from the negation of negation. This thesis is also evident from the process itself. First, the abstracted

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[579] ‘Eigen’ means ‘own’. The properties are the things ‘own’.
universal is just one content distinct from others. Second, the content that is removed from
the manifold of contents is not itself the process of negating negation. It is some given
content, or negation, just as the other contents are. We discovered the negation of negation in
the act of omission by some thinker, not in what is raised into the mind of the thinker. Indeed,
upon the completion of the act of abstraction, what is left is not the act of negating negation,
but some specific or determinate negation. Thus, in the abstract universal, the negation of
negation is posited as external to the content of the universal itself. In this scenario, the
abstract universal does not develop itself or determinate itself. Its content is simply given.
Thought gives some content to think about by omitting others, but it does not account for
the content of the universal that it thinks.

The abstract universal is an absolute nest of paradox. Most obviously the process of
abstraction requires an appeal to foundations. But more than this, we have a finite universal
that is the result of some psychological, historical, and/or natural process, however one
might want to characterize it. In addition, to identify the universal itself with the abstract
universal is to commit the fallacy of onto-theology, for in this case one identifies the concept
itself with some determinate universal, with a universal. Hegel’s revolution in philosophy
turns on the recognition that the traditional view regarding concepts is onto-theological.

Given this insight, we must be univocal in our banishment of the abstract universal
as a psychological, foundational, and onto-theological concept, from the self-differentiating
concept. Much of the time, Hegel employs the word ‘abstract’ in this derogatory way, to
signify the process of omission that we described above. Though we must be sure to
preclude this sense of the abstract from the concept, Hegel uses ‘abstract’ in another way.
For example, certain passages show that Hegel has another, let us call it ‘higher’ and ‘richer’

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580 For example, one might want to claim that concepts have their origin in a natural process, such as evolution, or a historical event.
understanding of universality than the derogatory sense: “In this, the Notion is outside itself; since it is the Notion that is here outside itself, the abstract universal contains all the moments of the Notion.” Here I do not wish to jump ahead into Hegel’s analysis of particularity from which I have pulled this quote. What I would like to point out here is that passages such as these demonstrate that Hegel has multiple senses of abstract universality, and that the abstract universal is not merely external to the concept. Indeed, Hegel goes so far as to claim that the abstract universal contains all the moments of the concept! It would be quite the equivocation to think that Hegel means that all the moments of the concept are contained by the psychological process that he has already precluded from the concept. By retaining another sense of the abstract universal, Hegel holds the right to bring some determinacy to the universal that is not grounded on foundationalism and the other paradoxes that have plagued philosophy for millennia. Indeed, because Hegel identifies the abstract universal with the determinate universal, Hegel must reserve another sense for abstraction that he may legitimately employ, for otherwise he cannot introduce any determinate content to the universal. Let us keep this distinction in mind as we move forward in our analysis.

Having laid bare the difference between the Logic of Being and the Logic of the Concept, as well as pointed to the various senses of the term ‘abstract’ that will come to bare on our analysis, let us complete our discussion of Hegel’s comparison with an analysis of the difference between the Logic of the Concept and the Logic of Essence. Hegel finds it necessary to compare the Concept with the Logic of Being and Essence. In part, this is necessary because Hegel considers the concept itself to be a unification of these two logics. At the very outset

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581 Hegel, Science of Logic, 608.
Because the concept is the interfusion of Logic of Being and Essence, in order to lay bare the concept as such, we must have a firm grasp of the form of the Logic of Essence as well as the Logic of Being. As I mentioned earlier, in his explication of the concept Hegel will constantly refer to terms that have their origin in the Logic of Essence, and he will give special status to the term ‘illusion’. In order to lay bare the meaning of the term ‘illusion’, as well as explicate the form of the Logic of Essence in general, I shall reconstruct the opening moves in the dialectic of Essence from Essence to Determining Reflection in which the term ‘illusion’ first makes its systematic appearance. The discussion of Determining Reflection in the Logic of Essence is also of key importance because it shows how the Logic of Essence, like the Logic of Being, is a system of Ideality. Because the twists and turns of the dialectic can be tortuous, I ask the reader to bear in mind the systematic purpose of this explication.

Essence is that which posits or mediates that which is mediated. It is that first thought-determination of the Logic of Essence, which arises from measure and the regress of measures in the Logic of Being. Essence is the outcome of the determinations in the Logic of Being. Still, Essence is not merely immediate, for its determination is that which posits. As that which posits, Essence is not that which is posited. That which is posited is not Essence. Since Essence is not what is posited, or is not that which is not positing, that which is not the positing is the Unessential. Essence is present, or arises from Being as that which posits Being. As that which posits Being, the determinations of Being become present as that which Essence immediately is not, and Essence thereby excludes the Unessential from itself as the positor of the determinations of Being. According to the very content of Essence, the

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582 “[…] The Notion is the interfusion [Durchdringung] of these moments, namely qualitative and original being [ursprüngliche Seinde] is such only as positing, only as return-into-itself [Rückkehr-in-sich], and this pure reflection into self is a sheer becoming-other [Anderswerden] or determinateness which, consequently, is no less infinite [unendliche], self-relating [sich auf sich bezügende] determinateness.” Hegel, Science of Logic, 601, 274.
very first determination of Essence is the opposition of Essence to the Unessential. The Unessential appears to be the other to Essence and Essence appears to be the other to the Unessential.

If each were a something opposed to an other, then both would be self-subsistent, or independent determinations. This cannot be the case, for the Unessential is exactly that which is posited by Essence, and for this reason it cannot be independent of Essence. If it were independent, then it would be that which mediates, not that which is itself mediated. Whatever is mediated is dependent upon that which mediates. So the Unessential, in itself, is that which is not self-subsistent, but is, according to its own content, dependent. It is that which only appears to be the other to Essence, but is not. Accordingly, it is illusory being. The Unessential is the illusion of self-subsistence, or that which is but is not self-subsistent. The determinations of Being, as posited, are only illusory in Essence, and in this sense the formula of illusory being may be stated as the non-self-subsistent that shows as self-subsistent. Thus, the Unessential is not the other to Essence, but is only the mere illusion of being an other to Essence, for it only has being in the positing of Essence. In sum, the Unessential is illusory being, and Illusory being is the remainder of Being, or what is left over. Since Essence is that which is self-subsistent, and illusory being is the illusion of the self-subsistent, illusory being is the illusion of Essence. As we move forward in our analysis of Hegel, let us keep in mind Hegel’s definition of illusion, since it plays a central role in the development of Hegel’s account of the concept.

Since the illusory being is posited, and what is posited requires something that posits it, illusory being points to the positor, Essence, as its origin. To use Hegel’s terms, as the illusion of Essence, illusory being reflects, or shows forth Essence as its illusion or posited being. Reflection is a return of Essence to itself through what it posits. This ‘return to self’ is
not a negation of the difference between that which posits and the posited. Here in Essence, the reflection of one in the other preserves the difference between determiner and determined. Essence is first reflected in the positing of illusory being.\footnote{Hegel, \textit{Science of Logic}, 395-402.}

Since Essence, as the mediator, does not determine the content of that which it puts forth in the positing, it must presuppose some content to mediate and posit. In Hegel's terms, Essence is indifferent to the determinations of the content which it posits. As we noted earlier, if one thing mediates another, one only knows that one thing is posited by another, but one does not know \textit{why the content which is posited has the determinations which it does}. For instance, the fact that Being, as Quantity and Quality, is posited by that which posits, the Essence, does not itself specify why the contents posited are Quantitative and Qualitative contents. These contents were developed earlier in the \textit{Logic of Being}. Since the positing is indifferent to the determinations of the content, it must take up such contents as given or presuppose them.

Since Essence must presuppose what it posits, what posits must be and is external to Essence, but not as an external Essence. The content of the posited is given, and is appropriated by Essence to become what Essence puts forth as its posit. Insofar as it posits what is external to it, Essence is \textit{reflected in the external content}, which is presupposed. The external content shows forth Essence as that which is its positor. It shows forth not only the positor, but also the positing of the positor, since the positor just is the positor in virtue of its own positing. Hence, Essence is not merely immediately reflected in that which is posited as posited, or in illusory being, but it is reflected in the external content that it presupposes. The being of Essence is posited and external reflection.
In sum, Essence has been shown to reflect itself as illusory being, through what it posits, an external content which it appropriates for its own positing. Here we already have Positedness and Reflection-in-Self as moments of Essence. But since the positing is that which Essence immediately is, as positing it has not yet posited its own positing, or mediated its own mediation. What we must investigate now is how Essence, even though it is immediately a positing, posits its own positing, and thereby secures a content of its own, which could be said to belong to it in virtue of its own determining, i.e. the determining of the Logic of Essence. Such a reflection ought not be merely a reflection in virtue of the determining of the Logic of Being. For if it cannot give itself its own positing, it cannot have its own determinacy as Essence, and cannot break free or be distinguished from the determinations in the Logic of Being. The positing and reflection of the positing would in some significant sense remain a determination in the Logic of Being if the reflection of Essence were not itself reflected, and if it were not responsible for its own reflective structure. 584

Indeed, Essence is not just Essence, that which is opposed to the Unessential. It is the reflection of itself in and through the Unessential. Essence is both a positing reflection and an external reflection. But if we reflect on the character of the reflection of Essence in its external posit, we find that Essence is not merely an external reflection, but is also a determining reflection.

Once it takes up these given contents, which were developed earlier, and takes them up as posited, their mode of being changes from being immediate categories of Being to being posited contents of Essence, or that which is the illusion of Essence. In the sense that the contents are posited contents, the contents as posited only come to be once they are determinations of Essence. In this sense, Essence determines the contents of what it posits.

insofar as the contents have the determination of positedness. In this sense, what is posited is not external to Essence, but internal. Accordingly, the positing and reflection of Essence are internal to the very activity of Essence itself.

What is posited is what is presupposed by Essence in its act of positing. Since there is nothing posited until Essence posits, there is nothing presupposed until Essence presupposes the posit. In the act of presupposing the posit, Essence transforms the content of what it posits from something external to Essence into something posited. In the act of presupposing the external content, the content ceases to be an external content. Instead, its content is now wholly determined as that which is posited, or more simply, as the posited. Naturally, this means that there cannot be a presupposition external to Essence. No presupposition exists except in the positing of Essence. This means that what is external to Essence is only external to Essence once Essence gives itself the given as a posit. In other words, only once the content is rendered internal to Essence is there any ‘external content’ to speak of. Thus, the external posit must be internal to Essence itself, as that which belongs to the positing of Essence. From this it follows that there is only that which is external to Essence within Essence itself.

Reflecting upon the process of determining reflection further, we notice that it is not simply the external content of the presupposition that is transformed, but it is also the very content of the positor itself. Initially, Essence appeared to be laden with the given content ‘that which posits’. But in the act of positing, the character of Essence is also transformed. At the outset, Essence is simply that which posits. Until the act of positing however, Essence is not yet a positor, and cannot reflect itself in what it posits. Because it is in virtue of positing that the positor exists as a positor, Essence achieves its character as that which posits only in virtue of the act of positing. Thus, act of positing negates the given character of
Essence, and posits Essence itself as one element of the positing relation. For this reason, Essence gives itself its own character as the reflecting relation. Essence is now no longer just the positor, for it is now constituted by a relation of reflection that has two sides: positor and posited. Each side is a function and result of the activity of positing. Accordingly, both the givenness of the positor as well as the externality of what is posited are negated. Now both become moments of one content: the process of reflection. To put it another way, Essence, in virtue of the activity of positing, is not just the positor, but the activity of reflection itself, which has swallowed up its own assumptions, namely the external character of itself and the content of what it originally posited. Essence ‘returns to itself’ in the case of determining reflection by transforming its own character.

Because Essence has posited its own character as that which posits, Essence has posited it own positing, or what is the same, it has reflected its own reflection. Hence, Essence is not mediated by any externality, but is only self-mediated. Insofar as the presupposition belongs to Essence itself, Essence is reflected reflection, or mediated mediation. External Reflection is reflected in determining reflection, rendering Essence an internal mediated reflection in self. Essence is therefore not merely an immediate mediation, an external reflection, or a development out of the Logic of Being. On the contrary, as self-mediating, it has its own determination. Since the positedness is itself reflected, Essence is self-mediated [Mediation]. Essence’s reflection in self is not merely an immediate reflection in self as in Illusory being, or a merely external reflection, but it is a mediated reflection in self. As self-mediated its positing is its self-relation and reflects its reflection. Essence as self-mediated has its own internal content, and is self-identical. Internally it owes its own difference to itself, since it gives itself its own difference. Hegel goes on to explicate how Identity and
Difference develop out of the self-mediating and determining reflective character of Essence.  

Although the Logic of Essence is an Ideality, it is an Ideality in which determiner and determined are nonetheless opposed to each other. Given our analysis, we have the resources to interpret the following:

But even so, it does not merely show [scheint], or have illusory being, in its other, like the determination of reflection [Reflexionsbestimmung]; this, as a correlate [ein Relatives], is not merely self-related but is a positive relating [Verhalten] of itself to its other in which it manifests itself; but, in the first instance, it only shows in it, and this illusory being [das Scheinen] of each in the other, or their reciprocal determining, along with their self-dependence, has the form of an external act. The universal [das Allgemeine], on the contrary, is posited as the essential being [das Wesen] of its determination, as the latter’s own positive nature. For the determination that constitutes its negative is, in the Notion, simply and solely a positedness [Gesetztsein]; in other words, it is, at the same time, essentially only the negative of the negative, and is only as this identity of the negative with itself, which is the universal. Thus the universal is also the substance [Substanz] of its determinations; but in such wise that what was a contingency [Zufälliges] for substance, is the Notion’ own self-mediation [Vermittlung des Begriffes mit sich selbst], its own immanent reflection [immanente Reflexion]. But this mediation which, in the first instance, raises contingency to necessity, is the manifested relation [manifestierte Beziehung]; the Notion is not the abyss of formless substance [Abgrund der formlosen Substanz], or necessity as the inner identity of things or states distinct from, and limiting, one another; on the contrary, as absolute negativity, it is the shaper and creator [das Formierende und Erschaffende], and because the determination is not a limitation but is just as much utterly sublated [aufgehobene] or posited, the illusory being is not manifestation, the manifestation of the identical.

In the first instance of the Logic of Essence, Essence only shows in the other, and it has the form of an ‘external act’. The concept does not merely ‘show’ in its other or have ‘illusory being’. The determinations of the universal, e.g. the universal, particular, and individual, do not relate to the universal as unessential moments of a relationship of positing. Instead, the determinations of the universal constitute ‘its own positive nature’. If the moments of the

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585 Hegel, Science of Logic, 405-408.
586 The phrase ‘Or have illusory being’ does not appear in the German text.
587 Hegel, Science of Logic, 603, 276-277.
concept did relate to the concept as the Essential relates to the Unessential, each moment of the concept could not be the whole concept. Nonetheless, Hegel claims that “the concept is the essential being of its determination.” Here Hegel seems to mean that the determinations of the concept result from the activity or the ‘positing’ of the concept per se. Still, because the universal is self-differentiating, the identity of the universal cannot be separated from the identity of its determinations, or what it determines itself to be. Hegel claims that the universal is ‘simply and solely a positedness’, and that this is no other than ‘the negative of the negative’. Here Hegel seems to mean that, unlike the character of Essence, in the self-differentiation that which posits and that which is posited are wholly identical. The universal, by ‘positing itself’, if we insist on that terminology, is just a mere positing, or what is the same, the transceding of the relation of positing altogether.

Hegel goes on to illuminate the difference between the Logic of the Concept and Essence by comparing the Concept to Substance. Through examining the comparison between Substance and Concept, we may glean a basic insight regarding the structure of the Logic of Essence. Hegel writes: “Thus the universal is also the substance [Substanz] of its determinations; but in such wise that what was a contingency [Zufälliges] for substance, is the Notion’ own self-mediation [Vermittlung des Begriffes mit sich selbst], its own immanent reflection [immanente Reflexion].”

Substance in Hegel’s logic is a self-identical being. The identity of all substances is given at the outset, and is determined a priori. On this assumption, it follows that any alteration or alterable determinacies that it possesses are not a result of the substance itself,

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588 This streamlined discussion of substance is based on two separate sources: page 191 of J. Melvin Woody’s Freedom’s Embrace. See Wood, J. Melvin, Freedom’s Embrace, Penn State University Press, 2007. In addition, this reconstruction is based on Richard Winfield’s lectures on the Logic of the Concept in the Science of Logic from the spring semester of 2009 at the University of Georgia. For the relevant lecture, see www.archive.org/details/LectureCourseInHegelsScienceOfLogic-RichardDienWinfield.
for as substance it is a mere self-identity and is not the principle of its differences. Accordingly, such alterations or alterable determinacies are *accidents of the substance*, which are *contingent* to its *a priori* identity. Because substance is not sufficient to account for its own alterations, substances cannot be *self-determining* or self-differentiating. The accidents are a “contingency” for substance, because the relation of attribute to substance is *external* to what the substance is. The term ‘accident’ expresses both the contingency and externality of the attributes. In Hegel’s language, the substance is not ‘self-mediated’. Given that the substance is not the cause of its own accidents, the accidents and alterations must have their origin in some *other* substance or substances. Accordingly, the alterations of substances are the result of the causal activity of other substances. For this reason, the substances are *mediated by another*. As mere self-identities, the substances are not the cause of their own alterations. Instead, the accidents of the substances alter in a causal change initiated by substances.

When we consider the logic of substance, we immediately discover why it would be erroneous to identify the concept with the concept of substance. Because the cause of the accident is not in the substance that bears it, in substance there cannot be any self-determination. Instead, every alteration of substance is due to a factor that is *external* to it. Hegel spells out this relationship in terms of cause and effect. What is absent in substance is the identity of the substance and its determinations. In order to discover the determinate states of the substance, and distinguish self-identical substances from one another, we must appeal to other substances.

For these reasons it may seem odd that Hegel would claim that the concept is the ‘substance of its determinations’. Indeed, Hegel himself points out that although the concept is the ‘substance of its determinations’, what was a contingency for substance is now the concepts own ‘self-mediation’ and ‘immanent reflection’. At the outset of our analysis of
universality we emphasized the *self-identity* of the universal. Because the universal is indeed self-identical, it is not completely unwarranted for Hegel to compare the universal with substance. Nevertheless, what sets the concept apart from substance is the content of the concept's self-identity. The concept is self-differentiation, and is self-identical as the self-differentiating principle. As self-differentiating, whatever differentiations or determinations that belong to it are a result of the activity of the concept itself. What is distinctive about the universal concept is that it remains itself in its own differentiation of itself. Accordingly, the determinations of the universal are no longer external to the universal itself. As Hegel has already stated, for the concept, *each moment of the concept is the concept itself*. Because the relationship between the universal and its determinations is not external, the determinations of the universal are not contingently related to the universal. As Hegel claims, “what was a contingency for substance becomes the concepts own *self-mediation*.” Thus, although the universal is the substance of its determinations insofar as it is the self-identical principle of self-differentiation, *unlike substance*, those differentiations of which it is the ‘substance’ are identical with and necessary to its being. Instead of the relations of reflection, positing, or causation, Hegel claims, as we have already seen, that the universal is the *creator* of its determinations.

As noted above, what is self-differentiating is nothing more nor less than what is self-determining or free. In his comparison between the concept and substance, Hegel is also pointing out that freedom cannot be reduced to substance. In the case of freedom, there is no need to appeal to cause and effect, for there is no external accident that requires an explanation. Accordingly, the opposition between cause and effect and freedom is indeed an *authentic* opposition. On the one hand, Hegel’s comparison between substance and freedom appears to shed light on the distinction between the *Logic of Essence* and the Concept. For the
former, what determines, e.g. the cause, and what is determined, e.g. the effect, are not identical. Categories of Essence are defined by the opposition of determiner and determined. Still, we would be fooling ourselves if we thought that this were the whole story. For sure, just as in the case of the Logic of Being, Hegel himself finds room for a comparison between the logics. Although the Logic of Essence and the Concept ought not be identified, both contain the concept of ideality. Ideality is the negation of otherness, which is a negation of negation. Indeed, we have already witnessed the presence of Ideality in the Logic of Being. In the Logic of Essence there is also Ideality. Let us be unequivocal: ideality as self-differentiation does not show up in the Logic of Essence, just as it does not show up in the Logic of Being. This is evident if we consider the form of ideality that does appear in each: in the Logic of Being the overcoming of otherness is a transition, whereas in the Logic of Being the overcoming of otherness is a positing. As we shall show, because transition and positing each only constitute one side of the universal or self-differentiation, neither the Logic of Being nor the Logic of Essence presents ideality as self-differentiation.\textsuperscript{589} Although in each logic terms unite with their opposites, self-differentiation is nonetheless only present in a one sided way. Although ideality as self-differentiation does not appear, the progression of the categories within the Logic of Essence itself exemplifies the content of ideality, or the overcoming of otherness. In this matter, it seems that the Logic of Essence is the harder sell. If the Logic of Essence is defined by the opposition of determiner and determined, then there appears to be an opposition constitutive of the Logic of Essence. If there is an opposition constitutive of the Logic of Essence that is not overcome within that Logic, then it appears that the structure of Essence precludes the possibility of ideality. Indeed, to insist on the difference between determiner and

\textsuperscript{589} Hegel, Science of Logic, 601, 274.
determined, as in the case of cause and effect, implies that there is always some outlier, some content that is not negated, or in Hegelian terms, a ‘bad infinite’.

The universal concept is a transcending of otherness and as such is a negation of negation, and as such it is an ideality. But it is not reducible to this. Hegel claims that the concept, the fulfillment of ideality as such, is constituted by the interpenetration of categories in the Logic of Being and Essence. One way of beginning to understand the meaning of this claim is to focus on the ideality of Being and Essence. Self-differentiation as such is constituted by the interpenetration of two forms of ideality, one that is present in the categories of Being, one that is present in the categories of Essence. In this way, self-differentiation is ideality fulfilled, or ideality perfected.

In contradistinction to transition, which is characteristic of the Logic of Being, in the Logic of Essence there can only a reflection if difference is maintained. Essence cannot reflect if there is not something posited which reflects it. In presupposing, Essence indeed negates any external mediation, and it thusly transcends all otherness. For this reason, in determining reflection Essence also achieves Ideality. But the transcending of otherness in determining reflection preserves a difference and mediation within itself, for its way of transcending otherness is a positing and presupposing. A positing is such that it maintains the distinction between determiner and determined. In this way, reflection transcends otherness while maintaining the distinction between that which reflects and that which is reflected within its own self. Ideality in the Logic of Being transcends otherness by rendering it absent within its own self, not preserving some internal difference, which is characteristic of the Logic of Essence and its categories. It is important to discuss determining reflection in this vein, because determining reflection is what renders Essence self-mediated and it shows how the Ideality of the Logic of Essence is its own Ideality and not merely the Ideality of the Logic of Being. In unifying itself to
what it is not, Essence does not abolish the other, or become identical in content with the other, but preserves what it is not within itself as different from itself. This tension is maintained until the development of the Concept in which the distinction between determiner and determined is abolished.

In the reflection of Essence there is a difference between positor and what is posited that is maintained within the self-relation. In the Logic of Essence the change in contents is a change in the relation between the positing and the posited. Although the relationships are defined by the opposition of positor and posited, the dialectical changes occur in respect to the content of the relata. The relation between determiner and determined acquires various forms, such as Essence and Illusion, Ground and Grounded, Cause and Effect, etc. In each new act of positing, one opposition is overcome and replaced by another, until the very content of the opposition can no longer sustain the difference between determiner and determined.

In the Logic of Being there is transition. Each returns to itself out of its other. The returning to itself out of its other is characteristic of Ideality. In the One otherness is simply absent. The One just is the Void. It is the very absence of any difference whatever that gives the new differences. This form of movement is transition: the One becomes the Void. The very content of the One transforms into the content of the Void. In turn the very content of the void becomes the One. The One returns to itself by transforming its own content into its other and returning to itself. In this process, the content is lost in its new other, and by losing itself in its transformation, it returns to itself or fulfills its being as what loses itself and becomes a new content: self-repulsion and self-attraction. The self-differentiating universal is distinguished from both. Unlike the Logic of Being the self-differentiating concept does not lose itself in its self-othering. In the process of ideality the self-differentiating
universal remains the self-differentiating universal. Unlike the Logic of Essence all differences between determiner and determined have vanished.

Having illuminated the basic forms of Ideality in the Logic of Being and the Logic of Essence, we are in a position to return to the very first paragraph of the chapter on universality, in which Hegel analyzes the concept in terms of its origin in the Logic of Being and the Logic of Essence.

It is here, at the outset of the discussion which has the Notion for its content, that we must look back once more at its genesis. Essence [Das Wesen] is the outcome of being [Sein], and the Notion the outcome of essence, therefore also of being. But this becoming has the significance of self-repulsion [des Gegenstosses], so that it is rather the outcome which is the unconditioned and original [Ursprüngliche]. Being, in its transition [Übergänge] into essence, has become illusory being [Schein] or a positedness [Gesetztsein], and becoming or transition into an other [Übergeben in Anderen] has become a positing [Setzen]; and conversely, the positing or reflection of essence [die Reflexion des Wesens] has sublated itself [sich aufgehoben] and has restored itself as a being that is not posited [Nichtgesetztsein], that is original [ursprünglichen Sein]. The Notion is the interfusion [Durchdringung] of these moments, namely qualitative and original being [ursprüngliche Seinde] is such only as positing, only as return-into-itself [Rückkehr-in-sich], and this pure reflection into self is a sheer becoming-other [Anderswerden] or determinateness which, consequently, is no less infinite [unendliche], self-relating [sich auf sich beziehende] determinateness.\(^{590}\)

At the outset of this paragraph, Hegel recites the basic moves that have given rise to the Logic of the Concept in the Science of Logic. Essence arises out of the Being, and the Concept in turn arises out of Essence. What is of interest to us is not the details of the whole development, but how the development of the Concept sheds light on what the concept is. Hegel points out that the development of the concept is a ‘self-repulsion’, in which the outcome of the process is the ‘unconditioned and original’. Hegel continues to emphasize the outcome of ‘originality’ in the following sentence. Being became positedness, and

transition became a positing. So far Hegel is simply rehearsing the system and pointing out the different structures of the Logic of Being and Essence. What is striking is what comes next: positing has “restored itself as a being that is not posited [Nichtgesetztsein], that is original Being.” In what sense can the concept as such be the ‘original being’? This question becomes especially urgent given the fact that it is the outcome of previous processes. In order to grasp the overall structure of the development of the concept, we must have some sense of where the concept falls in the Logic, and how it both relates to other categories, and ought to be differentiated from them. In doing so, we shall narrow the scope of our concern, and avoid equivocation. Having elucidated the basic senses in which the categories of Essence and Being are Idealities, we have the resources to illuminate this claim.

The most obvious response to the question: ‘in what sense is the concept the original being?’ is quite simple. Given that the concept is self-differentiation, it is wholly self-determining. As self-determining, it is wholly original. What is original is not a copy or imitation of something else. The original is the beginning, and as the beginning it is novel. Naturally, self-differentiation appears to fit the bill. Yet, Hegel does not begin with self-differentiation in the Logic. Instead, the Logic begins with Being. Still, why not claim that ‘Being is the original being’? It is, after all, what comes first. Notoriously, Hegel thinks that the beginning is the end. But again, such dictums do not solve the problem; they only worsen it. After all, ‘how can the beginning be the end?’ is structurally analogous to ‘how could the original being be an outcome of a previous process?’ Upon elucidating the structure of the concept, we shall have reconstructed the whole of the Logic in the microcosm of the concept. By doing so, we shall have insight into the meaning of the phrase: ‘the beginning is the end’. Nevertheless, I do not wish to fully postpone this discussion, for we

591 My emphasis.
already have the resources to grasp a basic sense in which the concept is the original being despite being an outcome.

The transition from the *Logic of Essence* to the Concept may provide some headway regarding this question. The result of the concept of substance is cause and effect. It is the self-negation of the categories of cause and effect that gives rise to the concept. The cause, as a cause, gives rise to an effect. The effect is that which is produced by the cause, and the cause is that which produces the effect. When we think about the relationship, we usually immediately think about examples of particular causes, especially natural ones. But to see how the concept of cause and effect gives rise to the concept, we must consider the concepts themselves, not our favorite examples. The effect, we know, would not be the effect without the cause. But it is equally the case that there would not be any cause if there were no effect. The condition for the existence of causation is the existence of the effect, and the condition for the existence of the effect is the existence of the cause. Because the effect is a condition of the cause, the effect itself is the cause of the effect. Likewise, the cause, as an effect of the effect, is no longer simply a cause, but is also an effect. Thus, the cause is both cause and effect, and the effect is both cause and effect. Reciprocal causation gives rise to the self-cause, or what is the same: the concept. As is evident, the transition from cause and effect to the concept is analogous to the process by which Essence developed. The cause, in virtue of causation, gives rise not only to the effect, but more importantly, gives rise to itself. As the cause of causation, the concept of cause develops into the concept of the concept. Although there is an authentic opposition between substance, cause and effect, and freedom, in the *Logic* these oppositions are overcome.\(^{592}\)

\(^{592}\) Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 582. Because my main aim in this work is to show how Hegel's concept of the concept solves the classical paradoxes of self-reference by undermining the four dogmas of universality, I have only given the briefest of sketches regarding the transition from cause and effect to the concept. A more thorough
In the previous paragraph I have, albeit very briefly, reconstructed the process in the *Logic* whereby what is original and unconditioned arises out of categories in the *Logic of Essence*. As is evident, the original being is initially the result of the self-negation of the categories of cause and effect. Earlier we motivated the positing of ‘self-differentiation’ from the self-negation of the separation of the principles of universality and particularity. Indeed, as long as one remains committed to the *Logic of Essence*, one must insist on the separation of the principles of universality and particularity. What we also noted earlier was that the self-negation of the separation of the principles of universality and particularity do not give rise to just nothing. If the self-negation of the *Logic of Essence* were to give rise to just nothing, then the *Logic of Essence* would not have negated itself. Instead, it would be re-instated, for the assumption that self-negation, or contradiction, results in utter nothingness is itself one of the central theses of formal thinking. Instead, the result of the self-negation of the *Logic of Essence* is the identity of determiner and determined. Or, as we formulated it in our initial discussion of Hegel, the result of the self-negation of separation of universality and particularity is the self-differentiating concept.

In his commentary on the *Logic of the Concept*, McTaggart admits that he is unable to follow the development of the concept out of the previous categories, and fails to understand how the universal or the individual could follow from the dialectical development. McTaggart goes on to provide his own account of the transition. Unfortunately, McTaggart appears to have forced a foreign notion of universality onto Hegel’s text. He defines the universal as the “common quality found in two or more

reconstruction of this development would require a more detailed discussion of action and reaction and reciprocal causality.
things”\textsuperscript{593}, which only expresses the self-identity of the universal, but fails to distinguish it from the universality that is \textit{merely} abstract in form. Moreover, McTaggart also seems to insist upon a distinction between individual and universal: “The universal must be common to many individuals, while the individual has to be determined by many universals.”\textsuperscript{594} As we shall see, for Hegel, the universal just \textit{is} the individual. The individual is not merely that which is determined by many universals. I would suggest that part of McTaggart’s confusion regarding the transition is grounded on misconceptions of Hegel’s concepts of universality and particularity which have their origin in traditional ways of thinking about universality. Expressed positively, what is absent from McTaggart’s position is the self-determining and self-differentiating character of the universal that provides the bridge from the \textit{Logic of Essence} to the concepts of particularity and individuality.

Hegel will often discuss the outcome of a conceptual development in terms of ‘truth’. For example, the concept ‘concept’ is the truth of the concept ‘cause and effect’. Though the pragmatists took this in a different direction, Hegel means, on the one hand, that the content of cause and effect is not complete by itself. The concept of cause and effect is negated, and it is negated not by any external act, but by itself. Because it necessarily self-negates, it is not true \textit{by itself}. On the other hand, it is only true \textit{as} the concept. This means that the content of cause and effect, though negated, is \textit{preserved} only as the Concept. Naturally, the \textit{Aufhebung}, the negation and preservation of the concept is, in some sense, simultaneously a \textit{transformation} of the concept. We have witnessed this process in the examples of transition and positing that I have reconstructed for illustration in the transition of the One to the Void, the positing of Determining Reflection, and the positing of the

\textsuperscript{593} John McTaggart and Ellis McTaggart, \textit{A Commentary on Hegel’ Logic}, Cambridge University Press 1910, London Fetter Lange, 194.
\textsuperscript{594} McTaggart, 194.
Concept. In each of these categorical processes, the initial determination, e.g. ‘One’, ‘Essence’, and ‘Cause’ all become elements of another category. The One becomes a moment of Repulsion and Attraction, Causation becomes a moment of Reciprocal Causation, and Essence becomes a moment of Identity and Difference.

Truth for Hegel is self-correspondence. The concept Cause and Effect only corresponds with itself, or is what it is, in what it gives rise to: the concept. The ‘truth’ of Cause and Effect might also, for this reason, be called the ‘falsehood’ of the concept, since Cause and Effect, by itself, is not true. Put into these terms, the negation of the separation of the principles of universality and particularity also entails the negation of the absolute separation of principles of truth and falsehood. Unlike the categories of Being and Essence, because the concept remains what it is even in its various self-differentiations, the concept is ‘true’ to itself. It remains true to itself, or corresponds to itself, even in the moments of its self-abandonment or falsehood.

One might wonder why, given the originally of the concept, Hegel continually draws on previous categories in order to explicate the initial content of the concept. One reason is simply this: the concept preserves the previous categories from which it develops. Accordingly, they are available as resources for the elucidation of the concept. Still, this does not mean that the concept is reducible to any of these previous concepts. Indeed, they are only preserved in the concept in a transfigured state.

Given that the self-negation of the categories of Being and Essence give rise to the content of the Concept, once we arrive at the Logic of the Concept there is no longer any process that stands apart from the Concept from which the Concept derives its being. Instead, whatever it is that gave rise to the Concept only exists in the form of the Concept, or as the Concept. For this reason, once we arrive at the stage of the concept of the concept
in the *Logic*, the only content that is present is the Concept. Everything else has vanished into it. At this stage in the development, it is all that there is. Naturally, this claim may be made of any category in Hegel’s *Logic*, for whatever comes to be as a result of a prior process is the ‘truth’ of the previous development and preserves it in a transformed state. Because each new category of the *Logic* forms a new beginning, we must say more in order to explicate why the concept of the concept, and not other concepts, such as ‘Cause and Effect’, are ‘original’ in the sense that Hegel means here. Of course, this is not a temporal process, but a logical one. No matter when one conceives, or how often one conceives of the separation of the principles of universality and particularity, of determiner and determined, one ought to arrive at the self-differentiating concept.595

What arises out of the self-negation of the category of causation is the concept or ideality as self-differentiation as such. The only content that we aim to explicate is the content of conceptual determination *per se*. Since we are only explicating the content of the concept per se, we shall not be elucidating how or why each content of the *Logic* is a concept. Because the self-differentiation of the concept only gives us the moments of universality, particularity and individuality, the concept *per se* does not, on its own, explain why all of the other categories of the *Logic* ought to count as categories. It is only with the concept of the *Absolute Idea* that all of the various contents in the *Logic* become concepts per se, or receive the determination ‘concept’. In the Absolute Idea each content in the *Logic* becomes a category of the *Logic* as a whole. Accordingly, even the determination of the concept only becomes a

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595 Burbidge explicitly defends the non-temporality of the concept against Kojeve in his essay *Concept and Time in Hegel*. Burbidge, John. *Concept and Time in Hegel*, Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review, 12, 403-422, 1973. Here he points out that despite other interconnections between the concept and time, the concept is not identical with time.
category, or a concept, in the Absolute Idea, or the Method. Because I do not wish to disappoint the reader, I do not want to give the impression that this analysis can offer something that it cannot. Indeed, by restricting our analysis to the concept per se, we shall not lose the thread of the question and the problems with which we have been concerned throughout our inquiry.

Given that our analysis requires the separation of the concept per se, namely the universal, particular and the individual, from the particular concepts of logic, at this level of generality our inquiry requires a separation of form from content or the universal from the particular. Although in respect to the concept itself we shall show how the universal, particular, and individual are inseparable, our account shall leave undetermined exactly what concepts manifest these moments of the concept. In order to apply the concept of ‘concept’ to other concepts, the content of ‘concept’ itself must first be elucidated. Hegel’s complaint that the concept itself cannot merely be formal comes down to this: the concept ‘concept’ must have some content on its own without which there could not be any conceptual determinacy whatever. Of course, the Absolute Idea remedies this omission at the most general level by unifying the form of the concept, the concept per se, with the particular concepts of the logic. Altogether the unification of the universal, the concept per se, and the particular concepts constitute the individuality of the Logic. Our inquiry into the concept begins in medias res.

Because the concept itself does not grant conceptual determinacy per se to the various categories in the Logic, with much gusto we must admit that our comparisons between the various types of Ideality are nothing more than external reflections, which have

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596 I do not wish to imply that this is a sufficient description of the Absolute Idea. For a proper description of the Absolute Idea we must also introduce other concepts, such as the unification of concept and objectivity, as well as the knowing of that unity, which involves an account of the unity of theoretical and practical reason.
not been systematically reconstructed. But it is no less a fact that for Hegel each of the concepts of the logic, as well as the processes they undergo, are concepts and undergo conceptual developments. For us the examples serve a pedagogical function, namely as logical instances of conceptual processes. Indeed, we cannot abstract out the essence of conceptual determinacy from these examples. To do this would betray the very character of the project, for the abstract universal is exactly what must be called into question by Hegel's argument. Instead, we are aiming to elucidate the concept on its own terms as it follows from the self-negation of the separation of principles of universality and particularity. The aim of the comparison is to ensure that the very character of the concept shall become clearer for us and to help us avoid equivocation with other categories.

When we look over Being and Essence we encounter different forms of ideality. All are idealities, but different forms of ideality. Hegel himself points out that the determinations of the Logic are categories insofar as they unite themselves with their opposites. In the concept we encounter ideality as self-differentiation as such. Prior to the concept of the concept, every determination was “only in itself [an sich] the Notion; it was not yet manifested.” Ideality has been at work in the previous concepts as transition, and as positing but had not yet appeared as self-differentiation, as the principle of ideality or development. Finally, in the concept as such, we just have the ‘what it is to be the concept’. The concept is original for exactly this reason: the concept is the process of conceptual development that has always been at work in the Logic, both in the Logic of Being as transition and the Logic of Essence as positing, yet never as itself, as self-differentiating development. For this reason, the Logic of the Concept

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598 The categories of being were, as Notions, essentially these identities of the determinations with themselves in their limitation or otherness [Anderssein]; but this identity was only in itself [an sich] the Notion; it was not yet manifested. Consequently, the qualitative determination as such was lost in its other and had for its truth a determination distinct [unterschiedene Bestimmung] from itself.
is a ‘turning back into itself’, or a ‘return-into-itself’ \(\text{Rückkehr-in-sich}\). Self-differentiation is the fulfillment and perfection of ideality as transition and positing.\textsuperscript{599}

In some respect, in the concept of the concept Hegel explicates one common feature of both Being and Essence. In this sense, Ideality is more general, if you will, than either, for it is the common form of both. The loss of the category in its other, and the return to the category out of its otherness is one of the central features of Hegel’s dialectic. In both transition and positing categories are engaged in self-differentiation. Each sets itself apart from other concepts and connects itself to them. In order to understand how the process of self-differentiation works in Being or Essence as transition and positing, we must understand the process of self-differentiation as such, or what I have been calling ‘development’. In transition self-differentiation works through the absence of difference, and in positing self-differentiation works through the internalization of difference and the transformation of the two opposing sides of that internal difference. In the concept the process of self-differentiation is no longer in a form that is alien to itself: transition or positing. To the contrary, in the concept, Ideality actually corresponds with the form of its very development: self-differentiation. Accordingly, it is in the concept of self-differentiation where the process of ideality is true to itself. At the stage of the concept, self-differentiation differentiates itself into self-differentiation. Indeed, by following the self-differentiation of self-differentiation the determinacy of the concept reveals itself to us. In its self-revelation, the concept is revealing not only what it is, but what it is for any concept to be a concept. For this reason, if we understand the revelation of the concept, we shall be grasping the form of the

\textsuperscript{599} We ought to point out that self-differentiation as such is not just the overcoming of otherness, since the overcoming of otherness is already present in the \textit{Logic of Being} and the \textit{Logic of Essence}. Self-differentiation is the perfection and fulfillment of the other forms of ideality because upon achieving self-differentiation, ideality integrates the other forms of ideality in itself. Ideality as self-differentiation is true ideality, or what ideality in the \textit{Logic of Being} and \textit{Essence} is in itself though not explicitly.
conceptual development as such in the *Logic*. Only in following the self-differentiation of self-differentiation can we elucidate the how each of the moments of the concept belongs to the concept as such.

The concept is the ‘interfusion’ of Being and Essence.\(^{600}\) Or, as Hegel puts it, the interfusion is the union of ‘reflection into self’ and ‘becoming-other’. ‘Interfusion’ is the translation of *Durchdringung*, which more literally translated, is the ‘pushing through’ or ‘pressing through’. The qualitative being of the concept is the unity of reflection into self (positing) and the sheer becoming other (transition). On the one hand, in the *Logic of Essence*, the difference between determiner and determined places categories in terms of mediation. On the other hand, the *Logic of Being* the absence of difference places categories in terms of immediacy. In the former, all immediacy is on the side of mediation. In the latter, all mediation is on the side of immediacy. For example, the transition from Being to Determinate Being is an *immediate transition*, in which Being undergoes a transition into Nothing, a process of mediation, yet that transition is immediate. On the other hand, in the positing of Essence, the immediate content of Being is a function of the process of mediation [*Setzen*]. In each case there is a unity of immediacy and mediation that is constitutive of different forms of ideality. Still, the unity of immediacy and mediation is only ever one-sided: in other words, the unity of immediacy and mediation is only ever given in the form of *either* immediacy or mediation, but *not both*.

In self-differentiation there is the *unification* of both types of Ideality. The consequence of this unity is the “infinite, self-relating, determinateness”. Fittingly, Ideality in Being and Ideality in Essence is preserved in the concept of self-differentiation as such, as

\(^{600}\) “The Notion is the interfusion *[Durchdringung]* of these moments, namely qualitative and original being *[ursprüngliche Seinde]* is such only as positing, only as return-into-itself *[Rückkehr-in-sich]*, and this pure reflection into self is a sheer becoming-other *[Anderswerden]* or determinateness which, consequently, is no less infinite *[unendliche]*, self-relating *[sich auf sich bezügende]* determinateness.” Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 601, 274.
that which unifies Being to Essence and Essence to Being. Self-differentiation insofar as it differentiates itself, must immediately be what it is not, and in this respect, it is a “sheer becoming other”. Since transition is constituted by the becoming of each category into another, transition expresses Ideality in the form of Being. Yet, it is also a “reflection into itself” insofar as it is the self-identical being that posits or puts forward its own determinations. Nonetheless, because self-differentiation posits differences with which it is identical, its ‘reflection into self’ really is nothing other than its ‘sheer becoming other’, and its ‘sheer becoming other’ is nothing more than its ‘reflection into self’. In the concept, the determinations of Being and Essence are raised into conceptual determinations.

Towards the end of his discussion of universality Hegel reminds us that so long as we consider the universal by itself we have not yet progressed to consider the determinacy of the concept. As Hegel states, “the Concept, being as yet only the universal and only self-identical, has not yet advanced to that stage (determinateness)”. As we mentioned earlier, the universal moment by itself is not yet determinate, for determinateness refers to the universal as particular and individual, not merely the universal moment. At the stage of the universal, the concept has not yet “gone forth from itself” (fortgegangen) and created particularity. Still, Hegel is clear that when we think the universal, we cannot help but also think the universal

601 As we shall see at the end of the development of the concept, the result of the development of the concept will be a mere immediacy. This will be constitutive of all conceptual developments.

602 “We have just mentioned determinateness, although the Notion, being as yet only the universal and only self-identical, has not yet advanced [noch nicht fortgegangen] to that stage. However, we cannot speak of the universal apart from determinateness which to be more precise is particularity and individuality, for the universal in its absolute negativity, contains determinateness in and for itself. The determinateness, therefore, is not introduced from outside when we speak of it in connexion with the universal. [die Bestimmtheit wird also nicht von aussen dazu genommen, wenn beim Allgemeinen von ihr gesprochen wird.] As negativity in general or in accordance with the first, immediate negation, the universal contains determinateness generally as particularity; as the second negation, that is, as the negation of negation, it is absolute determinateness or individuality and concreteness [Konkretion]. The universal is thus the totality of the Notion; it is concrete, and far from being empty, it has through its Notion a content, and a content in which it not only maintains itself but one which is its own [eigen] and immanent in it. We can, indeed, abstract from the content: but in that case we do not obtain the universal Notion but only the abstract universal, which is an isolated, imperfect [unvollkommen] moment of the Notion and has no truth.” Hegel, Science of Logic, 604, 277-278.
in its determinacy, namely as particular and individual. Hegel confirms this: “However, we cannot speak of the universal apart from determinateness which to be more precise is particularity and individuality, for the universal in its absolute negativity, contains determinateness in and for itself”.

In what follows we must investigate why it is that the universal, as self-differentiation, necessitates the particular and the individual moments. In this paragraph, Hegel is not just reminding us of where we stand in regard to the development of the Concept, but he is also preparing us to follow the self-differentiation of the concept as universal into the moments of particularity and individuality. He reminds us that the universal has its content within itself, and that the content does not come from outside: “The determinateness, therefore, is not introduced from outside when we speak of it in connexion with the universal.” He reminds us that the universal, as the self-differentiating principle, is neither empty nor abstract, for it is the source of its own differentiations. The abstract universal is not ‘perfect’, or what is better, “has not yet fully come” or “has not yet fully arrived” (unvollkommen).

At the outset of the discussion of the concept, we pointed out that the concept itself is indistinguishable from each of its moments. Accordingly, the moment of universality, the self-identity of self-differentiation, must itself be grasped as the totality of its moments: “As negativity in general or in accordance with the first, immediate negation, the universal contains determinateness generally as particularity; as the second negation, that is, as the negation of negation, it is absolute determinateness or individuality and concreteness [Konkretion]. The universal is thus the totality of the Notion.” What is novel in this passage is the way that Hegel parses out the totality that is constitutive of universality. In this passage

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603 Hegel, Science of Logic, 604, 277-278.
Hegel parses out the content of the universal as totality in terms of two negations. The first negation, he claims, is particularity, while the second is individuality. While particularity is the determinacy of the concept, individuality is the absolute determinacy of the concept. In our analysis of particularity and individuality, we must be careful to parse out the sense in which particularity is the determinacy of the concept, and individuality the absolute determinacy. At this point they are anticipatory remarks that have not yet been justified.

Having laid bare the basic constitution of the moment of universality per se, let us further investigate how particularity follows immediately from the moment of universality. In particular, let us be careful to distinguish the sense in which particularity is the ‘first negation’, the ‘determinacy’ of the concept, and why it ultimately fails to be the ‘absolute determinacy’ of the concept. In conjunction with these terms, we must also be keen to notice the way in which the concept of ‘illusory being’ plays a role in the explication of particularity as such. Particularity, as we shall see, is constituted as a ‘twofold illusory being’. As we progress in following the self-development of the concept, we shall justify Hegel’s anticipatory remarks regarding the identity of universality, particularity, and individuality.

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605 At this point in my analysis of the text I have chosen to skip two paragraphs in which Hegel discusses the “twofold illusory being” of particularity (604-605), and discuss the transition to particularity. The main reason for this is simple. Once we have reconstructed the transition to particularity, the sense in which particularity is a “twofold illusory being” shall be evident. It would not be sensible to discuss how particularity is a “twofold illusory being” without first reconstructing what particularity is in the first place.
Ch. 18 Particularity

In the following paragraph, Hegel briefly explains how particularity develops out of universality:

The true, infinite universal which, in itself, is as much particularity as individuality, we have next to consider as particularity. It determines itself freely [Es bestimmt sich frei]; the process [Verendlichung] by which it makes itself finite is not a transition [kein Übergehen], for this occurs only in the sphere of being; it is creative power [schöpferische Macht] as the absolute negativity which relates itself to its own self. As such, it differentiates itself internally, and this is a determining, because the differentiation is one with the universality. Accordingly, the universal is a process in which it posits the differences themselves as universal and self-related. They thereby become fixed, isolated differences. The isolated subsistence [Bestehen] of the finite which earlier was determined as its being-for-self, and also as thinghood, as substance, is, in its truth, universality, the form in which the infinite Notion clothes its differences—a form that is, in fact, one of its own differences. Herein consists the creative power [das Schaffen] of the Notion, a power which is to be comprehended only in this, the Notion’s innermost core. 606

As the absolute negativity, Hegel writes that self-differentiation differentiates itself internally, and this is a determining, because the differentiation is one with the universality.” The universal is just self-differentiation as such. What is self-differentiation? It is that which differentiates itself. As a self-differentiation, it does not relate to an other; it only relates to itself, and this self-relation is one of self-differentiation. For this reason, the differentiation is ‘internal’. The differentiation that it gives itself is ‘one with the universality’ exactly because the differentiation is of the universal by the universal itself.

What is it into which self-differentiation differentiates itself? If self-differentiation were not itself self-differentiated, then it would not be the identity that it is: self-

606 Hegel, Science of Logic, 605, 279.
differentiation. Thus, self-differentiation must differentiate itself. Into what differences can self-differentiation differentiate itself? The universal has no access to anything other than itself, namely that which is self-differentiating. Its contents cannot be derived from anything but self-differentiation, for otherwise it would not differentiate itself internally, and would not be what it is. So, the differentiations of self-differentiation follow from the self-differentiation of self-differentiation and nothing else. Upon differentiating itself, self-differentiation immediately acquires a determination: self-differentiation. Self-differentiation is self-differentiating.

Universality by itself is simply ‘self-differentiation’. Nonetheless, in virtue of its very content as self-differentiation it cannot help but immediately give rise to its determination. Immediately upon grasping self-differentiation, the determination immediately follows. Accordingly, the universal, in virtue of what it is, is self-referential. The self-referential character of the universal is not a result of the application and repetition of term ‘self-differentiation’ by an external factor such as a philosopher. For if this were the case, the subject term, ‘self-differentiation’ would not be that which is self-differentiating. Instead, the universal would derive its character from without, not from itself. By giving itself its own determination, the universal renders itself determinate. By differentiating itself, the universal makes itself determinate. But what are the characteristics of that determination?

An act of differentiation is simultaneously an act of negation. Earlier we pointed out the connection between difference, negation, and determinacy. Determinate contents stand in a negative relationship with an other. They are differentiated from that which they are not. The determinate content, insofar as it is differentiated from that which it is not, excludes that which it is not. Insofar as it excludes that which it is not, the determinate content negates what it is not, what is other to it. The determinacy of the content is only determinate so long as
the negation is active. Accordingly, whatever is differentiated is also negated. What is negated in the act of differentiating some content is the unity of the content that is negated. In some sense, differentiation takes what is already one and separates it from itself, thereby placing it in relationship with an other to which it is opposed. Naturally, without the capacity to be differentiated, what is already one could not in principle become differentiated.

In the case of self-differentiation, what is differentiated is self-differentiation, and what differentiates is self-differentiation. For this reason, no other outcome is possible than the following: in the act of self-differentiation, self-differentiation must negate itself. To differentiate oneself is to negate oneself. The negation of self-differentiation is that which is not self-differentiating. Thus, self-differentiation differentiates itself into what is not self-differentiating.

As Hegel likes to say, particularity is the universal in the ‘form of negation’ and this is neither more nor less than the determinacy of the concept.

Hegel says as much in his first statements regarding particularity:

*Determinateness* as such belongs to being and the qualitative sphere; as determinateness of the Notion it is particularity. It is not a limit [Grenze], as though it were related to an other beyond [jenseits] it; on the contrary, as we have just seen, it is the native, immanent moment of the universal; in particularity, therefore, the universal is not in the presence of an other, but simply itself.

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607 Alfred Schaefer fails to understand the development of particularity when he argues that “Hegel tries in vain to derive the particular and individual from the universal. He fails in this. The concept is empty and formal. The empty external reflection of empirical concepts also applies to the concept of the concept.” See Der Nihilismus in Hegel’s Logik Kommentar und Kritik zu Hegel’s Wissenschaft der Logik Berlin Verlag Arno Spitz GmbH, Berlin, 1992, 139. The concept gives rise to particularity exactly in virtue of its self-identity as that which differentiates itself. Unlike empirical kinds, the universal is self-referring. It is exactly in virtue of its self-referential character that it differentiates itself. Unlike empirical concepts, whose identities do not differentiate themselves, the self-identity of self-differentiation is exactly to differentiate itself.

608 Although the concept is not identical or reducible to the negation of negation, the development of particularity may also be considered under this aspect of the concept. ‘Negation of negation’ is explicitly an act of self-negation, for in the formula ‘negation of negation’ it is negation that is negated. If the universal failed to negate itself, then it would not engender the negation of negation, which we established earlier. Naturally, ‘negation of negation’ is in itself not a negation of anything other than itself. Considered just by itself, the negation of negation must negate itself if it is to remain what it is. What is it into which the negation of negation must negate itself? It must negate itself into that which is not the negation of negation. Thus, as long as universality engenders the negation of negation, it must negate itself into the self-differentiating concept that does not negate itself.

Clearly, particularity is not determinacy as such, but the determinacy of the concept. As we have already clarified, determinacy as such belongs to the Logic of Being. In addition, unlike the Logic of Being, particularity does not arrive out of universality by way of transition, but as a development of universality as such. In particularity, the universal is not in the presence of anything other than itself, for the particularity is the universal in the form of negation. We have expressed this above by pointing out that it is self-differentiation that differentiates itself into what is not self-differentiation. For this reason, the determinateness of the universal as particularity is not a limit, for there is no other to which the universal may be compared. The universal is by itself in its self-differentiation.

There is yet another way to understand how the universal becomes the particular. The concept in the form of mere universality is fully contained in the proposition ‘the universal is’. But insofar as there is just universality and no determination, there is not yet any determination. Accordingly, the first inference we may make is that ‘the universal is not universal’. Particularity is precisely this: the universal in its self-negation. Because of what it is, the universal immediately negates itself. As such, the universal is now in the form of its negation.

Hegel proclaims that it ‘determines itself freely’ and ‘makes itself finite’. Here I think it is especially important to pay attention to the use of Hegel’s language. Hegel uses the term ‘Verendlichung’ here. This term means ‘to bring to an end’ or ‘to render finite’. The act of self-negation brings the universal as universal to an end. By bringing it to an end, it renders the universal finite. How does it render the universal finite?

Prima facie, one might think that Hegel has undermined his own claim. First he claims that in particularity the universal is only in the presence of itself, and no other is present.
Secondly, he claims that there is an other present. Indeed, in the concept of the ‘finite’ there is the concept of the ‘limit’. If the particular is not a limit, and the finite is that which has an internal limit, how can the particular be the universal in its finitude?

The particular is the universal itself, but it is its difference or relation to an other, its illusory reference outwards [sein scheinen nach außen]; but there is no other present from which the particular could be distinguished, except the universal itself. The universal determines itself, and so it is itself the particular; the determinateness is its difference; it is distinguished only from its own self. Therefore, its species [Arten] are only (a) the universal itself, and (b) the particular. The universal as the Notion is itself and its opposite, and this again is the universal itself as its posited determinateness; it embraces its opposite and in it is the union with itself. Thus it is the totality and principle of its diversity [Verschiedenheit], which is determined wholly and solely by the universal itself.

In the act of self-negation, the universal creates that which is not the universal out of itself. Accordingly, the universal opposes itself to what it is not in virtue of its negation of itself. On the one hand, the result is that the universal itself exists as particularity, or as that which is not self-differentiating. This is what Hegel means when he considers the universal as particularity and what he means when he claims that “in particularity the universal is not in the presence of an other, but simply itself” and that “it is the totality and principle of its diversity.” Indeed, the universal is the unity of itself with its opposite, and in particularity the universal is that which it is not, what is not self-differentiating. On the other hand, the negation of self-differentiation creates a new opposition between self-differentiation and its negation. If the universal were merely that which is not-self-differentiating, it would not stand in opposition to itself, or what is the same, it would not be self-negating. Yet, the self-differentiation of self-differentiation is nothing more than the self-negation of the universal.

610 As we shall see, the two forms of illusion that are constitutive of particularity as such correspond to the presence and absence of otherness.
Thus, the self-negation of self-differentiation results in a duality: self-differentiation must be different from itself. Insofar as it is different from itself, two terms must be present: self-differentiation (the universal), and that which is not self-differentiating (the particular). For this reason, there are only two species or types of universality: the universal qua universal, and the universal qua particular. No other differentiation of the universal is possible without appealing to an external difference. The limit of the universal is a limit that it gives itself. For this reason, although the finite differences are present within the universal, because the finite is the self-opposition of the universal, or results from the self-opposition of the universal, the finitude of the types of universality do not necessitate an appeal to an external difference.

Each term limits the other, and comes to an end. The universal moment, as that which is self-differentiating, has rendered itself finite by opposing itself to that which is not self-differentiating, what Hegel calls ‘the particular’. The results of the self-negation of universality are fixed isolated differences. Since each term excludes the other, each term is isolated from the other. Insofar as each is isolated from the other, neither do they become each other nor are they to be identified with each other. The universal is what it is and is opposed to the particular. The particular is what it is, and is opposed to the universal. Insofar as the particular moment is not the absolute determinacy of the universal, and identifies the particular as the finite moment, the particular itself must ‘come to an end’. The particular as such is not ‘absolute determinacy’ for exactly this reason: it is the finite moment and must thereby come to an end. In order to see how the particular itself ‘comes to an end’ we must first work though particularity as such, and see how it gives rise to individuality.

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612 In what follows we shall specify the way that the particular is not self-differentiating. The particular is, as we shall see, the transformation of the universal into a finite, self-identical determination that excludes its negation.

613 At this point I have introduced the term ‘species of universality. The use of this term requires some justification, for the concept of species appears to first arise in judgment. In the remainder of our discussion of particularity and individuality we shall carefully explicate how the terms ‘species’ and ‘genus’ may be employed in the Logic of the Concept prior to Judgment.
One might wonder why Hegel employs the term ‘particular’ [Besonderheit]. One could replace the term ‘particular’ with ‘determinate universal’, ‘differentiated universal’, or ‘universal in the form of negation’ if one preferred. But the term ‘particularity’ [Besonderheit] is well chosen for several reasons. The phrases ‘Das besondere Begriff’, ‘the particular concept’, and ‘die Besonderheit’, particularity, are well chosen phrases. ‘Besonderheit’ involves specificity. Particularity is not reducible to specificity, for the character of specificity is exhausted by the categorical form of determinacy. Still, Hegel’s use of the term may be elucidated by dwelling on how this term is employed in ordinary speech. In German, I might use the term colloquially to say “Insbesondere konzentriere ich mich auf den Film”, which means “in particular or specifically, I am concentrating on the movie”. What is particular is specific. When one specifies something, the act of specification narrows what it is to which I am referring so that it may be picked out. In my example above, I said I was concentrating on the movie, not other topics. What is specific is ‘this’ and not ‘that’. Without the act of exclusion or negation, an act of specification cannot be successful. For this reason, the term ‘particular’ is a proper term for this moment of the concept, for in Besonderheit the universal and particular exist as specific types of universality. The particular is ‘this’ and not ‘that’. In the moment of particularity the universal becomes a specific, finite content that is opposed to another specific, finite content, the particular. Again, particularity is not reducible to specificity, but in the Logic of the Concept, particularity is the concept specified.

As we continue in our reconstruction of the moments of the universal, we ought to trace how Hegel has altered and preserved various aspects of the traditional interpretation of universality and particularity. Regarding the universal, Hegel has abandoned ‘the concept’ that the universal is ‘the one over many’. Yet, he has maintained an element of this definition, namely the concept that the universal is what is self-identical across all of its
differences. It is the content of that self-identity that Hegel revises. Regarding particularity, we see other interesting connections with the tradition. We may say, with Aristotle, that the particular is what is *one in number*, but it is one in number on *account of its specificity*. Moreover, in his discussion of individuality, Hegel will also show that the specific universal can only be specified in virtue of its individuality. The particular in Hegel’s account will also carry many of the connotations it possessed in Ancient Greek philosophy. In our analysis of ‘illusory reference outwards’ we shall see how quickly the concept of the ‘specific’ may divulge into the concept of an *indefinite plurality*, a connotation that the term ‘particularity’ carried in Ancient Greek thought. To see this connection, we must investigate how the connotation of the indefinite plurality is also a function of the status of the particular as what is specific. As we analyze particularity, we shall uncover how the specificity of the particular is a condition for the particular as an indefinite plurality, or as mere *diversity*.

In the passage we have been analyzing, Hegel identifies the particular as an ‘illusory reference outwards’:

The particular is the universal itself, but it is its difference or relation to an other, its illusory reference outwards [sein scheinen nach außen]; but there is no other present from which the particular could be distinguished, except the universal itself.

Earlier in his discussion of universality, Hegel claims that the determinate concept, or particularity as such, is constituted by two illusory references, one inward and one outward:

More precisely, the universal shows itself as this totality as follows. In so far as it contains determinateness, it is not merely the first negation, but also the reflection of this negation into itself. Taken expressly with the first negation, it is a particular, and it is as such that we are soon to consider it; but in this determinateness it is essentially still as universal; this side we have to consider. For determinateness, being in the Notion, is the total reflection, the
twofold illusory being ['der Doppelschein'] which on the one hand has an illusory reference outwards ['der Schein nach außen'], the reflection-into-other, and on the other hand has an illusory reference inwards ['der Schein nach innen'], the reflection-into-self. The former reflection involves distinction from an other; from this standpoint, the universal possesses a particularity which has its resolution ['Auflösung'] in a higher universal.\(^{614}\)

As is evident from this passage, the illusory reference outwards constitutes just one side of the determinacy of particularity. Particularity as such is constituted by two illusory references. The illusory reference ‘involves a distinction from an other’, and the universal has its ‘resolution in a higher universal’. This description is consistent with what Hegel has told us in the section on particularity, in which the illusory reference outwards is described as the universal insofar as it is ‘difference or relation to other’.

One might wonder why Hegel would insist on introducing the term ‘illusion’ at this stage of the development. One concern is that the term ‘illusion’ implies that there must be a mind to which that illusion appears. Let us first remind ourselves that the term ‘illusion’ first arises in the Logic of Essence. Here, as in the Logic of Essence, ‘illusion’ does not necessitate a mind. Instead, the term signifies a direction of determination that is constitutive of particularity. In our discussion of universality we spent some energy towards its explication. Illusion, as we discovered, signifies the non-self-subsistent that shows ['Scheinen] as self-subsistent. What is illusory reflects the self-subsistent, but is not itself self-subsistent. At the stage of particularity, the illusory is not yet known as illusory. Instead, it is simply illusory. In the stage of individuality the illusory will be shown to be illusory.

In the literature, there is some debate concerning the status of the illusory reference. Trisokkas in “The Speculative Logical Theory of Universality” takes the illusory references

\(^{614}\) Hegel, Science of Logic, 604, 278.
to be constitutive of universality. Against Friedrich Schick and Christian Iber, Trisokkas defends the view that the illusory reference is twofold, and cannot be reduced to the illusory reference outward. Though Trisokkas is correct to argue against Schick and Iber that the illusory references are twofold, I am inclined to think of the illusory references as characteristic of the moment of particularity. It is tempting to view the illusory references under the heading of universality, for Hegel first introduces the concepts when he is discussing universality. Still, Hegel is clear that the illusory references are constitutive of the universal as determinate, and the determinate universal is the particular. For this reason, I take Hegel’s comments here to be anticipatory of what he shall develop in the section on particularity.

‘The illusory reference outwards’ describes the relationship between the two universals that results from the self-differentiation of the universal. In virtue of

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616 See Iber, C. “Hegel’s Konzeption des Begriffs” in G.W.F. Hegel: Wissenschaft der Logik, ed. A.F. Koch and F. Schick. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 181-201, 2002. Also see Schick, F. Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik—metaphysische Letztbegründung oder Theorie logischer Formen? Freiburg/München: Karl Alber. Trisokkas points out the deficiency of the model of the single shining model: it fails to give an account of the unity of the self-identity of the universal and the determinacy of the universal. Nevertheless, on the whole I think that Schick, Iber and Trisokkas fundamentally mistake the concepts of the illusory reference as the structure of universality. Instead of taking the illusory references as structures of universality that refer to particularity (illusory reference outward) and individuality (illusory reference inward), I take both illusory references to signify the universality and particularity of particularity itself. On this view, in individuality the illusory references themselves are recognized as illusory. This perspective renders individuality the determining process of rendering the particular universal and the universal particular. If we were to identify the illusory reference inward with individuality, then we could not in principle identify particularity (or the difference as such) as its own distinct moment in which it takes on the character of the universal. Here the particular is universal (as the pure difference of universal and particular) but is not yet individual, which integrates each difference with the other. On the whole, we must be able to specify particularity as its own moment before proceeding to individuality. Moreover when we recognize the particular as constituted by two illusory references, we recognize that all differences in the concept (that is, all particular differences) are illusory.
617 In this passage above Hegel clearly identifies the particular with the ‘illusory reference outward’. But still, only a quick step is needed to see how the particular is also characterized by the illusory reference inward. Indeed, the two sided illusory character of particularity reflects both the universality and particularity of the particular. Hegel points out that even the negated universal, the particular, is universal. As universal, the particular is the illusory reference inward. As particular, the particular is the illusory reference outward. Accordingly, here Hegel is not discussing the universal by itself, but the particular as particular and the particular as universal.
differentiating itself, the universal creates two mutually exclusive universals: particularity and universality. As we have already mentioned, each of these universals excludes the other. Moreover, they are fixed, isolated differences that do not unify themselves with the other in virtue of what they are. Indeed, in particularity the universal has negated itself. Accordingly, it is in the form of what is not self-determining. Thus, neither of the universals that result from the self-negation of the universal admits what it is not, and neither is the source of its own differentiation. Insofar as neither is the source of its own differentiation, unlike the universal moment, the particulars are not self-differentiating. Because particularity is constituted by these mutually exclusive differences, particularity is the self-differentiating universal insofar as it is not self-differentiating.

Because the universals ‘universal’ and ‘particular’ do not admit what they are not, the very differentiation of each of the universals must have an external source. Each of the differentiations in particularity can only be what it is if it is differentiated from what it is not. Indeed, this is a basic requirement of the determinacy of any content, namely that it exclude what it is not. For this reason, the determination of the contents ‘universal’ and ‘particular’ must have their origin in an external source. Naturally, this leads us to ask the question: ‘what is the source of their content?’ Moreover, any relation of universal to particular cannot be initiated by either term, for each is what it is and does not relate itself to the other. For this reason, any relation of universal to particular may only be achieved through an external factor, a third term. Indeed, because their relationship consists just in their differentiation from each other, the relationship of the one to the other must have its source in nothing other than that principle by which they are differentiated. Naturally, the self-differentiating universal (as the principle of unity and difference of the moments) is the one source of both moments.
Indeed, for this reason, the unity and differentiation of universality and particularity, as moments of the universal, appear to have their origin in an external difference.

Already we can see the way that the *Logic of Being* and the *Logic of Essence* are at work in the concept. By *losing itself* in particularity, the universal undergoes transition into a new content, the particularity. Yet, the concept also posits two particular differences distinct from itself: universality and particularity. Each of these differences *reflects* the positing of the self-differentiating universal yet is not identical to the act of positing.

Each of the moments asserts themselves as independent of the other, as though they were not moments of one concept. Together, their mutual exclusion and difference from each other constitutes the *illusory reference outwards*. On the one hand, each of the moments shows itself as independent of the other, when *in reality*, neither is independent of the other. Or what is the same, each encounters an *other that is not really an other*, since each of the moments ‘particularity’ and ‘universality’ are moments of the one self-negating concept. In this sense, the illusory reference is *that there is an other*. Indeed, as moments of one universal, they cannot be independent of one another. The illusory reference is outward exactly because of the appearance of the self-subsistence of the moments. Because of the insistence on their separation, the unification and differentiation of each requires a *reference to a third term*, namely to an external factor in virtue of which their unity and difference may be grasped. Because the emphasis here lies in the *difference* between the universal and the particular, the illusory reference outwards may also be described as the *absence* of the unconditioned, absolute, and free universal. The illusion is that there is no unconditioned, absolute, universal. In this sense, the illusory reference outwards places all the emphasis on the side of the particular, or the division of the particular from the universal.
In this passage Hegel informs us that the particulars have their resolution in a ‘higher universal’. The word for resolution is *Auflösung*, which can signify a ‘loosening up’ or ‘dissolving’. As we shall see, there are two senses of ‘higher universal that are at work here. As long as we remain at the stage of particularity, we shall not properly resolve or dissolve the distinction between universality and particularity. The truly higher universal that undermines the difference between universal and particular, and weds them to each other, is the third moment of the concept: individuality. Still, there is another sense of ‘higher universal’ as that external term that unites the mutually external moments of ‘particularity’ and ‘universality’. In our further explication of the illusory reference outwards, we shall clarify the latter sense of term, and show why it fails to produce the desired unity.

Earlier in the *Logic*, when Hegel is discussing the relation between the infinite and the finite in the *Logic of Being*, he asks a question that is pertinent to our discussion: Thinkers have often placed the essence of philosophy in the answering of the question: how does the infinite go forth from itself and make itself finite? This, it is supposed, cannot be made comprehensible. In the course of this exposition the infinite, the Notion of which we have reached, will further determine itself and will show in all its varied forms what is demanded, that is, how (if we want so to express it) the infinite becomes finite.\(^{618}\)

In this passage Hegel is discussing the relationship between the infinite and the finite in the context of the infinite and finite *per se*, not the concept and the relation between two of its moments. Yet, the question is just as valid for our discussion of the concept as it is for the infinite and the finite *per se*. The concept, as the universal, is infinite, yet as a particular moment of itself, it is finite. Thus, the question regarding how the concept goes forth from

\(^{618}\) Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 152.
itself and makes itself finite is just as relevant for our inquiry into the being of the concept as it is for an inquiry into the relation of the infinite to the finite.

The question is: ‘how does the infinite go forth from itself and make itself finite?’ The answer is: self-reference and self-particularization. In the particular, the universal has not only become finite, but it is now determinate. The universal is determinate because it stands in contrast to the other, the particular. In the act of self-reference, the universal gives itself its own determinacy by setting itself ‘to the side’ or making itself finite. Indeed, the universal itself has universality as one of its moments, for the universal, self-differentiation, has differentiated itself into self-differentiation and what is not self-differentiating. Indeed, the term ‘self-reference’ expresses the general form of the whole movement we have been tracing thus far. The universal, in virtue of an act of self-reference, gives rise to its own particulars. Insofar as the universal is the sole principle of its particular specifications, the universal is self-particularizing. In the Logic of the Concept, self-reference is the principle of self-particularization. How this works is already evident from what we have already said: by differentiating itself, the universal applies its own content ‘self-differentiation’ to itself. This is the act of self-reference. Upon differentiating itself, self-differentiation becomes differentiated. Self-differentiation qua differentiated is the universal qua particular. For this reason, the self-referential activity of the concept is self-particularizing. Particulars, in this system, do not have their origin in any principle outside of the universal. The universal itself creates the particulars on its own through an act of self-reference.

The issue of self-reference and self-particularization is connected to Hegel’s use of the term ‘creation’. Indeed, Hegel’s question regarding the way the infinite makes itself finite is nothing more nor less than the question concerning the form of creation. In German Hegel uses two phrases, which Miller translates the same way: ‘schöpferische Macht’ and ‘das Schaffen’.
The former literally means ‘creative power’, while the latter means ‘the creating’. Hegel’s use of language naturally conjures up theological connotations. On the one hand, Hegel’s use of ‘creation’ indicates that the process by which the particular develops from the universal ought not be grasped as a process of making, generation, or contingent spontaneity. In our historical inquiry into the universal, we discovered that various historical epochs modeled the universal on one of these relations. Hegel, as is evident, rejects modeling the concept on any of these relations. Making, as it turns out, assumes form and matter from the outset, but cannot account for the form or the matter itself. Indeed, the concept cannot proceed as an act of making, or on analogy with it, for the concept cannot rely on any foundations.

Moreover, there is no contingent spontaneity in the concept. It is true that the concept is free, because it is self-determining, but that freedom is not contingent. As we have shown, self-differentiation is not an act of caprice or a choice. Instead, self-differentiation necessarily gives the particulars in virtue of what it is.

In the case of freedom or the concept per se, although there is necessity, the necessity is not mechanical or blind, for the determination of the concept is not external, as is the case in a chain of efficient causation. If we insist on a metaphor, we could follow Hegel’s lead and call the free necessity of the concept a ‘living necessity’ or ‘organic necessity’. But if we employ this metaphor, we might wonder why Hegel does not use the term ‘generation’ in his explication of the moments of the concept. The concept per se is not literally alive, for it is not a living organism. Life, as Hegel argues further in the Logic, requires the concept for its possibility, and exemplifies the concept in nature, but the concept per se does not require the category ‘life’ for its possibility. Hegel argues that other categories beyond the concept are necessary for explicating the concept of life, namely ‘teleology’, ‘chemism’, and ‘mechanism’.
Why ought we think about the relationship between the universal and the particular as an inherently creative one? In the first place, unlike life, the concept must completely give itself its own being. Its own being is dependent on what it determines itself to be. Insofar as the concept must give itself its own determinacy, or its own being, it cannot rely on any foundations for what it determines itself to be. Life, as is evident, depends on a multitude of foundations and given determinations, such as those that constitute its environment. Creation is that act of granting existence to determinate beings without any appeal to antecedent principles. On the one hand, because the concept does not rely on any foundations, and is initially indeterminate, the concept appears to create itself ex nihilo. After all, it is the concept that is the ‘original’. On the other hand, because the concept creates itself out of its own self, its creation cannot be out of nothing. Still, we must be careful to note that these two oppositions are unified, for although the determinations that the concept gives itself arise out of itself, the content that it is before it determines itself is an initially indeterminate content, and as such it is not initially a determinate ‘something’. 619 We have already noted that the concept is not reducible to indeterminacy as such, but the concept is indeterminate insofar as ‘self-differentiation’ is construed as that which is just self-differentiation, namely as that which is not yet self-differentiating, or as that which has not yet applied its own content to itself. The concept is that which brings itself out of its own indeterminacy and gives itself its own determinate being. In this way, the creative act of the concept is an act of self-creation. The particular, though it is a separate moment from the universal moment, is also the determinacy of the concept itself. ‘Creation’, unlike ‘life’, ‘making’ or ‘caprice’ corresponds

619 The naïve objection to the possibility of self-creation relies of a false premise. The objection states that in order for self-creation to be possible, what self-creates must already exist in order for it to create itself. Unfortunately, this argument assumes that what self-creates must already be a determinate something, which we need not admit at the outset. Indeed, some account of the original status of the indeterminate content is required, and Hegel’s Logic from the Logic of Being to the Logic of Essence is an account of how that initially indeterminate content first arises.
most closely to the activity of the concept. In making the form and matter are given at the outset, whereas an act of creation does not assume these principles. Instead, creation is also a principle of the form and matter. Although in the living organism the whole and parts are co-determining, life gives rise to life through generation, but does not account for itself. Although life is not identical to making, the form and matter of life must also always already be given as principles necessary for generation. In contrast to making, in the case of life they must be given as a unity in some living individual antecedent to the generation of new life. Creation, in the sense appropriate to the concept, is not the identical to life, for creation accounts for the form and matter. In addition, creation is self-creation, in which what is creating is simultaneously that which is created. In the self-differentiating concept, Hegel thinks that he has the key to grasping (i) why creation is necessary, and (ii) rendering the act of creation intelligible.620

What is most striking about the creation of the particular from the universal is that finitude is restored to conceptual determinacy.621 In our third Section we demonstrated that the concept could not be finite without engendering some fundamental paradoxes. For this reason, the concept was redefined as self-differentiation. Yet, Hegel argues that we cannot simply leave finitude behind. Instead, the concept, though it is infinite, makes itself finite. In individuality the infinite shall be restored to the concept, though in individuality, it will not exclude finitude, but shall embrace it as one of its elements. In individuality, the concept achieves the ‘true infinite’. As we shall see, the true infinitude of individuality is not limited by finitude and goes beyond the merely quantitatively infinite. Likewise, it is not lacking

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620 I would like to note that here I am not discussing the creation of nature. In this context, I am only concerning with the creation of the concept per se. For Hegel, the creation of nature, it is true, depends on the creation of the concept. But we ought not equivocate on the creation of the concept and the creation of nature.

621 Note that the restoration of finitude also entails the restoration of the dogmas of universality that we discussed in Section III. We must keep this in mind as we move forward.
determinate content, as the indeterminate infinite in the case of universality. Because the universal makes itself finite, the dogma of finitude is no longer a dogma, for we have discovered the principle from which it follows. Hegel writes that “The isolated subsistence [Bestehen] of the finite which earlier was determined as its being-for-self, and also as thinghood, as substance, is, in its truth, universality, the form in which the infinite Notion clothes its differences—a form that is, in fact, one of its own differences.” The isolated subsistence of finite determinations is one of the concept’s differences. Indeed, without the finite opposition of universal to particular, the concept would fail to possess any determinate or specific content. According to Hegel, the mistake that led us to take finitude as a dogma of universality was to think of the universal as merely finite. Instead, finitude develops out of the free, infinite, and unconditioned concept as one of its elements.

Given that finite determinations develop out of the infinite concept, we are now in a position to begin to address some of our most basic questions. How can the various forms of finite universality, namely the abstraction, the set, and the genus, be particular types of the concept, given that the concept is infinite? We know that because the concept entails finite determinations within itself in the form of particularity, the finitude of the concepts of the genus, class, and abstraction does not by itself undermine the possibility that they may exist as forms of particularity or what is the same, as forms of universality with their corresponding forms of particularity and individuality. Still, how can we avoid the paradoxes of self-reference that follow from the finitude of these concepts if we introduce them into the self-differentiating concept? In other words, how can we solve the problem of the differentia, as well as the problems that follow from it, once we admit the finite forms of conceptual determination back into the concept? In order to fully answer this question, we cannot remain satisfied with particularity, but must proceed to individuality. For if the concept only
differentiated itself into the particular, then the concept would simply determine itself to be finite. If the concept remained finite, then it would be subject to the paradoxes of self-reference that followed from the finitude of the concept in Section III. Thus, in order to satisfactorily complete our inquiry, particularity must be overcome. Let us keep these questions and concerns in mind as we proceed in elucidating particularity.

Self-reference and self-particularization, both features of the concept as such, cannot be limited to the moment of the universal. Hegel is clear that both the moments of universality and particularity exhibit self-reference and self-particularization. Hegel expresses this by pointing out that the self-differentiation of the concept renders the moment of universality particular, and particularity universal:

Therefore there is no other true logical classification than this, that the Notion sets itself on one side as immediate indeterminate universality \([\text{unmittelbare, unbestimmte Allgemeinheit}]\); this very indeterminateness constitutes its determinateness or makes it particular. Each of them is the particular and is therefore co-ordinate with the other. Each of them as the particular is also determine as against the universal, and in so far can be said to be subordinate to it. But even this universal, as against which the particular is determined, is for that reason itself merely one of the opposed sides. For if we speak of two opposed sides, we must supplement this by saying that it is not merely together that they constitute the particular—as if they were alike in being particulars only for external reflection—but rather that their determinateness over against one another is at the same time essentially only one determinateness, the negativity, which in the universal is simple \([\text{einfach}]\).  

It is here, in this small paragraph, that Hegel unveils the dialectical content of the concept, and it is also the clue to interpreting his claim that particularity is constituted by an illusory reference inwards and outwards.

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622 I read ‘each of them’ as referring to the differentiations or specifications of particularity, namely universality and particularity.
Hegel makes the bold claim that there is no other true logical classification than the division of the concept as such into the moments of universality and particularity. By differentiating itself, the concept ‘sets itself on one side as immediate, indeterminate universality’. In this first sentence, Hegel is distinguishing the universal as one separate moment of the concept. The universal, insofar as it is just the self-identity ‘self-differentiation’, but is not yet self-differentiating, is immediately what it is, and not yet determinate. But upon differentiating itself, the universal is no longer just an immediate and indeterminate content. Now it is determinate and mediated by its own activity. By determining itself, the universal concept as such has divided itself into two moments: self-differentiation as such and self-differentiation as differentiated into particular and universal. Accordingly, the concept has distinguished itself from the mere universality that is the self-identical, immediate, and indeterminate self-differentiation. Now, the immediate, indeterminate universal is just one moment of the concept. The universal, insofar as it is just one of the specific moments of the universal concept as such, is now to be differentiated from the self-differentiated universal. Because the indeterminate, immediate universal is now set in opposition to the determinate universal, the immediate, indeterminate universal now stands opposed to the determinate universal, and it thereby stands in a determinate relation to the determinate universal. Thus, what Hegel claims to follow actually does follow: it is exactly the indeterminate character of the universal that ‘constitutes its determinateness’ of the universal. When Hegel here speaks of the indeterminate universal as determinate he means the universal that is a moment of the universal concept as such. The universal concept has ‘set itself’ to the side. In other words, the universal is self-particularizing, for it is its own particular.
Given that the universal moment is now determinate as the indeterminate, immediate universal, and the determinate moment of the universal concept is the particular, the immediate, the indeterminate universal is also particular. So, we can with confidence say that the universal moment is a particular. But Hegel says more, namely that each of them is the particular, and is co-ordinate with the other. But we might wonder why this is necessary. Why is each the particular, and not just a particular?

This is easy enough to see: when self-differentiation differentiates itself, it negates itself, and gives rise to two opposite determinations: self-differentiation as such (the universal moment) and the self-differentiation of self-differentiation (the particular moment). Because both the former and the latter are now differentiated forms of self-differentiation, the immediate, indeterminate universal, as immediate and indeterminate, is no longer present. Instead, there is only the particular moment, the universal as determinate. In other words, because both the universal and particular are differentiated, only the universal as differentiated, or as particular, is given. This is why Hegel claims that their determinateness over and against one another is not a result of external determination or reflection, but is just one determination. Each is the same content, for each is the content ‘over against one another’, to use Hegel’s words. The one determination is ‘the negativity’, or as Hegel put it earlier, the universal in the form of negation, which is nothing other than particularity as such. This is simple, because there is only one content present: particularity. Having taken the place of the universal, instead of ‘Universality is’ we have ‘Particularity is’.

Insofar as there is only the particular, the concept itself is the particular. To see that the concept itself is the particular shows us that the particular itself has particularity as one of its moments. Because all that is given is particularity, particularity itself is not just a moment of the concept, but the concept itself. Because the concept is both the whole concept and an
element of the concept, and the concept itself is the particular, it follows that the particular itself has particularity as its own moment. For this reason, we cannot limit self-particularization to the universal moment. Here particularity is particular. In this self-referential aspect, the concept is an element of itself.

Another way to see how the particular itself is the universal is to remember that the universal, insofar as it negates itself, is the universal in the form of negation, or particularity. Already upon reaching this conclusion, we have the identity of the universal and the particular. Insofar as the universal exists in the form of negation, in particularity the universal is not in the presence of an other, but only in the presence of itself. Insofar as both the moment of immediate, indeterminate universality and mediated, determinate universality are differentiated from each other, and stand in opposition to each other, the whole concept no longer stands in the form of the mere unity of self-differentiation, but instead what is present is the mere difference of universal and particular. Each moment is differentiated from the other. In particularity, what is absolute, unconditioned, and free, is the differentiation. Indeed, the free, unconditioned, and absolute universal is now the free, unconditioned, and absolute particular. So, with confidence we may go forth and proclaim that it is not just the particular that is particular, and the universal that is universal, but it is the universal that is the particular and the particular that is the universal.

The return of particularity to universality out of the posited difference between the moments ‘universality’ and ‘particularity’ is the illusory reference inwards. Together, the illusory reference inwards and outwards624 constitutes the total determinacy of particularity. Having already clarified the illusory reference outwards, let us clarify the illusory reference inwards.

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624 See page 353 for my analysis of the illusory reference outwards. It signifies the illusion of the independence of the differences. Each is a determination of the concept, yet in particularity they are present as mutually exclusive differences, not as differences of the concept, or the individual.
At the close of his discussion of universality, Hegel indicates the basic structure of the illusory reference inwards:

More precisely, the universal shows itself as this totality as follows. In so far as it contains determinateness, it is not merely the first negation, but also the reflection of this negation into itself. Taken expressly with the first negation, it is a particular, and it is as such that we are soon to consider it; but in this determinateness it is essentially still as universal; this side we have to consider. For determinateness, being in the Notion, is the total reflection, the twofold illusory being [der Doppelschein] which on the one hand has an illusory reference outwards [der Schein nach außen], the reflection-into-other, and on the other hand has an illusory reference inwards [der Schein nach innen], the reflection-into-self. The former reflection involves distinction from an other; from this standpoint, the universal possesses a particularity which has its resolution [Auflösung] in a higher universal. Now even though it is merely a relative universal [ein relative Allgemeines], it does not lose its character of universal; it preserves itself in its determinateness, not merely as though in its connexion with the determinateness it remained indifferent [gleichgültig] to it—for then it would be merely compounded [zusammengesetzt] with it—but so that it is what we have just called the illusory reference inwards [Scheinen nach innen]. The determinateness, as determinate Notion, is bent back into itself [zurückgebogen] out of the externality [Äußerlichkeit]; it is the Notion’s own immanent character, which is an essential character by virtue of the fact that, in being taken up into the universality, being of like compass [Umfange] and identical with it; it is the character that belongs to the genus [Gattung] as the determinateness that is not separated from the universal. Accordingly, the limitation [Schranke] is not outward-going but positive, for the Notion, through its universality, stands in free relation to itself. Thus even the determinate Notion remains within itself infinitely free Notion. 625

The illusory reference outward is the premise for the illusory reference inward. Hegel points out that although each particular universal is a universal that is relative to another, namely the ‘universal’ is relative to the ‘particular’ and vice versa; it does not lose its character of universality. The universality that applies to particularity is not one that is garnered from the outside, but he claims that particularity is universal because it is “bent back into itself out of its externality”. Upon differentiating itself, universality becomes

divided into two mutually exclusive moments. This is the ‘externality’ of the universal. It is ‘bent back into itself’ exactly at the moment one has posited the difference between the particular and universal moments. Immediately upon differentiating the particular and universal moments, only the differentiated universal, the particular, is given. Because the particular moment now stands alone, the particular is positive, and not merely a limitation as it must be in the illusion outward (the appearance of the mutual exclusion of universality and particularity). The particular is now standing in ‘free relation to itself’ as the absolute content. For this reason, ‘even the determinate Notion remains within itself infinitely free Notion’.

Insofar as there is only the difference between universal and particular, the particular is no longer merely one side of the division between universal and particular. Instead, the particular is the division between particular and universal. As the division between universal and particular, the difference between universal and particular itself is not itself differentiated. Because it is not differentiated, it is itself undifferentiated, or an immediate, self-identical content. Likewise, it is not limited by any other difference, for it is the only content present. Indeed, as the difference, the universal is not a limit to the particular, but appears as one of its divisions. For this reason, particularity has now taken on the characteristics of the concept qua universal, namely it is immediate, and unconditioned. In addition, the particular, as the division between universal and particular, remains itself in its differentiations, for as undifferentiated neither of the differentiations of particularity can in principle be differentiated from undifferentiated particularity. Thus, the illusory reference inwards is nothing other than particularity as universality. Universality has returned or ‘bent back into itself’. In the illusory reference inwards, universality is particularity as such, not just self-identical universality. This is the meaning of the phrase ‘bent back into itself’. In the illusory reference inwards, we discover particularity taking on the significance of the
absolute. By ‘absolute’ I mean that particularity is the only determination that is present. Since it is the only determination present, there are no determinations present other than particularity. In this respect, the particular is not identical to either of its specifications, for each of its specifications, ‘universal’ and ‘particular’ excludes its negation. Although it is a relative universal it is also still universal, and exactly in virtue of that relativity, not any external measure. With the term ‘Umfange’ Hegel indicates that the particular now is just as extensive and all-inclusive as the universal.

What makes the identity of particular and universal an illusory reference is the fact that it shuts out and excludes the very distinction between the moments of universality and particularity that is constitutive of the illusion outwards. At this stage of the concept’s development, the particular asserts itself as the universal. The illusion is that only the particular is independent, unconditioned, and free. Indeed, the particular appears as the self-subsistent universal. The illusion inwards is the illusion that the particular is the universal. Indeed, the universal is not just that which is the difference between universal and particular. As the difference, it is not self-differentiation as such. Because the particular, as the difference of universal and particular, is not self-differentiation, the particular is the mere appearance or show of universality.626

If we reflect on what universality is at the very outset of our analysis, we are reminded that at the outset, the universal is self-differentiation, but not yet self-differentiated. Since self-differentiation has not yet differentiated itself as universal it follows that self-differentiation is not self-differentiated. This truth, namely that the universal is not self-differentiated, is particularity as such. Hence, particularity is what the universal

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626 This unity of particular and universal is a show of unity, and for this reason it must be distinguished from the unity of particular and universal that we arrive at in individuality. In the light of the true unity of particularity and universality in individuality we shall show that this unity of particular and universal is illusory.
immediately shows itself to be in virtue of simply being itself. Of course, this must be the mere illusion of universality, for self-differentiation, of all categories, must be self-differentiating.

Here the illusion is the opposite of the illusion in the illusion outwards, which we detailed earlier. In the illusion inwards, the particular presents itself as though there were no other at all except the difference. This is the meaning of the ‘reference inwards’. Indeed, the self-assertion of particularity as universality also entails the rejection of differentiation. The illusory reference inwards moves in the opposite direction of the illusory reference outwards. Ironically, the universal loses the particular by becoming identical with it. When all that is given is particularity, particularity cannot be particular. In each illusory reference, there is a show or appearance of independence, though what shows as independent is different. In the illusory reference outward, the specifications show themselves as independent. In the illusory reference inwards, the difference between universal and particular itself shows itself to be independent.

Insofar as the particular is the universal, the particular entails the absence of differentiation. As the universal, there is nothing that stands opposed to particularity, for it is the only determination present. As the only determination present, there is nothing from which it could be differentiated. In other words, the very differentiation between universal and particular itself is not one of its differences. All that is given is particularity. The very content of particularity is just differentiation, namely the differentiation of the universal from the particular moment. Hence, particularity is the absence and presence of the differentiation of its moments. Thus, particularity is a contradiction. Particularity is that which excludes itself from itself.

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627 See page 353.
Hegel claims that “The isolated subsistence [Bestehen] of the finite which earlier was determined as its being-for-self, and also as thinghood, as substance, is, in its truth, universality, the form in which the infinite Notion clothes its differences—a form that is, in fact, one of its own differences.” This favorite metaphor of Hegel to which he shall appeal again and again in the chapter on particularity invokes the concept of appearance. The particular is not only the ‘illusory being’ but it is also that which ‘clothes’ the concept. The particular is the moment in which each moment of the concept is separate from the others. Although the concept is the totality of its moments: universality, particularity, and individuality, the concept always already appears as one of its moments: as universality, particularity, or individuality. In this sense, the self-differentiating concept is hidden by the fixity of the non-self-differentiations that it posits. Yet, for those who can penetrate the content of each moment, the various determinations of the concept show themselves as appearances of the one self-determining concept.

In the history of philosophy, those who have taken particularity as the concept have taken the illusion to be the reality. One of the basic errors that philosophers have made in the history of philosophy is the mistaken view that particularity, or some form of the particular universal, such as the genus, the set, or the abstract universal, is exhaustive of universality per se. Each form of universality we find in the tradition, the abstraction, the class, and the genus, engenders the division of the universal from the particular, and as such belongs to the moment of particularity. On the one hand, the commitment to the universal as that which only exists in the form of particularity entails that no contradiction ought to be allowed, for particularity engenders the absolute separation of universal from particular. This is the side of the illusion outward. On the other hand, the identification of the particular with the universal engenders the contradiction that upon being raised to the throne of
universality, particularity must deny itself. Indeed, we have already arrived at this conclusion at the end of Section III.

We ought to insist against the tradition that the concept ought not be merely identified with a form of determinate universality, for this would be a one-sided and limited perspective, since the concept is equally universal. Nonetheless, it would be equally one-sided to insist on a complete separation between determinate universals and particularity as such. Because the element of particularity as such has equal claim to conceptual determinacy as the element of universality, the element of particularity must also be the concept, or that which is self-differentiating. Although we must reconstruct the development of individuality in order to grasp the full conceptual determinacy of the particular, we can at least intimate how that full conceptual determinacy must be conceived.

Because the particular element is the concept, and the concept is that which is simultaneously the whole concept and the element of the concept, the particular itself must have particularity as one of its elements. As the whole concept, particularity is universal. As the element of the particularity, particularity is particular. Given that particularity has particularity as its own element, particularity qua particular, or the elements of the universal particularity, cannot be absolutely separated from the particular as universal. Particularity, as determinate universality, has each of the determinate universals as its particulars: genus and species, the class, and the abstraction. Given that particularity qua universal is identical to particularity qua particular, and each of the forms of determinate universality (genus and species, the class, and the abstraction) are particulars of the universal ‘particularity, it follows that the particular qua universal must be identical to the genus and species, the class, and the abstraction.628

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628 This argument motivates the elucidation of the various forms of determinate universality in what follows. We are only properly justified in identifying the particular with the concept as such upon arriving at individuality. For this reason, this argument is merely anticipatory.
The result of the argument above shows that the particular \textit{qua} universal is identical to each particular form of particular universality: the genus and species, the class, and the abstract universal. Indeed, this type of reasoning would apply to each and every element of the concept, including universality and individuality, since each is the whole concept and the element of the concept. Indeed, each particular universal is not just a particular element of particularity, but each is a particular element of universality, for each is a particular \textit{universal}. Upon reaching the stage of individuality, we shall see that individuality is nothing more than the unity of particularity and universality. Given that each determinate universal is particular and universal, we shall see that these forms of determinate universality are also \textit{individuals}.\footnote{Earlier we showed that the concept per se does not concern anything other than the elements of the concept. For this reason, the explication of the concept excludes all other concepts except for the elements of the concept. Although we are here claiming that determinate universals such as ‘abstraction’ and ‘genus and species’ are immanent in the concept, these are \textit{unlike} the other categories that we have heretofore encountered, such as substance or the one, because they are explicitly \textit{particular universals}. Accordingly, they cannot be justifiably excluded from the account. Indeed, Hegel does not seem to exclude them from the account, insofar as they appear throughout the text at every stage of the argument.}

Above we pointed out that upon becoming universal, particularity renders the \textit{difference} between particular and universal absolute. This difference between universal and particular is the \textit{one content} that constitute particularity as such. In Section III we showed that each form of the determinate universal, namely the genus/species, the class, and the abstract universal, embodies the difference between the universal and the particular, though each exhibits that difference on its own terms. Because particularity is constituted by the difference between universality and particularity, and is identical to its elements, and each particular form of universality specifies that difference in a \textit{different} way, the difference between universal and particular is immediately identical to three different forms of difference: abstract universality, the class, and the genus/species. In each form of universality the universals and the particulars have a different status: the abstract universal is distinct from its instances, the class is an aggregate of its members, and in the genus/species,
species are differentiations of a genus that is not responsible for its own speciation. As we noted, this means that particular is contradictory, for not only is particularity universal, but the universal ‘particularity’ is immediately identical to three different ways of construing that difference.

To this argument one might object that the elements of particularity are not the various determinate kinds of universals, but instead ‘universality’ and ‘particularity’. But this objection misses a crucial point. Earlier we pointed out that particularity is not only each side of the difference, but it is also constituted by the one content ‘the difference’ that obtains between the two differences. As the difference between the differentiations, particularity takes on the role of the universal. Given that it is the difference between universal and particular that constitutes the particular as universal, the elements of particularity must be differentiations of that difference. Indeed, each of the particular universals, the genus/species, the abstract universal and the class are nothing other than differentiations of that difference between universal and particular. If we take a long deep look at the chasm between universal and particular that constitutes particularity we see the different forms of particularity starring right back at us.

There is some dispute in the literature regarding the status of the abstract universal in Hegel. I agree with Ioannis D Trisokkas that the particular is the abstract universal. In Hegel’s Science of Logic: A Critical Rethinking in Thirty Lectures, Winfield argues that the abstract universal, the genus and species, and the class first arise in judgment. Though I follow Winfield’s analysis in large part regarding the general structure of the concept, I suggest a

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631 Winfield, Richard Dien. Hegel’s Science of Logic: A Critical Rethinking in Thirty Lectures. Plymouth, UK: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2012, pgs. 211-212. On page 277, Winfield almost seems to admit that the abstract universal is immanent in the concept when he writes that “particularity is something that all of them share” indicating that the abstract universal as a common feature is already present in the concept. (227)
slight modification of this view. From a merely textual point of view, it is very difficult to argue that the abstract universal first arises in judgment, for Hegel himself explicitly identifies the particular as abstract.

If we were to insist that each of the forms of determinate universality only arose in *Judgment*, we would be committed to the thesis that the forms of determinate universality (the particular particulars) is not identical to determinate universality (universal particularity) as such. If this were the case, the universal particularity would not be identical to its own elements, or particulars. But since particularity is the concept (just as every element is), the particularity must be identical to its particulars. Thus, we cannot be committed to the thesis that the genus, the abstract universal, and the class first arise in *Judgment* without also rejecting the thesis that particularity is self-differentiating. Ironically, as long as we commit ourselves to the thesis that the forms of determinate universality first arise in *Judgment*, we have taken up the abstract position that the concept is divorced from abstraction, as well as the other universals. Instead, in order to avoid taking up a merely abstract position, we must integrate the abstraction, as well as the other forms of determinate universality, into the concept itself. Having provided a systematic motivation for the inquiry into determinate kinds of universality, let us turn to Hegel’s text in order to uncover the textual motivation for that investigation.

When we contemplate the form of particularity as such, we ought to immediately discover the three forms of the particular universal therein: the genus and species, the class, and the abstract universal. We have already achieved a glimpse of each. Hegel refers to the species of ‘universality’ and ‘particularity’ as the *species* of the concept. Likewise, we have

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632 In the conclusion I argue that the abstract universal does not appear as properly determinate in the concept, but does appear in the concept as inseparable from the individuality of particularity.

633 Again, this argument is anticipatory, for we only achieve the full conceptual determinacy of particularity in individuality.
witnessed how the self-negation of particularity in the illusory reference outwards creates an infinite class of particulars. Although Hegel banishes the abstract universal, in one respect, from the concrete universal, the self-identical, mutually exclusive, finite forms of particularity which we encountered at the outset of ours investigation into particularity exhibit the general form of the abstract universal. Still, it is not enough to point out these hints. We must give a systematic account of all three from the very concept of particularity itself. For sure, this is exactly what Hegel does. One of the most surprising results of our investigation is still to come, namely the insight that the particular is the abstract universal.

There are many senses of abstraction. In one sense, the abstract is integral to the determinacy of the concept. There is another sense that requires appeals to givens, and is beholden to a number of problematic assumptions, with which Hegel contrasts his own account of the concept. When we attend very closely to Hegel’s text it becomes very hard to deny that abstraction, at least in some qualified sense, is necessary to the structure of the concept per se. In Hegel’s discussion of individuality he writes that

Abstraction, which, as the soul of individuality, is the relation of the negative to the negative, is as we have shown not something external to the universal and the particular but immanent in them, and through it they are a concrete, a content, an individual.635

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634 Hegel uses the term ‘abstract’ in many ways. First, it signifies a determinate kind of universality. Though this determinate kind of universality belongs to the system of logic, because thinkers posit it as the concept as such, and ignore the aspect of self-differentiation, Hegel often disparages the abstract universal as a kind of determinate universal. As a determinate kind of universality, abstraction appears in both the concept and the judgment, albeit in different ways that we shall later distinguish. I should also like to note at this juncture, that in the Logic of the Concept. Hegel will often use the abstract universal to signify the particular in general, for in the abstract universal we find the greatest divide between universal and particular. For this reason, the abstract universal also has the sense of particularity such, not just a particular kind of determinate universality.

635 Hegel, Science of Logic, 621.
In our analysis of individuality, we will analyze this passage in respect to the element of individuality. At this point, I merely wish to motivate the thesis that abstraction is central to the structure of Hegel’s concept. Hegel is explicit and unequivocal: abstraction is not something external to the universal and particular, but is *immanent* in them. Moreover, he goes so far as to claim that it is abstraction *in virtue of which* the universal and the particular are *individuals*. Because it is *in virtue of abstraction* that the universal and particular are individuals, Hegel claims that abstraction is the “soul of individuality”. Because Hegel is unequivocal that abstraction is that *in virtue of which* universality and particularity give rise to individuality, we cannot reconstruct the development of individuality out of particularity without i) recognizing that abstraction is necessary to the development of individuality, and ii) working out *how* abstraction gives rise to individuality.

In numerous other places in the text Hegel points out that it is only *in virtue of the abstract universal* that we can grasp the transition from particularity to individuality. At the close of his discussion of particularity, Hegel argues that the particular gives rise to the individual. In these passages, Hegel focuses on working out how abstraction gives rise to individuality. For instance, consider the following passage:

But further, we must recognize the infinite force of the understanding in splitting the concrete into abstract determinatenesses and plumbing the depth of the difference, the force that at the same time is alone the power that affects their transition.\(^{536}\)

In this passage Hegel is clear that *only* the power which renders the concrete *(the self-differentiating universal)* abstract can “affect the transition” of the terms in question. This passage is nestled within a longer paragraph in which Hegel defends the understanding *(that

\[^{536}\text{Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 610.}\]
which renders categories abstract) from philosophers who have little esteem for it. By showing how abstraction is necessary for the transition, Hegel redeems the abstraction by integrating it into the concept of the concept. In a related passage, Hegel again appeals to abstraction as the principle of transition:

Since, therefore, understanding exhibits the infinite force [unendliche Kraft] which determines the universal, or conversely, imparts through the form of universality, a fixity and subsistence [das fixe Bestehen] to the determinateness that is in and for itself transitory, then it is not the fault of the understanding if no progress is made beyond this point. It is a subjective impotence of reason [subjektive Ohnmacht der Vernunft] which adopts these determinatenesses in their fixity, and which is unable to bring them back to their unity though the dialectical force opposed to this abstract universality, in other words, through their own peculiar nature or through their Notion. The understanding does indeed give them, so to speak, a rigidity [Härte] of being such as they do not possess in the qualitative sphere and in the sphere of reflection; but at the same time it spiritually impregnates them [begeistert] and so sharpens them, that just at this extreme point alone they acquire the capability to dissolve themselves [sich aufzulösen] and to pass over into their opposite [in ihr Entgegengesetztes überzugehen]. The highest maturity, the highest stage, which anything can attain is that in which its downfall begins. The fixity of the determinateness into which the understanding seems to run, the form of the imperishable [Unvergänglichen], is that of self-relating universality. But this belongs properly to the Notion; and consequently in this universality is to be found expressed, and infinitely close at hand [unendlicher Nähe], the dissolution of the finite [das Endliche]. This universality directly refutes the determinateness of the finite and expresses its incongruity [Unangemessenheit] with the universality. Or rather we can say that the adequacy [Angemessenheit] of the finite is already to hand; the abstract determinate is posited as one with the universality, and for that very reason is posited as not for itself—for then it would be only a determinate—but only as unity of itself and the universal, that is, as Notion. 637

In this passage Hegel is clear that “the fixity of the Understanding” is “in and for itself transitory”. Although the understanding gives the concept a fixedness, Hegel is clear that it only at this point of fixedness that the categories are able to “dissolve themselves” and “pass over into their opposites”. Again, Hegel is unequivocal that the abstract universal, or the fixed determination of the understanding cannot be separated from the universal: the fixed

determinacy of the understanding becomes indistinguishable from “self-identical universality”. At the close of the passage, Hegel points out that “the abstract determinate” is a unity of itself with the universal, and is “as Notion”.

Again, at this point in our analysis, I do not mean to provide an exhaustive analysis of these passages, but only to point out that Hegel does not think that one can elucidate individuality without the concept of abstraction. Taking the textual evidence as my guide, I will argue that particularity is abstraction, and that it is only in virtue of the abstract character of particularity that individuality can develop from particularity.

Naturally, these passages on abstraction in the Logic of the Concept raise difficult problems. First, we might remind ourselves that at the very outset of the analysis of universality Hegel makes it clear that in the Logic of the Concept, the concept is not abstractly determinate. Moreover, the abstract universal seems to first appear only after the three determinations of the concept have been elucidated in Judgment as the form of predication in judgments of existence. Indeed, Hegel is clear that we can only determinate what kinds of determinate concepts there are in the sphere of Judgment, not in the Concept. Since the abstract universal, the genus and species, and the class all count as determinate concepts, it would appear that abstraction, along with the other particular universals, ought not arise in the Concept. Yet, in the Concept Hegel is unequivocal that abstraction is already at hand, and as I have already indicated, there is good reason to think the others are as well. As we work through the text of Hegel’s Logic, we must keep these problems in mind. In order to solve this problem, we must take a very compare and contrast the way the abstract universal, the class, and the genus are determined in the sphere of judgment and the concept. For this

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638 Hegel, Science of Logic, 600.
639 Hegel, Science of Logic, 630.
reason, instead of completing our analysis with individuality, we shall briefly show how individuality gives rise to judgment. Thereafter we shall compare and contrast judgment with the concept in order to come to terms with this issue.

If one takes a hard line against the thesis that abstraction is already present in the concept as such, then one has two choices. On the one hand, one can argue that the textual evidence shows that Hegel simply misunderstood his own position. Following this line of reasoning, one could argue that it is only in judgment that abstraction arises. Yet, if one takes this line of reasoning, then one must be ready to i) critique Hegel’s account and ii) offer a revised account of the concept of the concept, by removing all references to the role of abstraction in the transition to individuality, in addition to the other places where the term shows up. Because of the systematic motivation for integrating abstraction into the concept, I think that the development of individuality can only take place if we recognize abstraction, at least in some qualified sense, as integral to particularity. For this reason, I do not think this option is very plausible. On the other hand, in an attempt to save Hegel’s analysis, one could argue that Hegel’s use of the term ‘abstraction’ as well as other terms such as ‘genus’ or ‘species’ are not intended to describe the elements of the concept, but instead anticipate later developments in Judgment. Yet, when Hegel claims that particularity and universality are ‘species’ of the concept, he is not anticipating further developments, for particularity and universality are the determinations of particularity itself, not judgment. Likewise, when Hegel claims that abstraction is immanent in universality and particularity, he is not looking ahead to Judgment. Instead, he baldly points out that abstraction is already immanent in the elements
of the concept. Thus, for the relevant passages Hegel is not merely anticipating later developments.\textsuperscript{641}

Given the problems that the text itself has raised, it appears to me that we only have \textit{two} plausible options: either we must reject Hegel’s own analysis of the concept, or find a way to salvage Hegel’s account by integrating abstraction into the concept of the concept. Thus, the only plausible reconstruction of Hegel’s \textit{Logic of the Concept} requires recognizing the role of abstraction in the concept of the concept. In what follows we shall attempt to integrate abstraction, as well as the other forms of the determinate universal, into the \textit{Logic of the Concept} while at the same time addressing the problems that we arise in that pursuit.

Because each of the forms of determinate universality is \textit{indistinguishable} from particularity as such, each of the forms of determinate universality is determinable in virtue of particularity alone. Indeed, because each particular universal is a differentiation of the difference between universal and particular, the difference between universal and particular must be the principle by which the particular universals are elucidated. For this reason, we shall take particularity itself as the principle by which each form of determinate universality is immanent in the concept. Because particularity is the self-negated universal, the principle of self-negation shall guide our analysis of each form of universality.

In the following passage, Hegel shows how the concept of particularity contains the concept of the genus and species, the class, and the abstract universal. In the following passage, Hegel introduces them in this particular order. In order to follow the text as closely as possible, we shall explicate each of the determinate universals in the order of their appearance in the text: genus and species, class, and abstract universal. By proceeding in this fashion, we glean insight into the very structure of particularity as such. As Hegel elucidates

\textsuperscript{641} I might also note that the way Hegel applies the terms for determinate universals ‘genus’, ‘species’, ‘abstraction’, etc. do not appear to be metaphors or analogies.
the genus, the class, and the abstract universal, he shows how particularity is a process by which the difference between universal and particular becomes an absolutely fixed and the difference absolute.

The element of particularity begins with the genus and the species, which is the most concrete of the particular forms of universality, and ends with the abstract universal, which is least concrete. By ‘less concrete’ I mean that the universal and the particular become further separated as we progress from genus and species to abstract universal. That the genus is more concrete than the abstract universal is evident if one thinks about their structure. In the genus and species, the universal contains its particulars as its differentiations, while the abstract universal does not contain its particulars. Instead, the instances of the abstract universal are completely external to the universal. It is no coincidence that when Hegel draws individuality out of particularity he appeals to the concept of the abstract universal as the point of transition. Hegel points out that “The highest maturity, the highest stage, which anything can attain is that in which its downfall begins.” Because in the abstract universal the difference between universal and particular is greater than in every other form of particularity, the abstract universal is “the extreme point” of particularity as such. Thus, if we want to reconstruct the development of individuality out of particularity, we must follow the progress of particularity from its most concrete to its least concrete forms.

At this point one might raise two objections. First, in the section on Judgment, Hegel introduces the particular universals in the inverse order: abstraction, class, and genus and species. Second, because the determinate forms of universality are identical to particularity as

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642 As we shall see, the class occupies a middle place between the genus and species and the abstract universal. The class is more concrete than the abstract universal because it is itself constituted by its particulars. The abstract universal, to the contrary, is not constituted by its particulars, but has them outside itself as its instances.

such, they ought not in principle appear in any particular order or sequence. The first objection is easily dismissed, for Hegel’s *Logic* is not a formal system in which categories must always appear in the same order in which they initially develop. The second concern may be addressed by appealing to the order of development from the universal to the individual. Because the universal, particular, and individual each admit each other, they nonetheless appear in a particular sequence—from universal to individual. Likewise, in respect to particularity as such, the identity of the forms of determinate universality does not necessarily preclude them from appearing in a particular order.

In the following passage, Hegel explicitly lays out the concept of the genus and species, as well as the concept of the class:

The particular contains universality, which constitutes its substance; the genus [*Gattung*] is unaltered in its species [*Arten*], and the species are not different from the universal but only from one another. The particular has one and the same universality as the other particulars to which it is related. At the same time, by virtue of the identity of the particulars with the universal, their diversity is, as such, universal; it is totality [*Totalität*]. The particular, therefore, not only contains the universal but through its determinateness also exhibits it; consequently, the universal constitutes a sphere that must exhaust the particular. This totality appears, in so far as the determinateness of the particular is taken as mere diversity [*Verschiedenheit*], as completeness [*Vollständigkeit*]. In this respect, species are complete simply because there are no more of them. There is no inner standard [*innerer Maßstab*] or principle that could apply to them simply because diversity is the difference without unity in which the universality, which in its own self is absolute unity, is a merely external reflection and an unrestricted, contingent, completeness. But diversity passes over into opposition, into an immanent relation of the diverse moments. Particularity, however, because it is universality, is this immanent relation of the diverse moments. Particularity, however, because it is universality, is this immanent relation, not through a transition, but in and for itself; it is in its own self totality and simple determinateness, essentially a principle. It has no other determinateness than that.

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644 But besides this concern, there is a good reason why the categories of the abstract universal, class, and genus appear in a different order in *Judgment*. In *Judgment* determinacies move from the least concrete to the more concrete. For this reason, the order of determination moves in the opposite direction, from the abstract universal to the genus and species.
As is evident, first Hegel first identifies the genus and the species as a particular form of particularity. After explicating the concept of the genus, Hegel shows how the particular transforms itself into a class. Although Hegel points out that in the class there is no principle of the particular, a principle develops out of the class concept. This principle is the abstract universal, namely, the ‘immanent relation of the diverse moments’, or the ‘simple determinateness’, which he later explicitly identifies as the abstract universal. Hegel devotes much of the remainder of the text that we have not yet analyzed shall to the particular as the abstract universal. On the whole, we must also make an effort to relate these determinations of particularity to the illusions outward and inward.

Earlier we already pointed out that upon differentiating itself, the universal cannot merely exist as that which is not self-differentiating, for in this case it would not be negating itself. For the concept to be negating itself, it must stand in a relation of opposition. Thus, we must recognize that in particularity the concept is not just simple, but in conflict with, or negating itself as the universal.

When we dwell on the being of difference, we receive insight into the twofold determinacy of particularity. We noted above that particularity, as the difference between universality and particularity, is external to itself. That particularity is self-external is evident from the outset of particularity. Particularity is the self-negation of the universal. Insofar as the

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645 Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 606, 280. ‘The following manner’ refers to the division of the concept into universality and particularity.

646 That which negates itself negates the identity that it is. The negation of the identity is simultaneously the establishment of the identity as difference. For this reason, the identity is its own negation or its own difference. As such, it is in a relationship of opposition and contradiction. From this relationship of contradiction and opposition a diversity of particulars can be deduced. As we elucidate the genus, we shall arrive at the concept of the class where we shall encounter the merely diverse.
universal negates itself, its very content is its own \textit{self-denial} or \textit{self-expulsion}. Indeed, this determination of universality stands in conflict with the particular as simply ‘that which is not self-determining’ in which universality and particularity exclude each other, and have their unity in another term. But this is exactly the point: particularity unifies these two determinations only in \textit{the contradiction} of these two determinations. On the one hand, because particularity is the self-negation of self-differentiation, particularity is not static, but is an activity whereby self-differentiation undergoes transformation. On the other hand, each transformation that results from that process of self-negation is a universal that is not self-differentiating, or a universal in which the universal and particular are separated. Accordingly, particularity is a process whereby self-differentiation undergoes transformation from one form of particularity to another. First, let us see how the self-externality of particularity gives rise to the genus and species and the class. Second, let us explicitly draw out how the twofold determinacy of particularity, which is nothing more than the two sides of the abstract universal, follows from the particular as a class.

At the very outset of our discussion of particularity we showed that self-differentiation differentiates itself, and through its self negation gives rise to two opposite determinations: self-differentiation as such (the universal moment) and the self-differentiation of self-differentiation (the particular moment). Upon having negated itself, the universal is particular, that is, it is that which is not self-differentiating, or that which is differentiated into two mutually exclusive terms: universal and particular. Accordingly, the two differentiations at hand, the ‘universal’ and the ‘particular’, are \textit{differentiations of the one}

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647 What negates itself is explicitly a contradiction, for the identity just is what it is not, which is the precise form of a contradiction. For this reason, contradiction is the most precise expression of particularity as self-negation. Naturally, contradictions are oppositions, so this term would also be fitting. Still, opposition may mean contrary, and not everyone seems to be in agreement that contraries are contradictory. Here in the concept it is unclear that we could make such a distinction.
content, the ‘differentiation’ of universal and particular. The concept of the genus is nothing more than the particular qua universal, namely ‘the difference’ that is differentiated into various particular universals, or species. These species are just the differentiations of a more inclusive universal, the genus, ‘the differentiation of universal and particular’. Self-differentiation has, as Hegel puts it, ‘set itself to the side’, meaning that it is simply one of two species. Because each differentiation of the universal genus is one differentiation of the whole concept, ‘universality’ is one species, and ‘particularity’ is another species of one genus. Hegel calls the universal the ‘substance’ of the particular, because the particular as the genus is in the form of the universal. The universal is the ‘substance’ of the universal insofar as it is the particular content, ‘the differentiation of universal and particular’ that is the self-identical universal that each of the particulars ‘universal’ and ‘particular’ have in common. The particulars are the differentiations of the one ‘substance’ or the particular as universality.

Each of the species ‘universal’ and ‘particular’ are, as Hegel claims, different from each other: one is self-differentiation as such (the universal), and the other is the self-negation of self-differentiation as such (particular). Insofar as the moment of particularity is the differentiation of the universal into the universal and particular, particularity “contains” universality as one of its moments. That which is divided into species, the genus, is universal. So, it must be the universal that is divided into the species. Nonetheless, because particularity contains the universal as one of its divisions, particularity itself is divided into species. Since the genus is the universal that is divided into species, particularity is also the genus, or the universal, that is divided into particularity and universality. Thus, the genus of the species ‘universality’ and ‘particularity’ is strictly speaking the particular universal. As is evident, though each species can be differentiated from each other, neither can be differentiated from the genus. In the unity of the species and the genus we discover the illusory reference inwards in the
form of the genus. On the one hand, the universal as a species is differentiated from the particular as a species, and thus the universal and the particular, as species, are both divisions of the differentiation of universal and particular as such, or the particular. On the other hand, the particular as a species is also the genus, because the differentiated universal is the unconditioned self-identity that runs through both universality and particularity. Thus, both the particular as a species and the universal as a species are indistinguishable from the genus.

Hegel points out that particularity may be grasped in terms of co-ordination or subordination. Hegel writes that

Each of them as a particular is also determinate as against the universal, and in so far can be said to be subordinate to it. But even this universal, as against which the particular is determined, is for that reason itself merely one of the opposed sides. 648

The differentiations of the universal concept, as moments of the concept, are not the concept as such. As moments of the concept, each excludes the other, and is a specific element of the whole concept. Insofar as each moment of the concept is a particular moment, the moments of the concept are differentiated from the concept as such. Each particular moment is co-ordinate with the other. The concept as such is the universal concept, namely that which has particularity and universality as its differentiations. For this reason, Hegel points out that there is also subordination in the concept: each moment as a moment, or each difference as a difference is a moment or differentiation of the concept as such. As Hegel states, “each of them as a particular is also determinate as against the universal.”

Having differentiated itself, the universal concept as such is in the form of particularity. Insofar as particularity has swallowed up both distinctions, namely the universal

and the particular, particularity itself *stands by itself* and has become universality as such. But what does this mean? Insofar as the particular is the universal concept as such, the particular stands in *no relation to another*. Insofar as it is the *only* content there, it is not differentiated at all, and is thereby indeterminate. Indeed, its very simplicity as ‘the difference’ renders it an *indeterminate* content. As we pointed out earlier, because the particular has become the universal, the particular takes on the character of the universal element: self-differentiation insofar as it is *immediate and indeterminate universal*.\(^{649}\)

To express this in another way, consider universality and particularity at the level of the concept as such. Here, they are indistinguishable, for each is the whole and the element of the whole. Accordingly, there is no way to distinguish them from one another. For this reason, I have called the universal as it exists in particularity the ‘particular universal’. There is no negation that stands between them and thereby no possible determination. By swallowing up both differentiations of the concept, the concept itself, or particularity itself, fails to be differentiated at all, and is indistinguishable from the immediate, indeterminate, universal. Indeed, this appears to be the meaning of the claim that ‘the particular is the universal’.

The particular moments of the universal, the differentiated elements of the concept as such, stand in contrast and in opposition to the (particular) universal to which they are subordinate. Yet, this universal, to which the particular moments are subordinate, is just the *one indeterminate, immediate universal* ‘self-differentiation’. Now the particular is the *self-identical moment* that runs through both the particulars ‘self-differentiation’ and ‘self-negated-self-

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\(^{649}\) Again, we cannot emphasize enough that the terms of the concept are not to be identified with terms from the *Logic of Being*. 

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differentiation’. Because the indeterminate, immediate universal is a determinate content in virtue of its contrast to the determinate, mediated universal, or the particular, the universal to which the particular moments are subordinated can no longer remain a ‘higher universal’ to which particulars are subordinate. Instead, the particular universal immediately splits itself into two divisions: particular and universal. As the indeterminate immediate, it is the universal. As the particular, it is the particular moment. The universal to which the particular moments were subordinate cannot maintain its distance from those moments. Indeed, it shatters itself into its own determinations. In sum, universality is nothing other than this very content, that which splits itself into its own particulars. As the divided universal, or the differentiated particular, it sets itself into opposition to itself as the undifferentiated particular, thereby setting itself to one side of its own opposition. Because the result of the self-division is nothing other than the givenness of differentiation as such, particularity necessarily swallows up its opposite, the indeterminate universal, and sets itself up as the subordinating (particular) universal, the undifferentiated particular, and the whole process of self-negation begins again: The universal vanishes into the particular, and the particular vanishes once again into the universal. The immediate, indeterminate universal vanishes into the mediated, determinate universal, and the mediated, determinate universal vanishes into the immediate, indeterminate universal.

Each particular in the series of particulars is co-ordinate with each other, and subordinate to the particular universal. As Hegel points out, this universal to which the particulars are subordinate is only one of the opposed sides. Insofar as the particular universal is itself just another particular, the subordinating universal negates its own superior status, and

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Again, the particular just is the universal insofar as it is the self-identical element that remains itself in its differentiations. Its position as the subordinating concept constitutes its identity with the universal. But as the self-identical element, it is not itself a difference and is for this reason undifferentiated. As undifferentiated, it cannot be differentiated from its differentiations, and for this reason remains immediate and indeterminate universality.
takes its place alongside the other particulars. Every time the subordinating universal arises, it is immediately negated. In the particular universal, the particular and universal are immediately identified. In the immediate unity of particular and universal, the separation of particular and universal fails to appear. Yet, upon the self-negation of the particular universal, the particular is separated from the universal. As a result, the particular and universal necessarily stand opposed to one another, for the particular is no longer identified with the universal. The result is evident: the immediate unity of the particular and universal is set into opposition with the difference between particular and universal.

The result of the dialectical process inherent in the genus and species is another form of the self-externality of the concept: the class. As we pointed out above, particularity is that which is differentiated from itself, or sets itself into opposition with itself. As the genus it is not the genus, but the species of the genus. As the species of the genus it is not the species of the genus but the genus itself. Let us think through how the self-externality of the genus and species explicitly saddles us with the specificities particular to the concept of the class.

Immediately upon recognizing that the particular cannot be distinguished form the universal, and the universal from the particular, the species themselves also appear to be indistinguishable. Or what is the same: there are a plurality of species or particulars that are distinct, yet there is no principle of difference or measure by which the particulars may be identified. This is the illusory reference outwards in the form of the genus, in which the genus loses itself in its species. The particular universal has ceased to be distinguishable from either of its moments or elements. Accordingly, all that is present is a totality and mere diversity of contents. The subordination of the universal that is expressed in the genus and species negates itself and gives rise to a universal that is merely horizontal, in which the universal is merely the co-ordination of indistinguishable particulars, that is, the class.
As we know from Section III, the lowest species is not itself a genus. Instead, it only contains a class under itself. Indeed, by showing how the genus necessary dissolves into the class, we have shown that the limit of the genus and species is the class. But our results show that whether you move towards the highest genus or the lowest species you arrive at the class. Because the class is the result of the inability to distinguish the universal from the particular at every level of subordination, the class turns out to be the limit of the genus and species at “both ends” of the order of subordination.

Particularity is the universal insofar as it is not self-differentiating. Since the universal as such is self-differentiation, the particular is self-differentiation as that which is not self-differentiating. The term ‘self-externality’ connotes this opposition: insofar as the very content of universality, self-differentiation, is in the form of its negation, namely what is not self-differentiating, it is ‘outside itself’ or ‘external to itself’. Because particularity is the universal insofar as it is external to itself, the content of every particular is external to itself. Insofar as the determinacy of particularity, (a), lies outside itself, another particularity (b) is generated. Since (a) is just particularity and (a)’s particular content lies outside itself in (b), (a)’s determinacy as particularity must lie in (b). Hence, particularity (b), expressing the particularity of (a), is by necessity also particularity. Since (b) is simply particularity, (b) has its determinacy in another particularity (c), whose determinacy must lie outside of itself in another particularity (d). Hence, particularity (a) is an aggregate of particularity (a)-(n). Likewise, (b), (c), and (d) are the totality of particulars. The series of determinations in (a)-(n) is simply an aggregate of particularity whose determinacy lies outside of what they are.

I have arbitrary chosen ‘a’ as the beginning of the process of particularity, but of course ‘a’ is simply a proper name that instantiates a variable, and arbitrary designates one particular among others. For this reason, the reasoning above should not be taken as an
inference about the particular ‘a’. Indeed, there is nothing special about ‘a’. The reasoning above is schematic for any particular you posit, any particular ‘x’. ‘X’ May be instantiated with the proper names ‘a-n’, and the reasoning would be exactly the same. Because particularity is external to itself, whatever particular with which one begins in the series, one shall find that the whole of particularity is external to that one particular. Or what is the same; the particular with which one began cannot itself be distinguished from the whole series. For this reason, ‘b’, just as much as ‘a’ or any other particular we desire to pick out, is just as much the totality of particulars as any other. In this way, ‘one’ ‘some’ and ‘all’ collapse into each other.

The universal as the totality of particulars is the universal as inherently diverse. Particularity has shattered into ten thousand pieces. It is unrestricted, and its unity is nothing distinct from its being an unrestricted. This is why Hegel calls it an ‘unrestricted completeness.’ Indeed, this is why we cannot distinguish one from ten thousand particulars. It is never at any time incomplete, for there is no particular which is not itself the completeness of particularity. The particular here is complete in the simple sense that no particular is ever missing from the class. Yet, this completeness always appears contingent in the sense that the totality is just as much this particular as it is that particular. In other words, each particular is the totality. No specific particular is necessary to the completeness of the whole totality. In fact, the specificity of particulars completely fails to appear. How many particulars it possesses is contingent to its determination.

Upon looking over the results of the self-externality of particularity, we see two basic trajectories or directions of determination. First, we immediately notice that although particularity as such at first appeared to be one of the moments ‘a’, ‘b’, etc., in fact

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651 The completeness of the class distinguishes it from classes that do not contain every particular.
particularity is nothing but the totality of particulars. By ‘totality’ I mean that all the particulars are aggregated together. Unlike wholes and parts, the members of a collection need not appear in any particular order. In totality as aggregation the order of the particulars is irrelevant. For example, in an aggregation of letters, ‘A’ and ‘B’ need not appear in any order. In contrast, in the whole syllable ‘Ab’ their order is necessary to what the unity of the syllable. If one were to change the order of the letters in the syllable ‘Ab’ one would have a new syllable. In an aggregation, the members of the collection are simply conjoined. In conjunctions, we can say ‘A and B’ just as well as ‘B and A’ and have the exact same collection. Naturally, we cannot invert the order of the syllables of ‘Ab’ into ‘Ba’ and still have the same syllable. For this reason, the syllable ‘Ab’ is not merely a totality, while the conjunction ‘A and B’ is a totality. Totality is a kind of universality that is indifferent to the way the particulars are ordered. When we look upon particularity from this vantage, we are under the illusion inwards. The illusion inwards takes the particular as the universal. In this scenario, the particularity is the totality of particulars as such in virtue of which (a-n) are created, not any one of the moments in the series a-n. As a result, when the particular is identified with the universal, the differences between the moments ‘particular’ and ‘universal’ ceases and particularity appears as a self-enclosed totality. Indeed, looked upon this way, the universality of particularity becomes clearer. Particularity is the universal because it is self-differentiating. It differentiates itself into various particulars, and thereby differentiates itself into the mere totality of particulars.

Particularity as the totality of particulars is nothing other than the class. As we discussed at the outset of Section III, the class consists of a collection of individuals. In the class, each individual is one member of the class, and taken all together, the class is an aggregate of individuals. As an aggregate, the universal is not distinct from the totality of the

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652 See page 365 for the definition of both illusions inwards and outwards.
particulars. Indeed, this is exactly what the development of the genus and species has wrought: a mere totality or aggregation of particulars. In the class, the identification of the universal with the aggregate precludes providing any standard by which particular members belong to any particular class or are excluded from the class. Indeed, this is exactly Hegel’s description of the particular qua class: it has no ‘inner measure’ or ‘principle’ by which the particulars could be distinguished from each other. Each is simply another self-external particular, or one member, and is indistinguishable from the others in the class. Since the class only specifies that each is a member of the class, it does not specify that in virtue of which each member is different from the others. The conceptual content of the class per se does not vary if one has one or more than one member, for no content besides ‘being a member’ is offered. Indeed, for exactly this reason we are justified in the employment of variables and proper names to distinguish the particular. In fact, here the variable is essential, for in the absence of any inner measure by which we might distinguish the particulars, we are forced to appeal to contingent, external marks by which we might distinguish them. For this reason, the universal as the class invites external reflection for its determinations. Variables as instruments of external reflection, serve this purpose well. Although the class is united with the particulars, its form of unity precludes any account of what individuates the members and the condition upon which membership ought to be granted.

Though particularity appears as a self-enclosed totality, this is just one side of its determination. What the particular as a self-enclosed totality fails to express is the actual infinite regress in which there is always an outstanding term. This is the sense of the particular

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653 In other words, the concept of the genus and species undermines itself. At this point we cease to have species and genera and instead only have a class.
as the illusory reference outwards. In two separate passages, Hegel points out the infinite regress that is constitutive of the illusory reference outwards:

But in regard to the other side, in which the genus [Gattung] is limited by its specific character [ihren bestimmten Charakter], it has been observed that this, as a lower genus, has its resolution [Auflösung] in a higher universal. The latter, in its turn, can also be grasped as genus but as a more abstract one; but it always pertains only to that side of the determinate Notion which has a reference outwards [nach außen].

Since particularity as such is self-particularizing, the universal particular (a-n) is just one moment of itself. As one moment of itself, particularity would contain the totality of the particulars (a-n) as its moments. Insofar as the totality of moments is itself just a moment of the whole series, the whole (a-n) would contain the whole (a-n). Yet, as a moment of the whole, (a-n) itself cannot be the whole. Or to put it another way, because it contains its whole self, it is simultaneously exceeding itself and receding from itself. We can think about this ‘self-recession’ in many ways. Every time the whole is identified it turns out that it is not the whole. Or better: the whole is just that which is constantly negating itself. Perhaps reminiscent of Plato’s Parmenides, it is infinitely greater and infinitely lesser than itself. Thus, the totality of moments fails to be the whole totality. Instead, the totality fails to appear as ‘the all’, and appears as just another differentiation, as another particular. This is the illusory reference outwards. Although one arrives at particularity as such, ‘a’ or ‘b’, every time one arrives at a new particular, that particular, in virtue of its being a particular, generates a new particular, and thereby a new totality of particulars. Although each particular appears to be the ‘higher

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654 Again, the illusory reference outwards is the appearance that there is always some outstanding term. This is illusory because it only emphasizes the independence of the various particulars, yet fails to express their unity. 655 Hegel, Science of Logic, 605, 278-279. 656 Though this appears to be a tautology, it is not a tautology, for it does not merely express that the whole is the whole, but that the whole belongs to the whole as a member of the whole.
universal’ in which the particulars are grasped, each turns out to be a false totality, a false universal. Each is ‘false’ because it is not the totality of the particulars, just the appearance of the totality. The false universal is the result of one direction of determination that begins from the divide between universal and particular. Every time the universal particular (a-n) is reached, it is necessarily surpassed by a new totality of particulars. This is the illusory reference outwards. ‘The illusory reference outwards’ signifies the infinite progression of particulars, or members of the class, towards a totality that it will never reach. It is a quantitative infinitude in which there is always something outstanding, always one more. To employ historical analogies, it is Aristotle’s concept of motion, or Heidegger’s being-toward-death, for at every moment it is incomplete. Because the self-externality of each particular necessitates that it give its content to another particular, in this quantitative sequence the content of each particular is determined by another particular. For this reason, each particular finds the unity and determinacy of its content in another particular. Once again, this highlights the way the illusory reference outwards works. In virtue of the self-negation of particularity, each particular is determined only by another particular, ad infinitum.

In particularity self-differentiation differentiates itself into that which is not self-differentiated. Our analysis has afforded us a finer understanding of what this means. ‘Particularity is differentiated into that which is not self-differentiated’ simply means that particularity is that which is always already determined externally, or that which is outside itself and has always already deferred its content to another particular. In this process

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657 In the section on individuality we shall see how individuality is the truly ‘higher universal’. Individuality, like the false universal, follows from the division of universality and particularity, though it does not preserve that division. Unlike the false universal that does not cancel the absolute hegemony of the division between universal and particular, it cancels and preserves the division.

658 Again, this is evident from the analysis of self-externality on pages 380-381. In virtue of its self-externality, particularity negates its own universal content and therewith passes its universal content on to another particular. This particular, in turn, in virtue of its self-negation, passes its content on to another particular, ad infinitum. The ‘passing’ of the content is simultaneously the creation of a new particular.
particularity has always already found itself and lost itself. Every discovery of particularity is the greatest disappointment and the greatest joy. Given the two directions of the determination of particularity, the universality of particularity becomes clearer. In each and every act by which particularity negates itself and gives rise to a new particular content, particularity is differentiating itself from itself and presenting itself as a particular distinct from what it is. This shows that particularity is self-differentiating, and thus that it is the universal. Moreover, as we showed above, it differentiates itself into various particulars, each of which is the self-differentiating totality. Yet, this process of self-differentiation is inverted, for the act of self-differentiation is in fact the inversion of self-differentiation: particularity is the act of negating the self-differentiating content, or the universal itself, in the creation of the non-self-differentiating series. For this reason, the particular is the universal but only as the self-negation of the universal.

As is evident, the situation falls very quickly into dialectical quicksand. As we pointed out above, the universal concept as such, that which contains universality and particularity as its differences, is just as much universality as it is particularity. Hence, there is an opposition between the concept as divided into universal and particular, namely the concept qua moment, and the concept as unified, namely the concept as such in which the universal is the particular, and the particular universal. Hegel points out that this situation is unstable. He states: “[…] even this universal, as against which the particular is determined, is for that reason itself merely one of the opposed sides.”

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659 We might appeal to Nietzsche for a more poetic rendering: particularity is the eternal re-occurrence of the same. Naturally, with this poetic expression we do not mean to introduce time into the determination of particularity. No time determinations are present in the logic.

660 The opposition between universal and particular is not imposed from without. Our analysis has already implied this. If we re-iterate the results of the analysis this should be evident enough. The universal as such, insofar as it self-differentiates, sets itself to the side and creates two particulars: self-differentiation and the self-negation thereof. Yet, we saw that this resulted in the simple negation of universality as such and the positing of particularity. Particularity then stood as the universal over and against its moments. Since the positing of
Perhaps what is most fascinating is that particularity, as self-negation, or as that which is self-external, is simultaneously constituted by the twofold illusory reference inwards and outwards. On the one hand, in virtue of the identity of each particular as self-negating, every moment of particularity is itself the totality of particularity, or the universal. Thus, every moment of particularity presents itself as the totality of all particulars, the universal. In this movement, the particular becomes universality. On the other hand, every totality of particularity presents itself as nothing other than one moment of that totality. In this movement, the particular presents itself as a differentiation of the universal, not as the universal. Accordingly, in this stage the particular refers outward away from the universal ‘particularity’ and presents itself as the differentiated moment.

In the former direction, as self-negation, the particular is always already immediately the universal. Accordingly, the particular construed as a moment of the universal disappears. As we mentioned in our discussion of the genus and species, insofar as the particular is identified with the universal, the particular is present in its immediacy, for what is there is just particularity as such. In particularity as such all the differences of the various particulars, and thereby all of the mediation between them, vanishes. As an immediacy, in the particular as universal, the particular is ‘in the form of being’. This is expressed in the proposition we have already mentioned: ‘particularity is’. In the latter direction, the particular is always already distinguished from the universal as one of its moments. Accordingly, the particular universal in respect to which the particular appears as a moment vanishes. Indeed, the separation of particular from universal in the latter direction is mediation, for it is a process in particularity resulted in the identity of the particular with the universal, the particular itself took on the identity of the immediate, indeterminate universal. As the immediate, indeterminate universal, particularity as such, or the concept as such, is simply one side of the opposition with which we began: self-differentiation (universal) and the self-negation thereof (particularity). Thus, the opposition between universal and particular is not a result of anything but the very self-transformation of particularity.
which every particular is determined by the self-externality of particularity. In sum, particularity is constituted by these two illusory references, one in which the particular is immediately the universal, the other in which the universal is divorced from the particular.

In the twofold determination of particularity, both the Logic of Being and the Logic of Essence are preserved in conceptual form. Because the Logic of Being is characterized by immediate transitions, the Logic of Being appears as the particular concept in the form of immediacy. Because the Logic of Essence is characterized by mediated oppositions, the Logic of Essence appears as the particular in the form of mediation. In the former, mediation is not expressed independently of immediacy, while in the latter immediacy is not expressed independently of mediation. Each side of particularity holds immediacy apart from mediation and mediation apart from immediacy. In terms of the concept, universality is held apart from particularity, and particularity apart from universality. Particularity is the self-splitting of the particular universal into its moments: particular and universal.

Upon reflecting on the development of the two fold split constitutive of particularity, it becomes evident how the abstract universal develops from the concept of the class, and how a principle of determination arises out the very lack of principled determination that is inherent in the concept of the class. In the class, each particular is externally related to the other, and each in turn gives rise to a new particular. For this reason, every member is the totality, or all of the members, and yet there is an unending process by which we exceed this totality. The result is an opposition between the particular as the universal, and the particular as distinct from the universal. What is it in virtue of which (the principle) each particular is

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661 See 380-381.
662 See 380-381.
663 Here we are talking about the concept of the class as such. For this reason, we are talking about the concept of the concept 'class'. From our reflections on the concept of the concept class, we are not excluding the possibility that there are empirical classes with only a determinate number of members, such as the class of Russian Tortoises.
related to, or gives rise to another member of the class? It is only in virtue of the self-externality of the particular that another particular is created. Thus, the self-externality of the particulars is the principle of the particulars. Let us note that particularity, or the self-externality of universality is the principle not only of the class, but also the genus and species, as well as any other form of determinate universality. If we remember, it is in virtue of the self-externality or self-negation of universality that universality initially sets itself into opposition to the particular as one species. In addition, it is also the self-externality of the genus and species that negates the subordinating difference between universal (genus) and particular (species). The negation of the subordinating universal identifies the universal with the particular as an aggregation of differences, or a class. Last but not least, upon interrogating the content of each particular in the class, we discover nothing other than the one simple content ‘self-externality of universality’. The lack of internal measure in the class is, as it turns out, nothing other than the self-negating character of each particular, or the particular as the universal ‘that which excludes itself’. As a result we must recognize that the particular as the self-external universal or the universal that is outside itself, is the principle of the class.

As we have plodded through particularity we have shown, albeit in different ways, how the particular as particular may be distinguished from the particular as universal. In abstract universality this is clarified in the simplest of terms. The particular as universal is the universal as the simple content ‘self-negation’ or ‘self-externality’, a universal content that is separate from the differences or the particulars. The particulars, on the other hand, that are determined by the principle ‘self-negation’ constitute the particular as particular, in which

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664 Particularity is the principle of the genus, the class, and the abstract universal. In one sense, the duality of genus and species has been negated and replaced by the class concept. Still, in another way, we still have the duality of difference that was present in the genus and species distinction, for we continue to have the play of the illusory reference outward and inward. This duality of difference in the illusory references shall appear once again in the abstract universal.

665 The particular as particular is the illusory reference outwards. The particular as universal is the illusory reference inwards.
there is an infinite regress of particulars in the form of serial determination. Each form of the particular concept is a form of the particular, and the particular is the abstract. Each kind of particular concept, the genus, the class, and the abstract universal, exhibits the particular as universal and the particular as particular as its moments, since each form of the particular concept is a differentiation of the difference between universal and particular.\textsuperscript{666} Naturally then, the particular as universal and the particular as particular can be elucidated in terms of any of these forms of abstract universality.

Every particular dissolves into the one simple universal: self-externality. This is simple because there is no plurality of particularity present in the concept of self-externality itself. The conceptual content of every particular is reducible to the one content ‘self-externality of universality’. Although each universal dissolves into the one content ‘self-externality’, self-externality as such is the absolute process by which each self-external particular is determined. Insofar as each particular is determined by the principle ‘self-externality’, each particular is externally determined.

Though each particular is determined to be externally determined, each particular fails to be distinguished from the others insofar as each is determined by that very content ‘self-negation’. First we witnessed concept differentiate itself into the genus and species. Upon the self-negation of the genus and species, the concept resurrected itself as the class. Now the concept has undermined itself as the class and has given rise to the abstract universal. As we shall see, the self-negation of the abstract universal will give rise to individuality. Yet, the abstract principle of self-externality as such does not yet find itself determined externally. In other words, at the stage of particularity we only have the self-externality.

\textsuperscript{666} Upon completing our discussion of individuality, we shall see that even the concept of the concrete universal, or self-differentiation as individuality will also be constituted by the opposition between particular as particular and particular as universal.
negation of self-differentiation, not the self-negation of the self-negation of self-differentiation.\textsuperscript{667} Instead, particularity is the principle of the external determination, or just that principle of self-negation.\textsuperscript{668} For this reason, the very content ‘self-externality’ stands opposed to the individual moments of the self-externality. Self-externality is the separate common term which each particular expresses. Although each particular is an instance of the common term, and in this way is indistinguishable from it, each instance is distinct from the common term as its own instance. The self-external universal deserves the name ‘abstraction’ exactly for this reason: the universal is here a separate common term that has instances. This universal stands opposed to the individual instances that express it insofar as it does not differentiate those instances from each other. What this shows is that the abstract universal can be formulated intelligibly without an appeal to givens that are outside of the Logic of the Concept.

Let us be clear here. The abstract universal ‘self-negation’ or ‘self-externality’ is not simply a common term. Universality per se is not present in that abstract universal. When the abstract universal merely means ‘the common term’ we have completely lost any connection to the self-differentiating universal. The abstract universal is not just a common term, but a principle by which particulars are determined. The abstract universal, as it appears within the concept of particularity, is the self-negation of self-differentiation or self-differentiation that is outside itself. At the outset of our discussion of particularity, we discovered that universality differentiated itself into the form of what is not self-differentiating. Or what is the same, the particular is the self-negation of self-differentiation. The abstract universal is nothing other than the self-differentiating universal in the form of self-negation.\textsuperscript{669}

\textsuperscript{667} In individuality the abstract universal also undergoes self-negation.
\textsuperscript{668} As we shall see, particularity becomes a distinguished moment, and ceases to be identified with the universal as such. In order to grasp the self-negation of the universal in the form of negation, we must proceed to individuality.
\textsuperscript{669} Hegel explicitly states this in the Science of Logic, 608-609, 283-284.
Having worked though each form of determinate universality, we have arrived at the most extreme point of particularity, or that point at which the difference between universal and particular is greatest. Unlike the genus and species, the abstract universal does not contain its differences. Unlike the class, the abstract universal is not constituted by its differences. Instead, the differences are instances of the abstract universal, for they are not internal to the universal or identical to the universal as they are in the genus and the class respectively.

The class concept fails to possess the resources to fully express the abstract relationship. In the class concept, the universal just is the aggregation. For this reason, there is no universal that could be distinct from the particulars. Indeed, this means that in the class there is no internal measure of the members. Yet, the class has given rise to the universal ‘self-negation’ that is the principle of the particulars that fall under it. Because ‘self-negation’ is the principle of the each particular, the class has been superseded. Because the term ‘instance’ implies a distinction between the universal and the particular that falls under it, we are justified to employ the term ‘instance’ when referring to particulars. Every single particular in the class is an instance of one universal: the self-negating universal. The self-negating universal is abstract, for it is the form of its instances. It does not, on its own, determine how many particulars are at hand. One only knows that there is some multitude that lies outside of the principle.

In the class such a division between universal and particular in the preceding fashion would be impossible. The class, as the aggregate of all the particulars, is nothing more than all the instances. But because it only covers one side of the abstract distinction, namely the side of the particulars that fall under the abstract universal, it is not sufficient to express the whole concept. The abstract universal negates and preserves the class. It incorporates the class
and moves beyond it, for the abstract universal is a self-identical content that is not reducible to the particulars that fall under it.

In particularity the self-differentiated universal is reduced to the abstract in two ways. First, self-negation as such constitutes the principle or the universal, but is not itself self-negated. In particularity, the self-negation of self-differentiation is not yet negated. If particularity were itself negated, we could no longer speak of the universal in the form of negation, or self-differentiation insofar as it is not self-differentiated. Instead the object of negation would be the self-negation of the self-negation of universality, not the moment of universality per se. For this reason, the principle self-negation fails to be its own instance. Self-differentiation as such is that which negates itself. Because the self-negation is not yet negated, the self-differentiating principle, as self-negated self-differentiation, must necessarily be outside of itself or external to itself. To be clear, the universal is outside itself in particularity in the sense that it is not self-referential and not self-particularizing. For this reason, the form of the universal (self-negation as such) is divided from the content of the universal (the particulars that are negated).

Self-negation as such is that into which the universal has differentiated itself. Second, each particular is not self-differentiated insofar as it is differentiated from other particulars by the separate principle of self-negation. Indeed, in self-differentiation as such, the determinations of self-differentiation are not separate from self-differentiation. Because the particular is the self-negation of self-differentiation, the determinations of the principle ‘self-negation’ are distinct from and external to that principle. In the form of the abstract universal as such, the universal ‘self-negation’ is distinct from the particulars, for each particular is negated and thereby placed into as series of determinations by the act of self-negation as such. What is

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670 Every other particular is that which is determined but not itself the principle of the determination.
the self-negation of self-differentiation? It is nothing more than the abstract universal. Again, this means that in the abstract universal the universal and the particular are separate. In the abstract universal, the self-negation of self-differentiation reaches its climax: the self-differentiating universal is now \textit{that which is not self-differentiating.}

Having shown that the particular is the abstract universal, Hegel provides a brief overview of the whole process of particularity that wrought the abstraction:

We have seen that the determinateness of the particular is simple as principle, but it is also simple as moment of the totality, as a determinateness opposed to the other determinateness. The Notion, in determining or differentiating itself, is negatively directed against its unity and gives itself the form of one of its ideal moments, that of being; as a determinate Notion, it has a determinate being in general. This being, however, no longer has the meaning of mere immediacy, but of universality, of an immediacy that is identical with itself through absolute mediation, an immediacy that equally contains within itself the other moment, namely, essential being or reflection. This universality with which the determinate moment is clothed is abstract universality. The particular has universality within it as its essential being; but in so far as the determinateness of the difference is posited and thereby has being, universality is a form assumed by the difference, and the determinateness as such is the content. The universality becomes form in so far as the difference is present as the essential moment, just as on the contrary, in the pure universal, it is present only as absolute negativity and not as difference posited as such.  

Hegel reminds us that particularity has its origin in the self-differentiation of the concept. Through its negative stance towards itself it has become of one of its ideal moments: particularity. As he reminds us, particularity is the concept not just in the form of being, or immediacy, as it was in the mere universal. To the contrary, the particular, as the determinate concept, is the concept as a determinate being.\textsuperscript{672}

\textsuperscript{671} Hegel, \textit{Science of Logic}, 608, 283.  
\textsuperscript{672} Moreover, Hegel reminds us of what we showed earlier, namely that the \textit{Logic of Essence} is preserved in the particular moment of the universal: in the \textit{Logic of Essence} the moment of mediation is absolute. The determinacy of the particular concept is a universal that is an ‘immediacy’ that is ‘identical with itself’ through absolute mediation or reflection.
Hegel claims that “this universality with which the determinate moment is clothed is abstract universality.” Though we have already touched on the metaphor of the ‘clothed universal’, here Hegel connects the Logic of Essence or reflection with the clothing metaphor. The particular, insofar as it is determined by two illusory references, is determined by categories, namely the illusory references, that have their origin in the Logic of Essence. To grasp the universal as the particular is to grasp the illusion of the universal, the universal as structured in the way of reflection. In sum, the determinacy of the universal shows itself (or clothes itself) in the logic of reflection, and presents the moments ‘universal’ and ‘particular’ into that structure. Indeed, this illusory showing of the concept as particular that is constitutive of the illusory reference outward and inward is necessary to the concept, but may also confuse us (and often has confused us!) into thinking that the universal just is the abstract universal, the genus, or the set.

In the passage above Hegel reminds us again that the universal is the essence of the particular. The universal is that which posits the particular, and remains itself in and through its differentiations. Still, the positing of the particular renders the particular universal. Insofar as only the differentiations ‘universal’ and ‘particular’ are present, particularity itself is the immediate content given, or as Hegel says, exists in the ‘form of being’. The difference between universal and particular is posited as the one and only content. It is posited as the universal itself. When the difference between universal and particular as such is taken simply as what is universal, we discover a split between universal and particular. The abstract

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673 Though we have overcome the Logic of Essence, particularity is constituted by a difference between universal and particular that has its origin in the self-differentiation of the universal. In this sense, the differentiations are the ‘reflections’ of the self-determining universal. Determiner (Self-differentiating universal) and determined (the differences) are placed in opposition to each other: one is the source of the difference, while the other is the difference.
universal, as we just showed⁶⁷⁴, has two simple sides: universal and particular. On the one hand, universality develops into differentiation, the abstract universal. The determinate content of the form ‘differentiation’, or its particularity, lies in a separate principle, the particular, which is constituted by the multiplicity or manifold differences that instantiate that universal. That the universal is constituted by the separation of universal from particular is the determination of particularity.

The abstract universal as such is not just the side of the universal, not just the content ‘self-negation’. Instead, the abstract universal is the absolute difference of universal from particular. The abstract universal is that universal that maintains the difference between the universal and particular. For this reason, Hegel points out that the ‘determinateness of the particular is simple as principle’. We noted that ‘principle’ here refers to the universal by which the particulars, or the instances of the universal, are determined. The abstract universal is simple in the respect that it is the self-identity ‘universal’ that excludes its opposite ‘particular’.

Still, since the abstract universal is the difference of universal and particular, it is also simple as the moment of the universal, or as the particular. The simplicity of the particular is that it is self-identical and excludes its opposite insofar as it stands ‘opposed to the other determinateness’.⁶⁷⁵

Hegel is explicit that in abstract universality, or particularity, the concept is ‘outside itself’:

Now determinateness, it is true, is abstract, as against the other, determinateness; but this other is only universality itself which is, therefore, also abstract, and the determinateness of the Notion, or particularity, is again nothing more than a determinate universality. In this, the Notion is outside itself; since it is the Notion that is here outside itself, the abstract universal contains all the moments of the Notion. It is (a) universality, (b) determinateness,

⁶⁷⁴ See pages 386-391 in which we show how the difference between the universal and particular is inherently abstract. In what follows, I take this development as a premise.
⁶⁷⁵ What is simple has no differentiations in itself, and that which excludes its negation fails to contain any differences within itself. For this reason, the abstract universal is simple.
(c) the simple unity of both; but this unity is immediate, and therefore particularity is not present as totality. In itself it is also this totality and mediation; it is essentially an exclusive relation to an other, or sublation of the negation [Aufhebung der Negation], namely of the other determinateness—an other, however, that exits only in imagination [nur als Meinung vorschwebt], for it vanishes immediately and shows itself to be the same as its supposed other. Therefore, what makes this universality abstract is that the mediation is only a condition [Bedingung] or is not posited in the universality itself [nicht an ihr selbst gesetzt ist]. Because it is not posited, the unity of the abstract universality has the form of immediacy, and the content has the form of indifference to its universality, for the content is not present as the totality which is the universality of absolute negativity. Hence the abstract universal is, indeed, the Notion, yet it is without the Notion; it is the Notion that is not posited as such.\footnote{Hegel, \textit{Science of Logic}, 608-609, 283-284.}

The very first lines repeat the dialectical procedure we have already completed, though they repeat it in terms of the abstract universal. Having already established that the difference between universal and particular is abstract\footnote{Again, see 386-391.}, we may proceed to explore this passage in light of that development. Given the development of particularity as abstract, throughout much of the text from this point forward, Hegel uses the term ‘abstract’ to signify particularity in general, and this is how I shall use the term in what follows.\footnote{To briefly recap the results of that development, the abstract universal is the one common difference between universality and particularity that has the particular differences for its instantiations. The instantiating relationship that is constitutive of abstract universality is now the relationship that is constitutive of the difference between universal and particular. Each \textit{instatiates} the common term ‘the difference’.} The determinateness of the concept is the concept in so far as it is differentiated. The particular, or differentiated universal, stands opposed to the undifferentiated universal, or the immediate indeterminate universal. The determinacy of the particular, or its abstract determination, is granted to it by its opposition to the undifferentiated universal. As we showed earlier, because the universal is that which is opposed to the particular, the undifferentiated and immediate universal is also one determination, or one differentiation that is opposed to and differentiated from the particular. Thus, the universal must also be a particular, or what is the same, an abstract
universal. Because we have two particulars, ‘universal’ and ‘particular’, and the particular is the abstract universal, we have *two abstract universals*. Indeed, this is evident in the fact that the abstract universal is constituted by the difference between the universal and particular, and each side of the opposition excludes either the particular or the universal. In sum, Hegel is committed to the proposition that the concept itself is not only differentiated into two species, but *two abstract universals*. These abstract universals are themselves the instances of the abstract universal per se.

On a very general level, the very process of the self-differentiation of the universal into the particular has the form of an abstractive activity in the following sense. The concept negates its original unity in which it is immediately itself and its moments, and subtracts out of that immediate unity two moments of itself: the universal and the particular. These two elements stand as abstractions of the self-differentiating universal. Accordingly, as we have noted throughout, in particularity there is *the abstractive process* whereby the concept separates its own moments from itself, and *the moments themselves* that are abstracted. The universal concept with which we began functions as the source of the moments from which the concept has culled its abstract determinations. Having abstracted the moments from itself, the concept stands in a condition of that is *opposed* to the abstractive activity. In abstraction, the abstractive activity is the self-negation of universal, while the abstractions themselves are not themselves identical with the activity. The opposition between abstractive process and the result of the abstraction is also the same as the opposition between the universal and the particular. The universal is the self-differentiating activity, and it is the self-negation of the universal that differentiates the concept into the universal and particular. The non—self-differentiating aspect of the concept is nothing but the difference between universal and particular that is the result of the self-differentiating universal. The universal, in virtue of
differentiating itself, is now in the form of the abstract opposition between universal and particular. The self-differentiating universal shows or reflects its differences as abstract universals.

Because the abstract universal is the concept outside itself, it contains the universal and the particular as moments of the concept, though each is contained in the form of the self-negation of abstract universality. This is easy to see given our analysis thus far. Insofar as the abstract universal is the difference of universal from particular, the universal and the particular are each moments of the abstract universal, or the particular. This is obvious from what has preceded: ‘universal’ and ‘particularity’ are both abstract universals, or differentiated and determinate universals. Yet, it is also immediately evident why Hegel includes (c) the unity of both universality and particularity ought to be included in the abstract universal. Since (a) the universal, and (b) the particular, are each particulars or abstract universals, all that is present is one simple content: the difference between (a) and (b), the abstract universal, namely the differentiation of the universal from the particular. This content is simple, for as the difference it excludes its differentiations. In the content ‘difference’ as such, we find that the particular is the universal, and the universal is the particular. Each is immediately the other and indistinguishable from the other as differentiated universality. In the following section on Individuality, Hegel identifies Individuality as the unity of universality and particularity. For this reason, Hegel’s claim that the abstract universal

679 In our discussion of individuality we shall show that even the abstract universal contains individuality as an element of itself. At this point we must rest content with the universal and particular as elements of particularity.

680 In our discussion of individuality we shall show how the unity of the universal and the particular is individuality.
contains the unity of both universality and particularity is tantamount to the identification of abstract universality with individuality.\footnote{As I pointed out earlier, the abstract universal is necessary for the development of individuality. For this reason, we must introduce it here in our analysis of particularity.}

Hegel reminds us of the results of the dialectical analysis. When both distinctions become the differentiated universal, each vanishes into the other, and the distinction between universal and particular disappears. For this reason, in the ‘particular universal’ we fail to find the totality of differences, for the differences themselves fail to appear. As we know, the abstract universal excludes the particulars from the universal itself. By doing so, the particular universal fails to be the totality, and instead is simply one side of the totality. Moreover, particularity is not just the immediate unity of particular and universal. It is also the separation of universal from particular. Hegel says that the particular is ‘the exclusive relation to an other’. Indeed, the particular, as the immediate unity of the particular with the universal, sets itself up as the immediate universal in which no differences are present. Accordingly, the particular is set into opposition with the particular. At this stage, the particular is mere mediation and ‘totality’, for it is constituted by the series of self-negating particulars we elucidated earlier.\footnote{Although only universality and particularity are the only particulars on hand, we showed how these two particulars give rise to an infinite regress in which innumerable particulars are given.} Accordingly, particularity is also the differentiation of the particular from the universal. In sum, Hegel is expressing, albeit in another way, what we have already said: the abstract universal contains two overall oppositions: the unity of particular and universal (abstract universal qua universal), in the particular universal, is opposed to the separation of the particular and universal (abstract universal qua particular).

Hegel points out that the supposed ‘other’ to which the particular is opposed immediately vanishes, for the results of the dialectic simply produce one more opposition: the opposition of the unity of particular and universal and the division of universal from
Because this is just *another opposition*, the supposed other, namely the immediate universal, that the particular is opposed to, is not an other at all, but just another particular. For this reason the other ‘exists only as opinion’ and ‘shows itself to be the same as its supposed other’. In the abstract universal the concept is outside itself, for it is always already *submerging itself* into one of its moments. The abstract universal as *abstract* has the specific, particular content ‘the difference of universal and particular that has the differences of the universal and particular as its instances’. This content is ‘indifferent’ or presents itself as not being in relation to self-differentiation, or the ‘totality which is the universality of absolute negativity’ which is nothing more than the immediate unity of those moments. But since *the difference* is the *one universal content* that constitutes the abstract universal, as a *universal*, there is no difference there at all: just the one content ‘difference between universal and particular’. In the next stage of the concept, the absence of difference in the difference between universal and particular shall provide a transition to individuality; the universal shall be developed as universal, and this shall be the moment of *individuality*.

Given the results of our analysis of particularity, we may conclude with confidence that the abstract universal is not ‘empty’. Indeed, we have described the content of the abstract universal in various ways. It is the ‘concept as it is outside itself’, or the self-negation of self-differentiation, namely self-differentiation in the form of what is not self-differentiated. In this one content we have two mutually exclusive sides: the universal and the particular, each of which excludes the other. We may also sum up the abstract universal by employing different terms: The abstract universal is constituted by two illusory

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683 The particular as universal is the unity of the particular and universal, what we earlier called the illusory reference inward, whereas the particular as particular excludes the universal and introduces a difference between them, what we earlier called the illusory reference outwards.

684 A.V. Miller translates ‘Meinung’ as imagination, though the more literal translation would be ‘opinion’.
references, one in which the particular is immediately the universal, namely ‘self-externality’ or ‘self-negation’, and the other in which the universal is divorced from the particular, in which the latter is determined by the former. The concept as divided into universal and particular is the concept qua moment, for as divisions or elements of the universal each is distinct from the other, and the universal and particular as unified is the concept as such in which the universal is the particular, and the particular universal. Hegel confirms that the abstract universal is not empty, as it is usually thought to be:

Moreover, abstraction is not empty as it is usually said to be; it is the determinate Notion and has some determinateness or other for its content. Even the Supreme Being, the pure abstraction, has, as already remarked, the determinateness of indeterminateness; but indeterminateness is a determinateness, because it is supposed to stand opposed to the determinate. But the enunciation of what it is, itself sublates what it is supposed to be; it is enunciated as one with determinateness, and in this way, out of the abstraction is established its truth and the Notion. But every determinate Notion is, of course, empty in so far as it does not contain the totality, but only a one-sided determinateness. Even when it has some other concrete content, for example man, the state, animal, etc., it still remains an empty Notion, since its determinateness is not the principle of its differences; a principle contains the beginning and the essential nature of its development and realization; any other determinateness of the Notion, however, is sterile. To reproach the Notion generally with being empty, is to misjudge that absolute determinateness of the Notion which is the difference of the Notion and the only true content in the element of the Notion.

As Hegel remarks, the determinate concept has some determination for its content. Indeed, because the determinate concept contains all the determinations of the concept, the abstract universal cannot be empty. For this reason, it is a mistake to judge the determinacy

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685 For the definitions of these terms, see page 365. In the illusory reference outward, the specifications show themselves as independent. In the illusory reference inwards, the difference between universal and particular itself shows itself to be independent.

686 The independence of one from the other is illusory. Upon arriving at Individuality we will show why the divorce of the moments is illusory.

687 This is one side of the abstract universal, not the abstract universal itself.

of the concept to be empty.\textsuperscript{689} As an example, Hegel appeals to the concept of the ‘supreme being’ and calls it ‘the pure abstraction’. Traditionally, the Supreme Being has been identified in various ways, as Being, as Nous, as the totality of positive predicates, as the One. In all these cases, it is supposed that the Supreme Being contains no negations, for negations are assumed to signify a lack of something, not as necessary for or constitutive of, the determinacy of the content specified. Because negation is necessary for determinacy, Hegel calls the content of the Supreme Being ‘indeterminacy’. No matter how much you try, even this, the most empty of concepts, cannot help but have some determinate content. As we already witnessed with the universal, the indeterminate content is set into opposition to what has determinate content. Thus, even the indeterminate Supreme Being has determinate content, namely as that which is opposed, or negates, the content that has negation.\textsuperscript{690} As is evident, even the most abstract of concepts, such as the ‘Supreme Being’ cannot help but have conceptual content, namely to exhibit the negation of negation, and it is ‘out of the abstraction’ or in virtue of its abstract content that it admits of conceptual content.

Following this paragraph, Hegel points out that the fixity of the abstract universal, or the understanding, has two sides, one which is imperishable, the other perishable. As Hegel elucidates these two sides of abstract universality, he provides a hint concerning how the abstract universal gives rise to individuality.

\textsuperscript{689} It may seem curious that Hegel would use the term ‘absolute determinateness’ here, since he is discussing the abstract universal which is only the determinateness of the concept. But Hegel will point out in the next section on individuality that every moment of the concept is an individual, even the abstract universal or particularity. Because the individual is the absolute determination and the particular will be individual, even the particular universal may be called the ‘absolute determinateness’ of the concept. In individuality the abstract universal itself is also grasped as the absolute determination.

\textsuperscript{690} We also witnessed the rendering of the indeterminate determinate in the context of our discussion of Eckhart. For Eckhart, God as a being, and God as beyond God signify the two senses of God's indeterminacy in relation to determinate existence. God as a being is a determinate God, a God who is opposed to creatures. Yet the God that is beyond God is the indeterminate in his utter indeterminacy, in his absolute reluctance to be determinate. Even still, this distinction must collapse. When Eckhart places himself in the essence of the Godhead this distinction shows its nullity. God as indeterminate cannot help but be the God that is determinate, and the God that is determinate cannot help but return to the God that is beyond God.
Connected with the above is the reason why latterly the understanding has been so lightly esteemed and ranked as inferior to reason; it is fixity [Festigkeit] which it imparts to determinatenesses and consequently to finite determinations. This fixity [Fixe] consists in the form of abstract universality which we have just considered; through it they become unalterable [unveränderlich]. For qualitative determinateness and also the determinations of reflection are essentially limited and through their limitation have a relation to their other; hence the necessity of transition [Übergehens] and passing away [Vergehens]. But the universality which they possess in the understanding gives them the form of reflection into self by which they are freed from the relation to other and have becomes imperishable [unvergänglich]. Now though in the pure Notion this eternity [Ewigkeit] belongs to its nature, yet its abstract determinations are eternal essentialities only in respect of their form; but their content is at variance with this form; therefore they are not truth, or imperishable [Unvergänglichkeit]. Their content is at variance with the form [nicht angemessen] because it is not the determinateness itself as universal, that is, is not the totality of the Notion’s difference, or is not itself the whole form; but the form of the limited understanding is itself the imperfect form, namely abstract universality. But further, we must recognize the infinite force of the understanding [die unendliche Kraft des Verstandes] in splitting [trennen] the concrete into abstract determinatenesses and plumbing the depth of the difference [die Tiefe des Unterschieds zu fassen], the force [die Macht] that at the same time is alone the power that affects their transition. [...]

In this passage Hegel identifies particularity as the “infinite power [‘Kraft’ or ‘Macht’] of the understanding”. It separates “concrete determinacies into abstract determinacies”. It grasps [fassen] the depth of the difference between universal and particular. Particularity takes the concrete unity of universal and particular in universality and splits the concept into the universal and the particular. Indeed, earlier we described particularity as the self-splitting of the particular universal into its moments: particular and universal. This captures exactly what the particular is: that moment in which the universal and particular are split from their original concrete unity in the universal and posited as abstract determinations.

Upon rendering the concrete unity of universal and particular abstract, in the sense that each is a common term with instantiations, the abstract universal as such contains two sides: universal and particular. If we recall the structure of the abstract universal, each particular is

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externally determined by other particulars in virtue of the self-externality of each particular. Each particular as self-external is the same self-identical content: self-externality. The universal content ‘self-negation’ or ‘self-externality’ is a fixed content. It is not itself undergoing any self-negation. According, the universal is fixed and secure [fest]. Because it is not coming to be or passing away, the universal, or the form of the particulars is unalterable. Each particular, as an instance of the universal ‘self-negation’ partakes in this unalterable form. In universality, each particular is identical. Because they are all identical in universality, the particular does not encounter another particular which could in principle determine it externally, for each is the same. Instead, each particular finds its own eternity in the universal. In the universal, all the moments of the universal are contained: the universal and the particular, as well as their unity.

In contrast to the fixity and therefore eternal existence of the universal, the particular as particular does not receive the same fate. Instead, each particular is one moment of a series, in which its negation is necessary, and a condition for the coming to be of the following particular. Each particular, as an instance, is divorced from the fixity of the self-identity of self-negation. Each particular arises from the self-negation of the previous moment, and gives rise to the following moment in virtue of its own necessary self-negation. Because each particular only gives rise to another by negating itself, the particular is not imperishable. Each particular as the content of the universal form fails to measure up to the form of the universal. Here the perishability of each particular is connected to the presence of other particulars. Indeed, the very existence of the particular as a perishing and finite instance of the universal is dependent upon the self-negation of previous instances. In

692 This series is a necessity, which we developed in our discussion of the class.
693 Though universal and particular are coeval, insofar as each undergoes the illusory reference outward explicated on page, there is an infinite determination of particulars. See our discussion of the class for the development of the series.
each particular, we do not find all the moments of the concept in immediate unity, for each particular is a moment within a totality, not the totality itself.

Earlier we pointed out that the Logic of Being and the Logic of Essence correspond to one side of the division initiated by particularity. Being, mere immediacy, or the universal, finds its limit and ceasing to be in mere mediation, or particularity. Particularity as mediation finds its limit and ceasing to be in mere immediacy, or universality. Each is finite, and finds its limit in the other. When we consider the universal and particular on the side of particularity, each has its ceasing to be in the other. When we grasp the universal and particular on the side of universality, neither has a limit, nor can it cease to be, for each is indistinguishable from ‘particular universality’ a such, which is fixed and unalterable.694

Regarding the conflict between the universal as imperishable and the particular as perishable we find an analogy in Aristotle’s theory of Forms. In Aristotle’s theory of Forms the Form is both imperishable and perishable. The Form is imperishable: the form ‘rational animal’ cannot come to be or pass away. Yet, the form of each particular thing is perishable, for the form of humanity in Socrates is perishable. Though this appears as a paradox in Aristotle, it ought to serve as a way to understand how Hegel understands the abstract universal. Let us notice that for Hegel the abstract universal is here a power by which each particular is differentiated.695 Though it is not self-referential, it is that principle in virtue of which the particulars come to be and pass away. Hegel’s account of the abstract universal appears to have more in common with the Ancient Greek notion than the early modern concept of the inert universal. This is the higher conception of the universal that Hegel saw

694 Hegel claims that “the Notion is the most concrete and richest determination because it is the ground and the totality of the preceding determinations, of the categories of being and of the categories of reflection; these, therefore, are certainly also present in it.” Hegel, Science of Logic, 617.

695 The concept of ‘force’ has its origin in Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit. The concept is the third movement in the triumvirate of sense certainty, perception, and understanding. In the phenomenology, the understanding is the form of consciousness that gives rise to reason, which Hegel identifies as contradiction, life, and infinity.
in the Greeks. We might also point out that this is the power implied by Kant's categories, such as causation, in virtue of which the sequence of times stand in a necessary, determinative, temporal series. The power of the universal is infinite because its creation of particulars never ceases. At every moment when one thinks one has completed the series, there is another lying in wait. In this way, the quantitative infinite is not only necessitated by the universal or the Form, but it is a testament to its infinite power. Hegel tells us that it is the absolute differentiation of universal and particular that brings them back together in a new content, individuality. We must see how moving as far away as possible from the unity of universal and particular is that in virtue of which they shall be brought back together.

Interestingly, Hegel points out that abstract universals, or determinate concepts, are not self-differentiating. Earlier we pointed out that the self-negation of universality is the abstractive process, whereas the moments are the abstractions of that process. In this sense, the latter are not infused with the power of the concept, but are merely fixed determinations that result from the abstractive power of the concept. The moments just as moments of the abstract universal constitutes the emptiness of the abstract universals.

Though the abstract universal has content, and is an imperishable, eternal form in which all the moments of the universal are united, each particular is perishable and finite and excludes the other moments of the concept. The content of the abstract universal lies exactly in the determination that it is not the totality of its determinations, that the universal is separate from the particular. Every concept contains the totality of its determinations. In

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696 Though the Greeks have a concept of the universal as the power by which the particular exists, they lack the concept of creation in which the very creation of the universal itself is constituted through the creation of the particular.

697 For example, in Aristotle, the Form is the being at work of something in virtue of which particulars generate more particulars of the same kind. This power of Form Aristotle also commits Aristotle to the eternality of the species. The eternality of the species requires a quantitatively infinite number of particulars.
other words, every concept is a concept of totality, and the concept of totality. Each particular abstract universal fails to contain the whole totality of its determinations, each particular abstract universal cannot contain the structure of the concept per se, namely the self-particularizing and self-referring power of self-reference. Indeed, if each instance of the abstract universal were self-referential and self-particularizing, then the instances of the abstract universal would not be abstract, for in this case each would be the self-differentiating universal, and would be the totality of its determinations. These concepts are ‘sterile’ for the lack of self-particularization entails that universality is not sufficient for the realization of the particular. Here, on the one hand, it is important to note that ‘abstract universality’ as such is a moment of the concept as such. At this stage of the argument, ‘abstract universality’ is the only abstract universal that is not empty. Because the universal and particular are divided in the abstract universal, particular abstract universals must be devoid of the universal, for they exhibit the form of one moment of the concept, namely the side of the particular, in its separation from the universal. Below we shall develop this distinction further in our analysis of Hegel’s discussion of abstract universals in nature.

Earlier in chapter three we showed that the abstract universal is self-contradictory. Because the abstract universal insists on the difference between universal and particularity, it appeared strange and problematic that the abstract universal would fail to remain self-identical and would admit its negation. When the abstract universal is thought independently of its place within the self-differentiating universal, we have no way to understand why the abstract universal is contradictory, or why the abstract universal has the absolute contradiction as its

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698 Each category of the Logic is the totality of logic at different stages. This is clear in the definition of the concept: the concept is every one of its elements: universality, particularity, and individuality.

699 Though at this stage the abstract universal is the only non-empty concept, in Hegel's Logic and Realphilosophie there are many abstract universals, such as time.
content when it is supposed to be empty! Hegel has shown how particularity as such could be a contradiction and abstract universality. As the particular, the abstract universal is the self-negation of the universal. As the particular, we can account for what the heretofore-problematic contradiction in abstract universality, for the self-negation of the universal is explicitly a contradiction. Indeed, Hegel points out that what people (both philosophers and non-philosophers alike) usually mean by ‘concept’ is ‘abstract universal’.

Abstract universality, when treated as absolute, falls victim to the four dogmas of universality. Upon doing so, abstract universality cannot be the source of its own content. Instead, the content of the concept as such, as well as particular concepts, must come from some non-conceptual foundation or assumption. If we proceed by merely determinate concepts, namely by concepts in their particularity, every claim that we make in philosophy must be grounded on the assumption of a determinate concept, and every result of that assumption must be a determinate concept. Without the universal as the underlying factor of the particular, we must appeal to assumptions. Insofar as each concept is determinate, it excludes its opposite, and concepts can only come into contact with each other through the intermediary of some external factor. Because they do not connect themselves, the thinker must posit a middle term in virtue of which the two may be connected. The classical theory of

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700 By ‘absolute contradiction’ here I mean the contradiction between the form and content of the formal universal that we laid out in Section III. In virtue of being itself, the self-identical universal fails to be itself. 701 We shall further develop this in our concluding comments. 702 “When people talk of the determinate Notion, what is usually meant is merely such an abstract universal. Even by notion as such, what is generally understood is only this notion that is no Notion [dieser begrifflose Begriff], and the understanding denotes the faculty of such notions. Demonstration appertains to this understanding in so far as it progresses by notions, that is to say, merely by determinations. Such a progression by notions, therefore, does not get beyond finitude and necessity; for it, the highest is the negative infinite [das negative Unendliche], the abstraction of the supreme being [des höchsten Wesen], which is itself the determinateness of indeterminateness. Absolute substance, too, though it is not this empty abstraction—from the point of view of its content it is rather the totality—is nevertheless abstract because it lacks absolute form; its inmost truth is not constituted by the Notion; true, it is the identity of universality and particularity, or of thought and its asunderness, yet this identity is not the determinateness of the Notion; on the contrary, outside substance there is an understanding—and just because it is outside it, a contingent understanding—in which and for which substance is present in various attributes and modes.” Hegel, Science of Logic, 609, 284.
the syllogism, in either its modern or ancient version, in which two terms are connected via a middle term, thereby exemplifies the activity of reason when it proceeds by merely determinate concepts.\footnote{After developing the concept of individuality and judgment, Hegel develops the concept of syllogism.}

More generally, the progression of concepts via assumptions is nothing more than the process of \textit{argumentation}, i.e. of interring conclusions from assumptions, and may not be limited to the process of the syllogism. By arguing form assumptions, the results are not a process of \textit{self-creation}, but a result of an act of positing by an external force, such as a philosopher. Each premise is a condition upon which the conclusion rests. Ultimately, only two results are possible: either every determinate concept is grounded in another determinate concept, and there is an infinite series of conditions, and nothing is grounded, or there is a ground of the determinate concept that is not itself determinate.\footnote{This is first developed in the Logic of Being from Being to Determinate Being, but we have also shown how the self-differentiating concept determines itself to be a determinate concept form its initially indeterminate status.} As we can see, these concepts are closely wedded to one another and belong together. Every time we think we have arrived at the origin of the series of determinations, namely the indeterminate ground, we shall only have arrived at another determination. Because it is a determinate concept, it cannot have its ground in itself, but is instead a result of some other determination. On the other hand, as one proceeds in the series, one develops the sense that the ground of the determinate series, the indeterminate, is that which is beyond the grasp of the philosopher, for it cannot be a member of the series, and it cannot be determinate. From the side of absolute understanding, we find ourselves wavering between unconditioned Nothingness and the incompleteness of the quantitative infinite. Hegel gets beyond this result by giving up on argumentation. The results of Hegel's philosophy are not grounded in premises, for
there cannot be any premises at all if the concept truly is self-differentiating. Instead, Hegel must read off the self-creative development of the concept.

The divine, as the merely indeterminate, is determinate in virtue of its negation of negation. Thus, the divine renders itself into a determinate being. Yet, as long as the separation of universality and particularity is rendered absolute or as an unconditioned universality, the indeterminate qua indeterminate cannot be the determinate. Thus, the indeterminate *qua determinate* is not the Supreme Being. Instead, we simply have a larger pool of determinate beings that includes the indeterminate as determinate. Once we attempt to say what the divine is, we fail again, for we shall render it determinate. Thus, every attempt to discover what the indeterminate is renders the indeterminate a determinate being, and undermines the indeterminate as indeterminate. As long as we are committed to the separation of the universal and particular, we shall discover two basic truths: 1) we are only ever on our way to the divine. To put this in different terms, there is an infinite quantity between the thinker and the divine. We find ourselves in an *infinite regress* towards (and away from) the divine, in which there is always some being between ourselves and God that is not God, and obstructs our access to God. 2) Because we have no access to God, God itself is inaccessible to thinking. Instead, we must appeal to some metaphor by which we may discuss the indeterminate. Every direct statement about God shall fail. In this scenario, we never get beyond finitude, for every concept of God is limited, and one which negates itself. Every thought of God negates itself, or the thought of God ceases to be what God is immediately upon its being thought. For Hegel, the concept of God as the ‘indeterminate immediate’ cannot be the highest universal. It is analogous to the false universal we encountered in the class concept: every time we arrive at this concept of God we must move beyond it. This God cannot be that than which any greater may be conceived, for we can
and indeed are forced by necessity to think a greater one. Indeed, the higher conception of God is that into which the indeterminate dissolves.

Substance, as Hegel points out, has more content than the abstraction of the supreme being, for the latter is often represented as mere Being or the purely indeterminate, while the former requires an explication of the categories form the Logic of Being through the Logic of Essence. Still, though it is a self-identical totality that contains its determinateness, namely its attributes and modes, it is not itself the principle of those attribute and modes, or that in virtue of which those attributes and modes are attributed to substance. It bears them within itself but fails to be the differentiating principle in virtue of which they are attributed to substance. This is most obvious in the philosophy of Spinoza. Spinoza simply stipulates the attributes, mind and extension, that belong to substance, exactly because substance on its own is not a self-differentiating principle. Spinoza demonstrates his theses, and his account is limited in exactly the way Hegel describes because he fails to have a principle of self-differentiation.

What is most fascinating here is that we have discovered the abstract universal, as well as a third man argument in the heart of Hegel’s account. In the section on particularity Hegel is arguing that particularity contains within itself an abstract universal and an infinite regress. The simplest form of this regress may be communicated without Hegel’s jargon. Insofar as the concept must be a moment of itself, we cannot say what the concept is without rendering it a concept. Indeed, this is nothing more than the problem of the differentia that we enumerated in chapter three: under the auspices of particularity the universal and particular are divided. In the problem of the differentia the universal cannot help but exclude its own content, and in particularity the universal excludes its own content. Indeed, the very self-negation of universality that leads to particularity is nothing more than the initiation of the problem of the
differentia. Insofar as the concept is a moment of itself, the concept (the subordinate universal) cannot be distinguished from its moments. Thus, the concept itself is reduced to the status of one of its moments. Every time the universal is posited as the self-identity of its moments, or as the whole concept, it gets reduced again to one of its moments.705 This is nothing more than the problem of participation. The problem of participation itself necessitates the problem of onto-theology: the reduction of the universal to the particular. This is the case whether we follow the relation of concept to moment in terms of universality or particularity, for each as particular reduces the universal to the particular moment.

Unlike the historical ways in which this regress has been understood, Hegel thinks that the abstract universal and the infinite regress are not results of someone positing another universal over and above the particulars, but a result of the concept’s own activity. We know that the difference between universal and particular is itself a result of the self-differentiation of the universal. Because the difference between universal and particular is the result of that activity, we ought to expect that the results of that division of universal and particular would also follow from that self-differentiation. In chapter three we showed that the problem of psychologism, the appeal to non-conceptual and non-logical contents to provide content to the concept, followed from the problem of onto-theology. In addition to showing how the division of particular and universal follows from the universal as such, Hegel must also show how the division between universal and particular may be healed without appealing to any factors that are external to the concept. If the concept could not in principle advance beyond particularity, and Hegel had not developed an account of individuality, he would have only shown that the concept as such is self-negating.706 As such,

705 See pages 377-379 for the necessity of the constant flipping back forth from particular to universal.
706 If this is all he had shown, then his account of the concept would not be much better than the formalists he oppose, for both his account and that of the formalists would have the same result.
we would be forced to look for conceptual determination outside of the concept as such. If
the universal remains identified with the particular as such, in which the universal and
particular are grasped as absolutely separate, then Hegel risks falling victim to the problem of
psychologism, or one of its foundational correlates, in which the universal is lost in a sea of
particularity that has no principle of unification.

Indeed, Hegel is clear that the difference between universal and particular, or
particularity, cannot be the end of line.\textsuperscript{707} Hegel claims that all concepts are simple. The
simplicity of particularity, as the difference between universality and particularity is easy to
see. Insofar as only the differentiated particular is given, particularity is the \textit{one and only
determination present}. For this reason, as difference particularity is difference pure and simple.
It is just the difference of particularity and universality. Hegel points out that the
determinacy of the concept is achieved when each is conceived in unity with its opposite.
Particularity becomes the one and only given by rendering its opposite, the universal itself,
one more differentiated universal, or particular.\textsuperscript{708} In this way, simplicity is inherently
connected with the unity of opposition.

As we already noted in our analysis of universality, all previous categories only
exhibit particularity in principle, but \textit{not in themselves}. Each category in the Logic exhibits

\textsuperscript{707} “Difference \textit{[der Unterschied]}, as it shows itself here, is in the Notion and therefore in its truth. All previous
difference has this unity in principle \textit{(im Begriffe)}. As immediate difference in the sphere of being, it is \textit{limit of an
other}; in reflection it is relative and posited as essentially relating itself to it other; here therefore the unity of the
Notion begins to be \textit{posed}, but at first it is only \textit{illusory being} in an other \textit{[Schein an einem anderen]}. The true
meaning and resolution of these determinations is just this, that they attain to their Notion, their truth; being,
determinate being, something, or whole and parts, etc. something and its accidents, cause and effect, are by
themselves \textit{merely} thought determinations \textit{[Gedankenbestimmungen]}; but they are grasped as determinate \textit{Notions}
when each is cognized in unity with its other or opposite determination. Whole and parts, cause and effect, for
example, are not as yet different terms determined as \textit{particulars} relatively to each other, because although in
themselves they constitute \textit{one} Notion, their \textit{unity} has not yet reached the form of \textit{universality}; thus the \textit{difference},
too, which is in these relationships, has not as yet the form of being \textit{one} determinateness. Cause and effect, for
example, are not two different \textit{Notions}, but only \textit{one determinate} Notion, and causality, like every Notion, is a

\textsuperscript{708} Of course there are two particulars ‘universality’ and ‘particularity’, but that is only possible if there is one
difference between them.
difference, whether that be being, determinate being, something, or whole and parts, something and its accidents, or cause and effect. In other words, each category that Hegel develops in the *Logic of Being* and the *Logic of Essence* involves difference, yet none of them develop difference as particularity, just as none of these concepts thematize universality as universality, for self-differentiation and its elements only arises upon the close of the *Logic of Essence* and Being. Each implicitly involves the concept of particularity, for in each there is some activity of negation or opposition.

In particularity as such we do have a unity of opposition; this we have just showed. But this unity results in another one-sided determination. In mere difference the unity has only begun, it has not yet been completed. When two categories are united in their difference their unity lies exactly in their having separate determinations. This is like saying that they are unified in not being unified. Accordingly, the unity of each lies in a determination outside of itself.

Of course Hegel is keen to avoid falling into the fallacies his account is created to avoid. For this reason, he promises us a third division of the concept, individuality, in which the division of the particular from the universal may be overcome. He writes:

The truly higher universal is that in which this outward going side is taken back into the universal, the second negation, in which the determinateness is present simply as posited or as illusory being. Life [*Leben*], ego [*Ich*], spirit [*Geist*], absolute Notion [*absoluter Begriff*], are not universals merely in the sense of higher genera, but are concrete whose determinatenesses [*Bestimmtheiten*], too, are not species [*Arten*] or lower genera [*niedrige Gattungen*] but genera which, in their reality, are absolutely self-contained and self-fulfilled. In so far as life, ego, finite spirit are, as they certainly are, also only determinate Notions, their absolute resolution [absolute Auflösung] is in that universal which as truly absolute Notion is to be grasped as the Idea [*Idee*] of infinite spirit, whose posited being is infinite, transparent reality wherein it contemplates its creation [*Schöpfung*], and in this creation knows itself.\(^{709}\)

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\(^{709}\) Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 605.
In this passage Hegel speaks of the ‘second negation’. Earlier we identified the first negation as particularity and the second negation as individuality. The ‘truly higher universal’ or better, the truly comprehensive universal is the second negation, or individuality. Unlike the higher or lower genera that only push on the regress, individuality unifies the particular with the universal. In individuality we shall see that the illusory references will be posited as illusory, and particularity will transform itself into individuality. In particularity per se, they are illusory, but not posited as illusory. The particular is the determinate universal though it is not yet posited as determinate. In individuality, the determinate universal will be posited as determinate.

Having reconstructed Hegel’s account of particularity, one might object that more species exist than Hegel has admitted. Hegel argues that the only true logical classification is (a) the universal and (b) the particular. Though parsimonious, it excludes a goodly number of empirical kinds that are too numerous to mention. Hegel’s answer is emphatic and swift:

With respect to completeness [Vollständigkeit], we have seen that the determinate side of particularity is complete in the difference of the universal and the particular, and that these two alone constitute the particular species. In nature, of course, there are to be found more than two species in a genus, just as between these many species there cannot exist a relationship we have just indicated. This is the impotence of nature [Obnmacht der Natur], that it cannot adhere to and exhibit the strictness [Strenge] of the Notion and runs wild in this blind irrational [begrifflos] multiplicity [Mannigfaltigkeit]. We can wonder at nature’s manifold genera and species and the endless diversity of her formations, for wonderment is unreasoning and its object the irrational [Vernunftlose]. Nature, because it is the self-externality [Außersichsein] of the Notion, is free to indulge itself in this variety [Verschiedenheit], just as spirit too, even though it possesses the Notion in the shape of the Notion, engages in pictorial thinking [Vorstellen] and runs riot in its endless variety [unendliche Mannigfaltigkeit]. The manifold natural genera or species must not be esteemed as anything more than the capricious fancies [willkürlichen Einfälle] of spirit in its representations. Both indeed show traces and inklings of the Notion on all sides, but do not present a faithful copy of it because it can freely abandon its difference to the shape of self-subsistent diversity, outer necessity, contingency, caprice, opinion [selbstständiger Verschiedenheit, äußerlicher Notwendigkeit, Zufälligkeit,
This rich passage does not augment our grasp of particularity *per se*. Rather, it explains the implications of the concept of particularity and the concept of the concept for empirical representations. Let us first note that the species ‘universal’ and ‘particular’ constitute the completeness of distinctions pertaining to the determinacy of particularity. The determinacy of particularity is the division into universality and particularity, not as the immediate particular that is identified with universality. We do not need a complicated lesson on Hegel’s concept of nature to understand the implications of this passage, since for our purposes the conceptual resources given by particularity may do the job just as well.\(^7\)

On the one hand, because there are non-empirical determinations of nature, such as time and space, which Hegel develops in his philosophy of nature, ‘nature’ cannot be reduced to merely empirical determinations. On the other hand, Hegel appears to be using ‘nature’ here in the very least as ‘empirical concept’. If we consider some examples of *empirical kinds* we shall see right away how the nature, understood in terms of empirical concepts, fails to exhibit the ‘strictness of the concept’ and ‘runs wild into the blind irrational’. Empirical concepts are ‘impotent’ to the extent that the powers of self-reference and self-particularization are absent. Consider the concepts ‘proton’, ‘water’ and ‘animal’.

Whether we investigate matters from the point of view of physics, chemistry, or biology the

\(^7\) In this passage Hegel elucidates the connection between nature and the concept. Hegel admits that in nature there are more than two species in a genus, and that the specific relations between the species of the concept cannot obtain between these species. The Absolute Idea is the last category to arise in the *Science of Logic*. As we mentioned earlier, it is in virtue of the Absolute Idea that all the preceding thought determinations acquire their status as categories of the one logical system. Upon completion of the Absolute Idea, logic is complete, and the result is the simple proposition that ‘logic is’. Insofar as logic is, logic is in the form of being, or immediacy. This immediacy is external to the logic, for the logic is already complete. ‘Nature’ is the term Hegel employs for the initial status of the logic after it has fully developed and completed itself. Because logic is in a form that is external to the logic, and it is logic that has given itself this form, in nature logic is ‘outside itself’. Space and time constitute the initial determinations of the philosophy of nature.
result is the same. The concept ‘proton’ is not a proton, water itself is not an instance of water, and the animal itself is not an animal. Indeed, we do not encounter ‘the animal itself’ out there in the Zoo, only particular animals. As the Buddhist tradition teaches us, ‘water does not wash water’ and ‘fire does not burn fire’. The lesson, of course, is that empirical determinations are not reflexive or self-referential. Since the self-reference of the self-differentiating universal entails self-particularization, the empirical universal by itself never implies the existence of the particular. Thus, no empirical concept exhibits self-particularization. Indeed, we know this not from the example, but from the general principle that empirical kinds or empirical concepts are necessarily constrained by the opposition of the universal from the particular. Since empirical kinds are structured by the absolute separation of universal from particular, they are not concepts.\footnote{Hegel will often make the distinction between a concept and a representation. Though empirical determinations may be representations, i.e. they may stand for something else, this does not make them concepts.}

Buddhist philosophers are not wrong that empirical concepts are not self-referential. Earlier we noted some famous Buddhist Koans that teach this truth regarding concepts: ‘water does not wash water’ and ‘fire does not burn fire’. The error comes when the tradition takes the empirical concepts to be exhaustive of conceptual determination. For sure, the concept itself does not fit this mold.

But we must be careful. They are not just the self-externality of the concept, for the ‘self-externality of the concept’ is also an integral aspect of the determination of particularity as such. The empirical determination is indeed also to be grasped as the wayward offspring of the concept. ‘The wayward offspring of the concept’ is the concept’s infinite power to abandon itself to ‘self-subsistent diversity’. The division of the universal and the particular is essential to the a priori determination of particularity, and hence of the concept. Still, it is
nestled within a principle of self-determination, and is only one moment of that self-determining principle. In the empirical determination, the difference between universal and particular is rendered absolute, meaning that it is separated from the principle of self-determination. It is the unrestricted development of the determinate opposition of universal and particular that never achieves reconciliation in individuality. The separation of the particular from the concept as a whole undermines its status as a particular of the concept and its capacity to be unified with the other moments of the concept. In the empirical determination, the opposition of universal and particular has broken away from particularity as such, and is free-floating. It is ‘the side of free externality’. Here we can speak of the concept because the empirical determinations exhibit the structure of determinate particularity, but we must qualify add ‘free floating’ or ‘self-external’ to the particular because this structure is not integrated within the a priori development of the concept.

Naturally, when the concept is modeled on such empirical distinctions, we get the results that we enumerated in chapter three: the absolute rule of the principle of non-contradiction, the separation of universality from particularity, merely finite concepts, and appeal to foundations. Formal logic, as we noted, cannot maintain itself. In fact, it loses itself and negates itself. The only result that is allowed or possible from this point of view, is in fact nothingness. From the formal logical point of view, nothing follows from a contradiction.

The nothingness that results from the formal logical system is also an infinite abundance, for according to the formal system, both nothing and everything follows from a contradiction. The contradiction engendered by the self-negation of the formal system must result in an infinite diversity that has no a priori principle of order. For this reason, Hegel has also chosen the word ‘Mannigfaltigkeit’ or many-foldedness with care. A priori, according to the
formal worldview, we only know that everything exists. But of course this might just as well mean nothing. Categories have no *a priori* content. Whatever content we wish to posit appears *arbitrary*. Here in the empirical categories of nature the principle of non-contradiction is quite applicable. As Karin Deboer points out, “Thus, Hegel by no means wishes to reject the logical rules constitutive of empirical judgments. On his view, the understanding is perfectly justified in avoiding contradiction as long as it is involved in the production of empirical knowledge.” Here everything and nothing follows from a contradiction. Unlike the categories of nature, the concepts of the concept, namely universality, particularity, and individuality are not governed by the classical principle of non-contradiction. For these concepts, *particular* results follow from particular contradictions: particularity follows from universality and individuality from particularity.

Since empirical categories have no *a priori* content, in order to know the content of what we are thinking, i.e. in order to discover the content of concepts, we must re-produce empirical givens or create new empirical determinations from those re-productions. In fact, we have already pointed this out in chapter three. Our concepts cease to be merely conceptual and become *psychological*. The result is an utter lack of normativity, which is just a natural respect of the fallacy of *psychologism*. In other words, our concepts become pictures of ‘*Vorstellungen*’, ‘what is put before the mind’. This is exactly what Hegel points out: “the manifold natural genera or species must not be esteemed for anything more than the capricious fancies of spirit in its representations.” Again, as long as we read ‘empirical representation’ for ‘nature’, these empirical representations are *contingent*. Because they are separated from the concept, and a basic principle of reason, they are subject matters for *opinion*, not knowledge.

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If all conceptual contents become empirical, those contents for which we have no direct empirical presentation, such as most categories in the logic, will require the invention of a metaphor. Not every representation on this view will be a metaphor. We can, for example, discuss the representation of the tree as a tree. Yet, to discuss the one, being, or the concept as such, for which no representation is possible, we shall need to adopt empirical contents as representatives, or symbolic ambassadors of what cannot in principle show itself.

Although we have no concepts by which such empirical representations may be grasped, and thus no way to have knowledge of empirical representations in this sense, we can wonder at it. To wonder why something is the case, or that something is the case is not a state of knowing. Indeed, knowing is the resolution of the wonder. When I know why it is that the earth revolves around the sun, I am no longer wondering why it revolves. Because it lacks the concept, the object of the empirical representation is irrational. For this reason, we can wonder at the endless empirical diversity. Because the object of empirical representation is in itself irrational, this wonder really is insatiable. The wonder may be directed either at the empirical content as the object, or at our own representations thereof. We can, in this respect, wonder at ourselves just as much as we can wonder at the object of nature.

In this rich passage on empirical determinations, the nuance of Hegel’s account really presents itself. Hegel’s account of individuality is not intended to provide knowledge of all individuals. If it were, then his account would requires knowledge of every natural individual. Obviously, it is important to know which individuals are knowable and which can only be objects of wonder. Still, the individuality that is knowable is itself the pre-condition for any natural individual, the non-knowable individual, whose content cannot be known but only an object of wonder.
Because empirical concepts are not properly concepts, Hegel refers to them as empirical representations. From here forwards I will refer to empirical determinations as ‘representations’. Much confusion regarding what the concept is a result of over-estimating the importance of such representations. The nullity of the empirical concept allows us to say whatever we want, as well as nothing at all.

We should note that Hegel also points out that intuitive contents, the psychological correlate to natural kinds, are just as empty of the concept as natural kinds are.

[...]The concrete of intuition [Anschauung] is a totality, but a sensuous one—a real material which has an indifferent, sundered existence [gleichgültig, außereinander besteht] in space and time; but surely this absence of unity in the manifold, where it is the content of intuition, ought not to be counted to it for merit and superiority over intellectual existence. The mutability [Veränderlichkeit] that it exhibits in intuition already points to the universal; yet all that it brings to view is merely another, equally mutable material; therefore, only the same thing again, not the universal which should appear and take its place. But least of all in sciences such as geometry and arithmetic, should we count it as a merit that their material involves an intuitive element, or imagine that their propositions are established on it. On the contrary, it is on account of that element that the material of such sciences is of an inferior nature; the intuition of figures of numbers does not procure a scientific knowledge of them; only thinking about them can do this. But if by intuition we are to understand not merely the element of sense but the objective totality, then it is an intellectual intuition [intellektuelle]; that is to say, intuition has for its object not the external side of existence, but what existence holds of imperishable [unvergängliche] reality and truth—reality, only in so far as it is essentially in the Notion and determined by it, the Idea [Idee], whose more precise nature has to reveal itself at a later stage. The advantage which intuition as such is supposed to have over the Notion is external reality, the Notionless element, which first receives a value through the Notion.714

Our translator somewhat obscures the meaning of ‘außer einander’ by translating it as ‘sundered’. The term means ‘external to’ or ‘outside of’ ‘one another’. The totality of the intuitions of space and time, in Kant’s sense, exists in an indifferent and external sense. This means that the manifold of intuition is not inherently unified. The manifold of intuition as

such is simply a *mani-foldedness*. As such, it corresponds to one side of the abstract universal, namely to the mutable side of particularity. Every particular intuition of space points to another space on the horizon. Likewise, each intuitive moment of time points to other moments of time, such as the future and the past. In experience the intuition of space and time always point us away from our own position towards further possible positions. At every possible spatio-temporal location we encounter another horizon that points to further points in an infinite quantitative sequence. Indeed, every experience of space and time is an experience of incompleteness. Instead of the universal appearing in the intuition, we only encounter ‘the same thing again’, namely more mutually external particulars. Each is ‘indifferent’ to its own universal content. Instead of pointing to the universal which they embody, they point to particulars. Insofar as the sensible contents as sensible lack the concept, it is not to the advantage of any science to be grounded upon it.

In his essay *Sketch of a Program for a Critical Reading of Hegel: Comparing Empirical and Logical Concepts*, Robert Brandom appears to conflate the content of concepts proper with empirical representations. He argues that the difference between empirical and logical concepts is merely an *expressive* one.\(^\text{715}\) For Brandom, the goal of the logic is to “to develop conceptual tools that are necessary and sufficient to express explicitly the essential structures that are implicit in our use of ordinary concepts (including those of the empirical sciences) in judgment and action.”\(^\text{716}\) Unfortunately, such a description of the *Logic* fails to acknowledge the elephant in the room. Hegel is explicit, as it were, that concepts proper are not mere


explications of ordinary empirical concepts.\textsuperscript{717} To the contrary, our ordinary empirical concepts do not have the form of the concept proper: self-reference and self-particularization. The relationship cannot be one of \textit{mere expression} when the form of the concept is \textit{radically} at odds with what it is purported to express.\textsuperscript{718}

One simple way to draw the contrast between properly logical and empirical concepts is the way that each is related to the principle of non-contradiction. Indeed, the difference in their relationship to that principle provides us a clue to clarifying the role of non-contradiction in Hegel's logic. On the one hand, for empirical thinking, the classical principle of non-contradiction is the principle. Because empirical notions rely on the difference between universal and particular, the principle of non-contradiction must remain in place. For this reason, when empirical knowing contradicts itself, the result is an error.\textsuperscript{719}

When the understanding is separated out from the self-differentiating process of the concept, the contradiction in the understanding does not lead to a new concept. Instead, the contradiction is a road that is closed and leads nowhere.

On the other hand, the principle of non-contradiction is also at work in the \textit{Logic of the Concept} per se. Because particularity is the concept in the form of the difference between

\textsuperscript{717} Apparently this confusion is quite rampant in Hegel scholarship. Robert Stern appears to make this error by reading EL 24Z p 37, which concerns empirical universals, as a lesson regarding universality as such. He claims that for Hegel universals must be exemplified in individuals. Therefrom he claims that Hegel rejects the Platonic view of universal as \textit{ante res} and endorses an Aristotelian view of universals. (59) He goes on to write that “the universal constitutes the real nature of the particular individual by claiming that the universal determines what sort of being each individual is and unless it exemplified a substance kind it could not exist.” I find this comparison quite unhelpful. Because Stern confuses the logical and the empirical in Hegel’s position, his comparison only serves to further obscure Hegel’s position. See Robert Stern, \textit{Hegel, Kant, and the Structure of the Object}, Rutledge 1990, New York, NY.

\textsuperscript{718} De Laurentiis, in “On Hegel’s Concept of Thinking”, makes an important point that in order for any serious discussion of Hegel’s \textit{Realphilosophie} to take place, such as the issue of recognition that fascinates the Pittsburgh school, Hegel’s concept of thinking as self-determination must first be recognized. See De Laurentiis, Allegra “On Hegel’s Concept of Thinking.” \textit{Societas Rationis: Festschrift für Burkhard Tuschling zum 65. Geburtstag, Dieter Huening, Gideon Stiening, Ulrich Vogel (eds)} 263-285.

\textsuperscript{719} As Bordignon point out, one sense of contradiction in Hegel is the “error of the understanding”. Michela Bordignon, Padua \textit{Contradiction or not-contradiction? This is the problem} 163-171 Akademie Verlag Editors: Andreas Arndt, Myriam Gerhard and Jure Zovko 2013 Deutschland, (163).
universal and particular, the principle of non-contradiction is also applicable in the moment of particularity. Indeed, insofar as we have already identified the abstract universal as the particular, it clearly follows that the principle of abstract universality, the principle of non-contradiction, would also apply here as well. Unlike empirical knowing, however, which is divorced from the self-development of the concept, neither can the particular concept be held back from the universal, nor the universal from the particular. For this reason, a contradiction arises within the moment of particularity. Instead of leading to nothing however, the contradiction in the heart of particularity leads to individuality. The reason is clear: unlike the abstract universal that is divorced from the process of the concept, particularity is self-differentiation as that which is not self-differentiated. Because it is nestled in the concept, the abstract universal per se is only the ‘clothing’ and ‘illusion’ of the universal, as it were, and does not express the fact that it is the self-differentiation that is outside itself. The particular is a moment of the self-differentiating universal, and as such, its contradiction leads to a particular result, not merely to a nullity. Because it is a moment of the self-differentiating concept, the principle of non-contradiction is that principle which contradicts itself.

This is what De Boer calls the principle of self-contradiction: “Speculative thought consists solely in holding on to the contradiction, and thus to itself. Unlike representational thought, it does not let itself be dominated by the contradiction, it does not allow the latter to dissolve its determinations into other ones or into nothing.”

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720 De Boer points out that self-contradiction is the principle of development in Hegel. “The contradiction…. is the root of all movement and vitality; it is only insofar as something contains a contradiction within itself that it moves, has an urge and activity” (LII 75/439), 366.

721 (LII/76/440-441) De Boer, 366. Bordignon calls this principle the “speculative self-contradiction” (165). Bordignon introduces another sense of contradiction in Hegel which we call the ‘metaphorical sense’ (164). Though I admit that there is such a sense of contradiction in Hegel, in the Logic of the Concept the two senses of contradiction as the error of the understanding and the speculative self-contradiction suffice for its reconstruction.
Indeed, that there is even a contradiction at hand requires admitting that there is a principle of non-contradiction in particularity. As we shall see, the contradiction upon which individuality rests is the self-contradiction of non-contradiction itself in the abstract universal: the principle of non-contradiction must be present within particularity in order for the self-contradiction of the universal and the particular to occur. On the whole then, we must differentiate between the principle of non-contradiction as an absolute principle in the region of empirical knowing, and the principle of non-contradiction within particularity as such, from which a self-contradiction arises that gives birth to individuality. Or to put it another way, the principle of non-contradiction may be integrated into speculative logic as a moment of the whole, or it may be treated as the form of the concept as such. For the latter, the contradiction is a mere error from which nothing follows. For the former, contradiction is the means by which new, particular, categories develop.

Still, as Hegel points out, Brandom might not be completely misguided, for the mutable contents of intuition do indeed point to the universal. Each moment of intuitive experience is an exemplification of the power and principle of that intuitive series: self-differentiation in the form of self-negation. The totality of spatial and intuitive intuition is constituted by a series of particulars, each of which is external to the other, and which points beyond itself to further particulars. As is evident, this intuitive structure embodies the abstract universal as the principle and power of the differentiation of the particulars in the series.

In this passage Hegel contrasts the intuition of sensible manifold with the intuition of what is imperishable in the sensible manifold, namely reality as the ‘objective totality’ or the sensible manifold insofar as it is determined by the concept: ‘reality, only in so far as it is essentially in the Notion and determined by it, the Idea’. In order to analyze this passage

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722 Time and space, for Hegel, differentiate themselves into particular spatial parts and temporal moments in virtue of a principle of self-externality.
with any justice, let us briefly re-cap our discussion of intellectual intuition and discuss how Hegel’s account of the concept plays a role in making it possible. Unlike Brandom’s appeal to expression, Hegel explicitly appeals to another concept to clarify the relationship: intellectual intuition.\footnote{On page 173 of Haas’ Hegel and the Problem of Multiplicity Haas rightly points out that only through intellectual intuition can approach the living contradiction of the concept. Haas, Andrew Haas, Hegel and the Problem of Multiplicity, SPEP Studies in Historical Philosophy, Northwestern University, Evanston Illinois, General Editors: David Kolb and John McCumber, 2000.}

Intellectual intuition is the creation of the concept in virtue of thinking alone. If we think back to our historical inquiries into intellectual intuition, we discover a twofold distinction. Either intellectual intuition is conceived in terms of categories by themselves, or in respect to natural or mental processes. This is evident in the accounts of intellectual intuition that we have considered in Kant, Descartes, and Augustine.

Kant banished intellectual intuition from knowing. Categories, by themselves, are empty. For Kant, the very content of the category is not in the category, but in the intuition. Intuition is the source of particulars. For this reason, in Kant the content of the universal lies in the particulars given in intuition. (As we pointed out in our discussion of Kant, this is the source of many inner conflicts in Kant.) We have quite often come to this result: the content of the universal does in fact lie in \textit{particularity}. Although Kant places the content of universality in particularity, he renders the particular \textit{completely intuitive}. For this reason, no conceptual content may be elucidated independently of the separate faculty of intuition. The ban on intellectual intuition means that i) we cannot read off the objective character of concepts without appeal to intuition, and ii) no particular may be derived from the concept without appeal to intuition. This is the ultimate meaning of the concept as a ‘logical function of judgment’. For Kant, Intellectual intuition would not only allow us to not only know particulars as they are irrespective of any appeal to intuition (\textit{nooumena}), but it would also
allow us to distinguish the objective contents of categories in sensible intuition purely \textit{a priori}, i.e. without any appeal to the sensible manifold.

In the tradition of German Idealism, that is, in the philosophies of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, the term ‘intellectual intuition’ has its origins in Kant. The term ‘intuition’ refers to the immediate relation to an object, while ‘intellectual’ qualifies the kind of immediacy. Kant limits human cognition to discursive understanding. Discursive understanding is a mediated relation to an object. On the one hand, for discursive understanding, concepts do not give us immediate access to objects. In Kant, intellectual intuition, on the other hand, signifies the immediate relation to objects \textit{via} concepts alone. Accordingly, in Kant intellectual intuition, like discursive understanding, signifies a capacity.

Kant’s separation of intellectual intuition from knowing undermined Descartes’ \textit{Cogito} in which intellectual intuition is employed to establish the existence of the self. As we pointed out earlier, the Cogito shows that so long as I am thinking I cannot deny that thinking exists. The Cogito is an intellectual intuition, for in virtue of thinking the universal ‘thinking’, the particular thought, ‘thinking’ as such, exists. Ironically, the content of the Cogito is fully \textit{psychological}. In other words, the content of the term ‘thinking’s is reduced to the psychological presence in the thought experiment. For this reason, Descartes’ ‘proof’ actually places all of the conceptual content for the ‘I’ in \textit{intuitive} psychological content.

In order to preserve the omnipotence of God, Augustine posited that it was in virtue of God’s thinking of universals that the universals themselves were created. In Augustine the universal has content irrespective of its intuitive content. Unlike in Kant, there is a clean separation between the particular instance of the universal in nature or intuition and the particular concepts themselves. Kant claims that intellectual intuition is a function of a divine understanding, but is beyond our understanding. Indeed, for Kant, we cannot establish the
objective contents of categories by simply thinking them! On the one hand, Descartes attempted to re-locate the intellectual intuition that Augustine attributed to God back into the human psyche. On the other hand, Kant denied that the allocation of intellectual intuition to the human mind was possible. Instead, it is a problematic concept that belongs properly to a divine intellect. Historically, we may view intellectual intuition on two levels: the thinking of the universal may immediately think the particular universals themselves, or it may immediately think the particular sensible realization of those universals in nature or in mind.

Hegel is pointing out an alternative way to relate to the sensible manifold. Instead of simply following the horizontal reference of particular to particular, one can also take the whole totality of the serial determinations of particulars as the object of one’s thinking. In the latter case, the intellect has the concept in virtue of which the sensible manifold is a unified totality, as one’s object. Through intellectual intuition one thinks reality as it is “imperishable” or reality as it is “in the concept”. For Hegel, one can intellectually intuit a category by itself, as well as the category in some sensible intuitive material. In the Logic, no non-logical content is thought. But in the Logic the concept self-differentiation creates its own content in virtue of thinking alone. In this sense, the concept is an intellectual intuition. By creating its own content through the self-referential activity endemic to self-differentiation, the concept particularizes itself. The self-particularization of the self-referential concept constitutes the concept’s intellectual intuition. In order for there to be any intuition or immediate relationship to the concept in what is not conceptual, the concept itself must first intellectually intuit itself, as it were.\textsuperscript{724}

\textsuperscript{724} Hegel himself speaks of certain categories in terms of intuition. For example, in respect to Being Hegel claims that “it is only this pure intuiting itself”. Hegel, \textit{Science of Logic}, 82. Of course this is an intellectual intuition, for the Logic does not concern any sensible manifold whether this be in nature or the mind.
Note that in the intellectual intuition constitutive of mental cognition, the conceptual terms at play involve subject and object, two terms which are not thematic for our inquiry, for they are not constitutive of the concept. Moreover, since intellectual intuition in respect to mental cognition is an act of consciousness, it is not strictly speaking a subject matter for logic. Moreover, since Realphilosophie is a result of the activity of the Idea's unification with what is not logical, and this unity only results upon the completion of the Logic, there is much that we cannot say about intellectual intuition at this point. Despite the deficiency of the logical structure and mere conceptual determination for circumscribing intellectual intuition in other non-logical manifolds, the concept as such is a necessary condition for its existence, and itself constitutes a purely logical intuition of categories. In Hegel intellectual intuition is the immediate thinking of the category in virtue of thinking alone. Here intellectual intuition allows one to think the particular through the universal by itself. The concept, according to Hegel, creates the particular in virtue of its own universality and in doing so renders itself individual. Without the concept, there is no way to grasp the particular in virtue of thinking alone. The concept gives us a logical template for the structure of intellectual intuition in conscious activity.\textsuperscript{725}

\textsuperscript{725} Schelling argues that his early identity philosophy functioned as the original impetus for Hegel's development of the categories in the Science of Logic. Schelling argues that in his own philosophy of nature and philosophy of mind, the self-developing concept of Hegel's system had already been anticipated. Hegel diverged from Schelling by arguing that an a priori logical method must exist antecedently to nature and mind. On this view, Schelling and Fichte's accounts of intellectual intuition must be preceded by a purely logical account of intellectual intuition in virtue of which they are possible at all. For this reason, Schelling complains that Hegel takes from the Identity philosophy without properly admitting that he has done so. Schelling writes the following: “Hegel as well was initially conscious of the negativity of this end, as in fact the pressing power of the positive, which demanded satisfaction in this philosophy, only gradually succeeded in drawing out the consciousness of its negativity from the identity system. This consciousness must have been present when it first arose, for otherwise this philosophy would not have been able to emerge. In Hegel as well, at least in his earliest presentation, there is still an echo, when he comes to the Last, of the fact that it is not at all a question of thinking of something real happening or having happened.” Schelling, On the History of Philosophy, 144-146. Schelling claims that Hegel stole the method of the philosophy of nature and applied it to logic. In this way, the absolute identity of the subject and object at the close of the logic is just Schelling's account of the structure of intellectual intuition at the level of the mind raised to a purely logical determination. Schelling, On the History of Modern Philosophy, 143.
In the *Logic of the Concept* Hegel provides a ground upon which the conceptual content of categories that are manifest in the sensible manifold may be realized *a priori*. In the *Science of Logic*, the thinking of the concept generates the conceptual content of the concept without any appeal to intuition. Still, the Logic itself is not yet a *mind*. For this reason, at the stage of the *Logic* we do not yet have mental activity, though we do have the condition for it. The philosopher, insofar as she grasps the conceptual contents of the *a priori* categories in the *Logic* without any appeal to intuitive contents intuits the contents of sensible intuition, has immediate access to the contents of categories. Thus, the philosopher, Hegel for instance, who reads off the conceptual character of the categories in the *Logic* intellectually intuits the concepts therein. In addition to this, the philosopher, Hegel for instance, may intellectually intuit categories such as ‘the concept’ in mind and in nature. Hegel himself is explicit that in nature we can intellectually intuit the concept in the living organism, and in mind we can intuit the concept in the synthetic unity of apperception (rational self-consciousness).

In the *Logic of the Concept* Hegel gives us a logic by which we may restore intellectual intuition to human rational self-consciousness that Kant banished to the divine mind. Still, Hegel avoids Descartes’ error of psychologizing the content of thinking, by securing the logical structure of universality, particularity, and individuality. Moreover, though Augustine privileged a kind of intellectual intuition, he placed the contents of the logical categories in the mind of God without first developing the logical contents of those categories. In his *Logic of the Concept*, Hegel shows that the concept is constituted by a process of self-reference and self-particularization. Self-reference and self-particularization constitute intellectual
intuition in the concept as well as the logical template for intellectual intuition of nature and mind.
In Individuality the universal concept frees itself from the imprisonment that it experienced in particularity. In his first remarks on individuality, Hegel lays bare some basic features of individuality:

Individuality [Die Einzelheit], as we have seen, is already posited by particularity; this is determinate universality and therefore self-related determinateness, the determinate determinate [das bestimmte Bestimmte].

Right away two features of individuality strike us. First, individuality has its origin in particularity. Particularity ‘posits’ individuality. Second, individuality is self-related, and the ‘determinate determinate’. What could Hegel mean by ‘determinate determinate?’ Clearly, he is not simply stating a tautology. Earlier we discovered that particularity is the determinate concept, and individuality is the absolutely determinate concept. The simplest way to address the origin of individuality is in terms of self-reference. Particularity is the determinate concept. Individuality arises from particularity by applying determinateness to the determinate concept itself. Particularity gives rise to individuality by applying its determination to itself. Upon applying its determination to itself, it ceases to be particular and is individual. Determinate universality becomes the fully self-relating universal, or individual, by relating itself to itself as determinate. Let us explore why and more exactly how this happens.

726 In order to discuss the issue along the lines of the tradition, and not to stray too far from the English translation, the I have used the term ‘individual’ instead of ‘singular’ as the translation for ‘das Einzelne’. Still, ‘singular’ is perhaps the more fitting translation.
727 Hegel, Science of Logic, 618, 296.
The section on individuality is divided into two parts. The first part delineates the rise of individuality and its status as the completion of the development of the universal. The second section shows how abstraction arises again in the form of individuality, and how judgment arises from this revived abstraction. In the second paragraph discussing individuality, Hegel points out the two basic directions of determination that follow from particularity, and provides a hint concerning how the development of particularity into individuality ought to proceed.

I. In the first instance, therefore, individuality appears as the reflection of the Notion out of its determinateness into itself. It is the self-mediation of the Notion in so far as its otherness has made itself into an other again, whereby the Notion has reinstated itself as self-identical, but in the determination of absolute negativity. The negative in the universal whereby this is a particular, was defined above as the twofold illusory being [Doppelschein]; in so far as the negative is an illusory being within the universal, the particular remains a universal; through the reference of the illusory being outwards it is a determinate; the return [Rückkehr] of this side into the universal is twofold: either through the abstraction which lets drop the particular and rises to the higher and the highest genus, or else through the individuality to which the universal in the determinateness itself descends. Here is where the false path [Abweg] branches off and abstraction strays from the highway of the Notion and forsakes the truth. Its higher and highest universal to which it raises itself is only the surface, which becomes ever more destitute of content; the individuality it despises is the profundity [Tiefe] in which the Notion seizes itself and is posited as Notion.  

As Hegel points out, two directions of conceptual determination follow from the particular. One direction is the Abweg, the straying path of abstraction. We have already discussed this false path in some depth. The false path of abstraction ossifies the difference between universal and particular. As one abstracts from the particulars, the universal content of each abstraction becomes more and more empty. For this sense of abstraction, the highest universals, such as Being, are the emptiest, and the particulars from which the abstraction originally arises are the richest. In this turn of fate, it is the non-conceptual particulars that

are rich in content, and the thoughts that are empty. In this universe, what is not conceptual possesses the richest of contents. The false path of abstraction does not return to the concept. Instead, it has abandoned it and forsaken its beginning as the self-determining universal. For examples of these false paths we always have empirical nature and intuition as our witnesses. To use an analogy from Kierkegaard, the Abweg of abstraction is like an addict who attempts to escape the recognition of the nullity of his aesthetic self by abusing drugs. He abuses drugs in order that he may not have to think about the nullity of himself, all the while the drug abuse encloses and ossifies that nullity. Thankfully, there is a second path.

The second path is individuality. Hegel explicitly points out that the particular is constituted by the twofold illusory being, which we defined earlier as the particular as particular and the particular as universal. Individuality is the return, or ‘back-turning’ [Rückkehr] of the universal to itself. Hegel is clear that the particular as determinate returns to the universal: “individuality appears as the reflection of the Notion out of its determinateness into itself”.

This means that individuality is the unification of the determinate concept, particularity, with universality. The return of the universal to itself is its self-enclosed or self-relating determination: the universal returns to itself through the determinacy of the particular. Indeed, this is what we anticipated the individual to be: the unification of the particular with the universal.

This process is self-mediation, for the whole process begins and ends with the concept: the concept as universal gives rise to the particular, and the particular in turn gives rise to the individual. Hegel claims that individual is the same content as the universal, for the concept has ‘reinstated itself’ in the form of ‘absolute negativity’, or as self-differentiation. The difference, of course is that now the concept is not immediately self-differentiating. Now, the concept as self-differentiation has been mediated by particularity. The concept reinstates the original determination of the universal in and through one of its own particular moments,
particularity. For this reason, the beginning is the end: self-differentiation. But how does the particular giver rise to the individual and how exactly is individuality universal?

Regarding the development of individuality, Hegel is unfortunately quite brief. He only tells us that the otherness of the concept, particularity, has ‘made itself into an other again’. In the briefest of terms, the otherness of the concept is other to itself. To spell this out, we must return to the specific determination of the concept as other to itself, namely the determination of the particular, and trace out exactly why this result must follow, and what it means. Before we fully embark on our explication of this development, let us briefly take a look at the two other passages where Hegel discusses the development of individuality in order that we might have a sense of the determination of individuality that follows particularity.

At the close of his discussion of particularity, Hegel discusses the rise of individuality. Hegel indicates that although the individual is the third moment of the concept, it is the return of the concept to itself. Likewise, particularity gives rise to individuality, and it is only by thinking through particularity as such that individuality may arise. Hegel also claims that individuality is also the loss of the concept. This is the return of the concept as abstraction, and we shall postpone an analysis of the return of abstraction until we have elucidated how the individual arises. Here again Hegel presses the self-referential character of the individual: individuality is determined as the determinateness posited as determinateness, or the determinate determinateness.

Nevertheless, Hegel augments our understanding of the development with the following sentence: “Determinateness in the form of universality is linked with the universal to form a simple determination [Die Bestimmtheit in der Form der Allgemeinheit ist zum Einfachen

729 Hegel, Science of Logic, 612, 288.
730 Hegel, Science of Logic, 612, 288.
Individuality arises by linking i) the universal and ii) determinateness in the form of universality. Determinateness in the form of universality is particularity in the form of universality. Particularity in the form of universality is the abstract universal that is constituted by the twofold illusory references. Thus, in order to break the code of individuality, we must investigate the unification of universality proper, namely self-differentiation, with the abstract universal.

In the following passage at the end of his discussion of particularity, Hegel further elucidates the development of individuality by connecting the fixity of the abstract universal with the development of individuality:

Since, therefore, understanding exhibits the infinite force [unendliche Kraft] which determines the universal, or conversely, imparts through the form of universality, a fixity and subsistence [das fixe Bestehen] to the determinateness that is in and for itself transitory, then it is not the fault of the understanding if no progress is made beyond this point. It is a subjective impotence of reason [subjektive Ohnmacht der Vernunft] which adopts these determinatenesses in their fixity, and which is unable to bring them back to their unity though the dialectical force opposed to this abstract universality, in other words, through their own peculiar nature or through their Notion. The understanding does indeed give them, so to speak, a rigidity [Härte] of being such as they do not possess in the qualitative sphere and in the sphere of reflection; but at the same time it spiritually impregnates them [begeistert] and so sharpens them, that just at this extreme point alone they acquire the capability to dissolve themselves [sich aufzulösen] and to pass over into their opposite [in ihr Entgegengesetztes überzugehen]. The highest maturity, the highest stage, which anything can attain is that in which its downfall begins. The fixity of the determinateness into which the understanding seems to run, the form of the imperishable [Unvergänglich], is that of self-relating universality. But this belongs properly to the Notion; and consequently in this universality is to be found expressed, and infinitely close at hand [unendlicher Nähe], the dissolution of the finite [das Endliche]. This universality directly refutes the determinateness of the finite and expresses its incongruity [Unangemessenheit] with the universality. Or rather we can say that the adequacy [Angemessenheit] of the finite is already to hand; the abstract determinate is posited as one with the universality, and for that very reason is posited as not for itself—for then it would be only a determinate—but only as unity of itself and the universal, that is, as Notion.

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731 Hegel, Science of Logic, 612, 288.
Hegel adds to our understanding of the development of individuality here by pointing out that it is only at the highest stage where its downfall begins. For particularity, the highest stage of its development is the abstract universal, which is fixed and does not admit its opposite. Exactly here, where the concept is most fixed, it negates itself and unify itself with its opposite. Accordingly, abstract universality really is just a transitory stage, and is not the absolute end of the development of the concept. In this dialectical maneuver, the finite universal is shown not to measure up (unangemessen) to the universal. This is the ‘dissolution of the finite’, and as we shall see, parallels the self-negation of the finite that gives rise to Ideality in the Logic of Being. Hegel’s language here is poetic. He speaks of the ‘spiritual impregnation’ (Begeisten), or the ‘spiritualization’ of the abstract universal by the understanding. Hegel points out that if reason is unable to move beyond the abstract universal, this is not an inherent defect in reason, but in its subjective use. Indeed, Hegel hints that the abstract universal, in so far as it is an imperishable self-relation, fails to be distinguished from universality, for the determination of the latter is also that of the imperishable self-relation.

At the close of particularity, we discovered that particularity as such is the abstract universal, whose content is the self-negation of universality. This content is the universal self-differentiation in the form of negation, or what is the same, the self-negation of the immediate, indeterminate content, ‘self-differentiation’. At the stage of particularity the ‘self-negation of universality’ does not negate itself. Instead, it is just what it is, and does not admit its negation. Since the universal is that which is what it is not, we said that the stage of particularity is the universal insofar as it is ‘external to itself’ or ‘outside itself’. In particularity, the universal is separate from the particular. Since the universal is that unity of universal and particular, the particular is the universal insofar as it has negated itself, or is
‘other to itself’. In other words, particularity is the difference between universal and particular. The difference has two sides, ‘universal’ and ‘particular’, each of which constitutes one side of the particular. At the stage of particularity or the self-negation of the universality, self-negation is not yet negated. Insofar as it is not self-negating, the particular remains abstract as that which stays itself and does not differentiate itself. The abstract universal as such ensures that the universal is separate from the particular. It is at this point where the dialectical fire begins.

We may begin by pointing out that the content ‘self-negation’ cannot help but negate itself. Self-negation, in order to remain what it is, must negate itself. If self-negation failed to negate itself, then it would not be what it is, namely ‘self-negation’. And more than anything else, the abstract universal, self-negation, must remain what it is. The abstract universal must remain what it is, for its very form lies in its fixed self-identity. Hence, we must admit that self-negation negates itself.733

Immediately we see that this phrase ‘self-negation negates itself’ is another way of expressing how otherness becomes an other to itself. The particular is the other of self-differentiation insofar as it is that which is not self-differentiating. By negating itself, that which is other to universality or self-differentiation is now other to its own otherness. The negation of the self-negation is nothing more than the negation of the otherness. The concept as particular is the concept as other to itself. Though this is not its only determination, in the particular or the form of negation, the universal is not what it is, but it is what it is not. For this reason, we may reconstruct the transition in terms of the ‘otherness of the concept to itself’ or ‘the self-negation of the concept.’ We should remind ourselves that we are not

733 The development of individuality consists in the collapse of the illusion outward into the illusion inward and vice versa. In the illusion outward, particularity, as merely particular, is always only just itself: it is just the illusory reference inward. As just itself, it is the universal, or that which remains what it is in its differentiations. This is individuality: the process whereby the particular as particular is universal and the universal as universal is particular.
rehashing the same development from universality to particularity. In the development of particularity, the universal negated itself as an immediate, indeterminate self-identity, and gave rise to particularity as such. Now we have universality in the form of self-negation, or what is the same ‘self-negation’ as such. The transition to individuality takes the *universal in the form of the difference* as the starting point, not the absolute immediate unity. Now we must consider what follows from the self-negation of self-negation.

Given that self-negation must negate itself, particularity is *self-referential*. Though earlier we pointed out that particularity, like universality, must be self-referential, we failed to show exactly how this process works. Particularity, as the determinate concept must itself be determinate. Instead of just having ‘particularity is’, we have ‘particularity is particular’. If one wishes to emphasize the essential role of difference here, one might also express this by saying that ‘the difference of the concept is different’ or ‘otherness of the concept is other’. Note that the reference of particularity to itself is not an act by any thinker; it is the inner necessity of the very content of particularity itself. Upon the self-reference of particularity to itself, the difference between universal and particular that is constitutive of particularity is undermined. Let us watch as this proceeds.

Self-negation is *self-negating*. Since self-negation negates itself, *it is itself*, for its own qualitative determinacy, ‘self-negation’ constitutes *what it is*, and takes the place of its indeterminacy. Ironically, because self-negation is self-negating, self-negation cannot remain self-negation. If self-negation were to remain just what it is, then it would not in fact have negated itself. Because the term ‘self-negation’ necessitates that *it negate itself*, the term ‘self-

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734 As we shall see, judgment begins from this assumption that determinate universality is determinate, or that particularity is particular. Still, we should be careful to distinguish the different ways in which the self-referential activity is working at each of these stages. At this stage, the particularity of particularity is simultaneously its dissolution into individuality. For this reason, the self-referential activity of particularity upon itself *undermines* its own claim to be determinate, for it becomes indistinguishable from individuality. Upon the arising of individuality, particularity is then determined to be particular again, though this time as judgment. In judgment, particular forms of particularity are separated from the concept and posited as the whole concept.
negation’ cannot remain that which is self-negating. Instead, the self-negating content must

vanish. Thus, the reference of self-negation to itself results in i) the self-identity of the universal

as such, and ii) the negation of particularity.

The result is simple, yet astounding. The self-negation of self-negation is the negation

of particularity. Insofar as the particular is the universal in the form of negation, the negation

of the particular resurrects the universal from its bondage in the particular. Indeed, by

negating self-negation, the negation of universality (particularity) is negated. Thus, with the

negation of self-differentiation removed, what is present is self-differentiation. Thus, the self-

identity and self-relation that comes to be upon the self-removal of particularity is nothing

other than that with which the process of the concept began, namely the universal. But the

return of self-differentiation from its exile is not the same determination as the universal

moment, for the universal moment did not itself arise out of exile, i.e. out of the particular.

Hence, we have a novel content: the return of the universal, or what Hegel calls ‘the

individual’.

That in virtue of which the particular truly comes to be itself, namely the reference of

self-negation to itself, is that in virtue of which it ceases to be itself. Universality, as self-

differentiation, remains itself even in its differentiations of itself. Since the particular admits

what it is not in virtue of being itself, the particular necessarily develops into universality

merely in virtue of what it is. Thus, the particular as particular admits its opposite, the

universal. The universal returns to itself, or resurrects itself, out of its own self-negation,

otherness, and difference. As it turns out, the universal never really abandoned the particular,

though it may have appeared this way. The universal remains itself even in its differentiation.

This very process of negating itself and returning to itself is the very being of the concept; it
is what Hegel calls individuality.\textsuperscript{735} Individuality is the differentiated particular.\textsuperscript{736}

Particularity, as the difference of universal and particular, itself undergoes differentiation.

For this reason, very differentiation of the difference of universal and particular gives individuality.

Earlier in our analysis of particularity, we already arrived at the self-negation of particularity. Still, because we insisted on the distinction between universal and particular, we were not able to admit to ourselves that each must be identified with the other. Individuality is the fulfillment of particularity in the sense that it is that particularity is incomplete without it; it is that which particularity must \textit{be} in virtue of what it is. Individuality is opposed to that infinite regress, or quantitative infinite, that insists on the division.

Given the result above, Hegel reminds us that Understanding ought not be separated from Reason:

\begin{quote}
Therefore, the usual practice of separating understanding and reason is, from every point of view, to be rejected. When the Notion is regarded as irrational, this should be interpreted rather as an incapacity of reason to recognize itself in the Notion. The determinate and abstract Notion is the condition, or rather an essential moment of reason; it is form spiritually impregnated \textit{[begeistete Form]}, in which the finite, through the universality in which it relates itself to itself, spontaneously catches fire, posits itself as dialectical and thereby is the beginning of the manifestation of reason.\textsuperscript{737}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{735} Haas points out that Hegel’s commitment to the individuality of reason remains consistent throughout his career, from the \textit{Differenzschrift} (1801) to the \textit{Logic} (1832). In the \textit{Differenzschrift} Hegel writes the following: “the true characteristic of a philosophy is the interesting individuality in which reason, from the building-material of a particular age, has organized a form for itself; the particularity of speculative reason finds therein spirit from its spirit, flesh from its flesh, it looks at itself in it as one and the same, and as an other living being. Each philosophy is in itself complete and has, like a real artwork, totality in itself.” (\textit{Diff}, 12) We should note that here individuality is \textit{Individualität}, not ‘Einzelheit’. See Haas, Andrew Haas, \textit{Hegel and the Problem of Multiplicity}, 170.

\textsuperscript{736} We have been assuming this definition of individuality since Section III. There we argued that none of the forms of particular universality or determinate universality could in principle account for the differentiated particular, or the individual.

The determinate and abstract concept is a “condition” of reason insofar as it gives rise to individuality per se. By condition I simply understand that individuality is constituted only through the development and negation of the understanding. But it is not just a condition of reason, but also one of the moments of the concept as such. Here again he employs the term ‘begeisten’, meaning ‘to give spirit to something.’ The finite form is ‘pregnant’ with the concept, and gives birth to individuality.

The way in which the particular develops into the individual parallels the way the finite transitions into the infinite. The finite, in containing its own limit, contains what it is not, its own ceasing to be. In containing its own ceasing to be, the finite ceases to be. But in ceasing to be, the finite itself preserves itself, for the finite is just that which of itself ceases to be. Since it preserves itself, the finite does not cease to be, and hence is no longer finite, for it never ceases to be. In not ceasing to be, the finite is, of its own accord, the non-finite. The parallel with the concept is clear: the finite gives rise to the non-finite by staying itself.

Insofar as it remains itself, it negates itself. Likewise, in virtue of remaining what it is the particular negates itself.

Looking back over all three moments of the concept, we encounter three senses of the infinite, each of which correlating to one moment of the concept. In the universal moment we showed that the concept is the infinite qua indeterminate for there is no difference that could form a limit to what is self-differentiating. But in the universal no specific differences are yet posited, and so there is no determination of the universal. In the particular moment, the concept achieves a finite determination, and thereby is only capable of the quantitative infinite, in which there is always an outlying determination. We witnessed the quantitative infinity in the development of the class, for example, in which each particular in virtue of negating itself gives forth a new particular, ad infinitum. Finally, in individuality, the
concept is recognized as *perfect*, as *that which has nothing outstanding*. In individuality, all the determinations of the concept are present: universality, particularity, and individuality. Because no moment lies outside the concept, there is no limit to the concept and deserves the attribution of infinity. What we have called ‘the *qualitative infinite*’ is constitutive of the final stage of the concept, and it is that which moves beyond the infinite regress. Though the infinite regress indeed never ceases to produce more universals, the concept, as the true infinite, is the creative principle that underlies that regress and sustains it. The qualitative infinite constitutive of individuality is the relentless process by which finite particularity is rendered infinite universality, and infinite universality is rendered finite particularity.

Just as the self-differentiation of self-differentiation rendered universality an element of the concept, so the self-negation of self-negation renders particularity an element of the concept. In each act of self-reference, the element is shown to be one element of the concept, and a new moment of the concept usurps the place of the concept as such. What is evident is that the necessary act of self-reference does not just entail self-particularization, but also initiates a new determination. In the case of universality it is particularity. In the case of particularity it is individuality. Having set itself to the side, particularity posits itself as a mere moment of the totality, and recognizes itself as a mere moment of individuality. Individuality, not particularity, is the *true* concept, and particularity must recognize individuality as the true monarch. Let us briefly discuss how singularity is the totality of universality and particularity, as well as why Hegel chose the word ‘*Einzelheit*’.

The term ‘*Einzelheit*’ or individuality, signifies *totality*. It stands in stark contrast to ‘*Besonderheit*’ which implies a splitting difference. Singularity is *the totality* of the determinations of universality and particularity. Unlike *the moment* of particularity, in singularity universality is

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738 This term would be better translated as ‘singularity’.
not a merely immediate unity of particular and universal, nor is particularity the mere
mediated difference of the two. Instead, immediacy and mediated determinacy are wedded.
Hegel describes the transition of particularity into individuality as the connection between
the abstract universal or particular and the universal. Indeed, this is what we have already
witnessed. The particular, in virtue of being itself, immediately is the self-differentiating
universal. Individuality is the self-relation of particular to universal and universal to particular,
for through the self-identity of particularity as the self-negation of universality, particularity is
universal. In other words, particularity differentiates itself into its negation ‘self-
differentiation’, that universal which remains itself in its own differentiations. Neither
universality nor particularity by themselves as mere moments could possibly be the totality, for in
neither are the differences between the two i) posited and ii) unified together. In individuality
the differences constitutive of particularity are unified in the concept of the self-
differentiation of self-differentiation. In the initial appearance of universality there were no
differences yet given. In the initial appearance of particularity, the absolute difference
between the moments ruled supreme. In individuality, the differences are recognized as
differences, yet are nonetheless brought together as differences of ‘individuality’. For this
reason, individuality is the true totality, and each concept of the concept, universality,
particularity, and individuality are true totalities only as individuals.

In particularity, the particular and the universal are one-sided determinations. The
universal and the particular, as particulars, exclude their opposites. Yet, insofar as the
particular as such negates itself\(^739\), and gives rise to self-differentiation, neither the universal
nor the particular may remain separate: because individuality is the negation of particularity,
and this is nothing other than the difference between universal and particular, the particular

\(^739\) See 425.
is given over to the universal and the universal is given over to the particular. The particular, as we showed above, cannot help but give the universal. Yet, the universal also ceases to be a separate determination. For this reason, individuality posits the illusory being as illusory. In other words, individuality shows that the independence of the determinations ‘particular’ and ‘universal’ is untrue, and that without individuality particularity is incomplete. In particularity as such we had not yet arrived at individuality. Having arrived at individuality, we see that the illusory references inward and outward are not really independent. Instead, they were merely reflections of independence. The universal no longer has its content as a separate ‘other’ to the particular—only if particularity as such were maintained could the separation of the universal from the particular be maintained. Thus, each becomes self-differentiation, and is individuality, and as such they are indistinguishable. That they are indistinguishable in individuality means that the illusory separation of universal and particular has been realized and overcome.

In individuality the universal and the particular are united. But we must specify the sense in which they are united. In particularity the universal was the immediate unity of universal and particular, while the particular was the difference of each term. The separation of universal from particular in particularity placed both distinctions on one of its own sides: the latter side of the absolute difference. Unlike particularity, in individuality, the unity is not one-sided. The immediate is not swallowed up by the mediation, nor is the mediation swallowed up by the immediacy, for the particular is the particular-universal, and the universal is the universal-particular. By giving the universal to the particular, and the

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740 Vittorio Hoesle describes individuality in terms of the synthetic unity of universality and particularity: Die Synthetische Bestimmung zur Allgemeinheit und Besonderheit ist nach Hegel Einzelheit. See his Hegels System Der Idealismus der Subjektivität und das Problem der Intersubjektivität, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1987 Hamburg, Deutschland Band I Systementwicklung und Logik, 233.
particular to the universal, a *true* totality is granted in which universality and particularity exist as *self-differentiation* or as *individuality*. By ‘true totality’ I mean that the determinations are determined to be the concept, determinate concepts, and *determinations of the concept*, not just mutually exclusive differences. Insofar as singularity unites universality (the immediate unity of universal and particular) with particularity (the mediated unity of particular and universal) in *self-differentiation*, individuality gives a unity of opposites in which there is *the unity* of the immediate unity of the particular and universal and the mediated unity of particular and universal. In other words, universality is not just a universal, and or just a particular, but universality is *the universal-particular*. Likewise, the particular is not just a particular or just a universal, but the particular is *the particular-universal*. Earlier the unity of these was implied in particularity, for the particular is universal insofar as the difference between universal and particular is the self-identical moment that runs through both differences ‘universal’ and ‘particular’. Still, this unity was *not posited as such*, for in the stage of particularity the unity of the two determinations always arose only *as the difference* between the two determinations, or as distinct, not as unified. Individuality posits the unity of universal and particular *as unified for it is the very act of removing the separation of the differences between universal and particular*. 741

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741 Here Hegel briefly sums up the result: “It is self-evident that each determination made in the preceding exposition of the Notion has immediately dissolved itself [sich unmittelbar antigelöß] and lost itself in its other. Each distinction is confounded in the very attempt to isolate and fix it. Only mere representational thinking, for which abstraction has isolated them, is capable of holding the universal, particular, and individual rigidly apart; in this way they can be counted, and for a further distinction such thinking holds to the completely external one of being, namely quantity, which is nowhere less appropriate than here. In individuality, the true relationship mentioned above, the inseparability of the Notion’s determinations is posited; for as negation of the negation it contains their opposition and at the same time contains its ground or unity, the effected coincidence of each with its other. As this reflection is in its very own nature universality, it is essentially the negativity of the Notion’s determinations, but not merely as if it were a third something distinct from them; on the contrary, it is now posited that posited being [Gesetzstein] is being-in-and-for-itself; that is, that each of the determinations pertaining to the difference is itself the totality. The return of the determinate Notion into itself [*Die Rückkehr des bestimmten Begriffes*] means that it has the determination of being in its determinateness, the whole Notion.” Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 620-621, 298-299.
Though we have abandoned the particular and the universal as mere moments of the concept, the particular that appears in individuality is the true particular, the universal the true universal. In other words, the true particular, as well as the true universal, is the totality. In the following exposition we shall show how each moment is the totality. In the moment of particularity, the abstraction ‘self-negation’ was separated from the self-negating particulars themselves. Because ‘negation’ and ‘difference’ may be used interchangeably here, the separation of self-negation from the particular negations is the same as the separation of ‘self-differentiation’ from the particular differentiations. The negation of the difference between universal and particular brings the abstraction ‘self-differentiation’ to the particulars and vice versa. According, self-differentiation itself, the universal, must be a self-differentiating particular. Likewise, each self-differentiating particular must be the universal. Once again, the result is exactly that with which we began: the universal ‘self-differentiation’ is that which constitutes its own particular moments, and the moments of the concept constitute the concept as such. Or what is the same: particularity as such must be recognized as both the moment of the concept and the whole concept as such. Insofar as it is the concept and a moment of the concept, it cannot merely remain particular, but must also be individual, that is, as the differentiated particular. Universality as such must be recognized as both the moment of the concept and the whole concept as such: it cannot be merely universal, but must also be individual. Because the universal and the particular are, in

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742 By ‘true’ here I mean that in individuality each corresponds to what it is, namely to its conceptual character.
743 See page 388.
744 The term ‘self-negation’ is helpful because it most easily illuminates the development of individuality.
745 In what follows we shall see how this is developed in more detail.
themselves, individuality as such, we ought to be able to elucidate how each is individuality from the very concept of individuality as such.\footnote{In his adept book, \textit{Hegel Im Kontext}, Dieter Henrich drives this point home quite well: Dieter Henrich points this out in the following way: ultimately the universal and particular are not really opposites that disappear into one another. Instead, it is that each from the beginning is inseparable from each other. Each is a different “perspective” of the whole concept. The goal is the complete structure. Here the idea is that the concept is immediately all three—the whole is in the form of the immediate—this distinguishes it from judgment. To speak with the utmost precision, we must agree with Henrich that in the concept each of the moments immediately is the other. None can be differentiated from the other. In judgment, on the other hand, the concept ceases to be in the form of identity, but is now swallowed up in the difference of particularity. Still, we might slightly modify Henrich’s approach by pointing out that there are differences in the concept \textit{that are illusory}. Without this addendum we miss the basic way in which the forms of determinate universality arise in the concept. See Henrich, Dieter, \textit{Hegel Im Kontext}, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, Germany 1971, 99. Following Henrich here, when Haas point out, for example, that the universal is “abstract” (Haas, 171,184), he is correct just in the sense that the abstract universal constitutive of particularity is immediately identifiable with each of the other moments. For this reason, it appears that mediation or difference is excluded, and reappears in judgment as distinct from that immediacy or identity of moments. The opposition of judgment and concept constitutes another side of the opposition of identity and difference, and expresses an aspect of the ‘subjectivity’ of the concept.}

As we have shown above, and as the paragraph quoted above states, there is no way to hold any of the differences ‘universal’, ‘particular’, or ‘individual’ separate, without confounding them. Hegel points out that representational thinking, accompanied by quantitative analysis, attempts to hold these distinctions apart, and for that very reason they are both unsuitable for embodying the concept of the concept. Lastly, we might point out that \textit{individuality is determinate} exactly because the particular is the whole of individuality, and the particular is \textit{the determinate universal}. The determinateness is absolute however, for the individual contains all of its differences within itself—there are no other distinctions to which the concept could be \textit{relative}. Individuality is the absolute determination of the concept. Individuality may be grasped as the particular rendered absolute.\footnote{\textit{Hegel, Science of Logic}, 620.}

If we remember back to the beginning of our exposition of Hegel, we will remember that the most basic determination of the concept is that the concept as such is \textit{indistinguishable from the moments of the concept}. Since individuality is self-differentiation, though now considered as a result, every moment of individuality must not only be one moment of
individuality, but also individuality as such. This is also clear if one considers the individual as the self-differentiation of self-differentiation. As the self-differentiation of self-differentiation, individuality differentiates itself into self-differentiated moments. Each moment of individuality, namely ‘universal’, ‘particular’, and ‘individuality’, is self-differentiation, or individuality, as such. Individuality is the return of self-differentiation out of particularity. Already we have noted that particularity and universality are each the particular-universal and universal-particular. Since individuality is nothing but the unity of these, and the particular and universal are each unified with the other, particularity is individuality and universality is individuality. Not only are each of these identified with individuality, but each is also a moment of individuality, for individuality contains both. Thus, individuality is the content that is constitutive of the whole concept and the elements.

Hegel first identifies universality as individuality. He writes:

Universality and particularity appeared, on the one hand, as moments of the becoming of individuality. But it has already been shown that they are in themselves the total Notion, and consequently in individuality do not pass over into an other, but that in individuality there is only posited what they are in and for themselves. The universal is for itself because it is in its own self absolute mediation, self-reference [Beziehung auf sich] only as absolute negativity. [...]

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The individual is the concept as such. Only in the individual is the concept self-differentiated self-differentiation in which the concept corresponds to what it only promised to be in universality. The individual is not just the assumption of self-differentiation, but the self-differentiation of self-differentiation. In other words, self-differentiation has determined it to be self-differentiating. In individuality the self-differentiating concept has fulfilled one of its basic tasks: to determine itself to be self-differentiating. Having posited itself to be self-differentiating, the concept has determined itself to be what it originally took on as a given

748 Hegel, Science of Logic, 619, 297.
content. Individuality is universality exactly for the reason we have already mentioned: universality is self-differentiation, and individuality is self-differentiation. In individuality universality is not merely one moment of the concept. As the merely immediate unity it is one moment of the concept, and in this sense, it has been overcome in individuality. Yet, because the individual is a negation of negation, the universal has been resurrected. Here the universal, as a negation of negation, is unconditioned, free, and infinite. There is no other to which it could relate. It is, as Hegel states, *self-refering* and as such only ‘for itself’.

Unlike the first appearance of universality, universality is now both particular and individual. Universality as individuality takes up all of the differences of universality, namely particularity, individuality, and individuality, and posits them as differentiations of itself, the self-identical self-differentiation. In this sense of universality, universality is the process by which it differentiates each one of its moments, universality, particularity, and individuality, and simultaneously posits them as the whole self-differentiation and as moments of the whole. The return to the universal out of the particular in individuality is that which makes particularity possible. It is the expression and realization of that which is present as a necessary condition in and for particularity yet as such remained therein unexpressed.

Perhaps the identity of individuality and universality is the most evident result of the dialectical process that particularity underwent. Indeed, because particularity had to negate itself in order to give rise to individuality, one might expect that particularity could not be identical to individuality. Though we have grasped in the unity of universal and particular in terms of the universal, to see how individuality is also particular we must also grasp individuality concretely as particularity. Indeed, individuality just is the unification of universality and particularity, and so it cannot help but *specifically* be the universal and *specifically* be the particular.
Before concretely exposing the identity of particularity and individuality, Hegel first reflects on the sense in which the particular universal as the abstraction has been left behind in the development of individuality.\(^{749}\) Hegel already points out the insufficiency of abstraction for achieving self-differentiation in his discussion of universality.\(^{750}\) Abstraction, as a process of removing content from a set of particulars in order to derive a common term, is not truly individual, for the process of abstraction is separate from the abstraction itself. Indeed, the abstract universal is the individual as it is \textit{outside of itself} or as \textit{not individual}. This is the only sense in which the abstract universal can be self-differentiating. Indeed, this is the main determination of particularity, which we discovered in the previous chapter. Following this brief reminder, he offers us more nourishment. Hegel hints that even abstract universals, despite their abstract character, are nonetheless individuals:

Yet the unity of the Notion is so indissoluble that even these products of abstraction, though they are supposed to drop individuality are, on the contrary, individuals themselves. Abstraction raises the concrete into universality in which, however, the universal is grasped only as a determinate universality; and this is precisely the individuality that has shown itself to be self-related determinateness. Abstraction, therefore, is a sundering of the concrete and an isolating of its determinations; through it only single properties and moments are seized; for its product must contain what it is itself. But the difference between this individuality of its products and the Notion’s individuality is that in the former the individual as content and the universal as form, are distinct from one another—just because the former is not present as absolute form, as the Notion itself, or the latter is not present as the totality of form. However, this more detailed consideration shows that the abstract product itself is a unity of the individual content and the abstract universality, and is therefore a concrete and the opposite of what it aims to be.\(^{751}\)

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\(^{749}\) [...] “It is an abstract universal in so far as this sublating is an external act and so a dropping [\textit{weglassen}] of the determinateness. This negativity, therefore, certainly attaches to the abstract universal, but remains outside as a mere condition of it; it is the abstractive activity itself, which holds its universal away and opposite it and which therefore does not have individuality within itself, and remains destitute of the Notion. Life, spirit, God—the pure Notion itself, are beyond the grasp of abstraction, because it deprives its products of singularity [\textit{Einzelnheit}], of the principle of individuality [\textit{Individualität}] and personality, and so arrives at nothing else but universalities devoid of life, spirit, colour, and filling.” Hegel, \textit{Science of Logic}, 619, 297. Here the translator takes ‘Einzelnheit’ as individuality and Individualität’ as ‘singularity’, which is a bit misleading.

\(^{750}\) Hegel, \textit{Science of Logic}, 620.

\(^{751}\) Hegel, \textit{Science of Logic}, 620, 298.
Earlier we noted two senses of abstraction. One sense of abstraction connotes the act of deriving universals from a set of givens. The other connotes one moment of the universal: the particular. In this passage, Hegel points out that even in respect to the former sense of abstraction, there is a sense in which each of the results of abstraction are still individuals. Hegel points out that “abstraction raises the concrete into universality”. The result of that raising is the abstract product, namely “the unity of individual content and the abstract universality”. Hegel points out that the result is the “opposite of what it aims to be”. Each abstraction is a determinate universal, and the determinate universal, like every moment of the concept, is individual. For this reason, even the abstract universals insofar as they are determinate are individuals. Still, they are nonetheless still to be distinguished from the concept insofar as the process by which they come to be is external to them. For this reasons, abstractions are inverted individuals, if you will.

To see this another way, consider that each abstract universal is universal, for it has the form of abstract universality, but also has some content by which it is distinguished from others. The abstract form in each and every universal is not separate from the content that is present in that form: the form is the form of some content. Or, as Hegel put it, each abstract universal is “a unity of individual content and abstract universality.” For this reason, every abstract universal is a synthesis of form and content, of universality and particularity. Individuality is just this: the unity of form and content or universality and particularity. For this reason, abstract universality as such fails to give an account of just what it is: individuality. It is the clothes or covering for something that it is not sufficient to explain. It is important that we recognize this, for it was initially the unity of universality and particularity in each universal that lead us to the four paradoxes of self-reference. It was the

752 From this it follows of course, that each of the determinate universals ‘abstract universal’, ‘class’, and ‘genus and species’ are themselves individuals.
very individuality of the abstract universals that lead us to Hegel, and for this reason we cannot deny that individuality lies even at the heart of abstract universality. What we have done in these last chapters is to show how abstract universality is possible. Abstract universality is posited by the concept, and abstract universality is only possible if we grasp the form of its individuality.

At this point our analysis might shed more light upon back upon the third section of this work. In that section we showed how abstract universality contradicted itself. The contradiction at the heart of abstract universality reveals that abstract universality is not just abstract—but that it is individuality, in whom each determination of the concept contradicts itself by admitting to being its other. Indeed, Hegel’s method, at bottom, is quite simple. He solves the problem of the differentia by allowing the abstract universal to simply be itself. In virtue of being itself, the abstract universal negates itself. The development of individuality only occurs because of the fixedness of the abstract universal, namely that it remain what it is. Through its fixedness, the abstract universal gives birth to individuality. Abstraction, by remaining the fixed concept ‘self-negation of universality’, undermines itself and what arises is nothing other than individuality, namely that universal in which universality is particularity, and particularity is universality. By getting out of the way, and allowing concepts to be what they are, they admit what they are not, and thereby show their contradictory character. 753

Having discussed the way that abstract universals, in whatever sense of the term, may be understood as individuals, Hegel goes on to explicate exactly how particularity as such is individuality. We have discussed this abstractly, as it were, as well as pointed out how

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753 Unlike in Section III, here we have considered particularity as a moment of the concept. It is because particularity is a moment of the concept that it does not result in mere absurdity, but gives rise to individuality. Hence, we could not show how individuality could in principle arise in Section III, for we needed to develop the concept of the concept.
universality is individuality. But we have yet to show exactly how individuality may be grasped specifically under the determination of the determinate universal, or particularity.

Hegel does just this in the following paragraphs:

For the same reason, the particular, because it is only the determinate universal, is also individual, and conversely the individual, because it is the determinate universal, is just as much a particular. If we stick to this abstract determinateness, then the Notion has the three particular determinations, the universal, the particular, and the individual; whereas previously we had given only the universal and the particular as the species of the particular. Since individuality is the return of the notion, as negative, into itself, this very return from the abstraction which, strictly speaking, is sublated in the return, can be placed along with the others as an indifferent moment and counted with them.

If individuality is reckoned as one of the particular determinations of the Notion, then particularity is the totality which embraces them all; precisely in being this totality it is the concretion of them or individuality itself. But it is also the concrete in accordance with its aspect, noted above, of determinate universality; as such it is the immediate unity in which none of these moments is posited as distinct or as the determinant, and in this form it will constitute the middle term of the formal syllogism.\footnote{Hegel, \textit{Science of Logic}, 620.}

We might at first be inclined to think of individuality as the whole concept whose elements or moments are the determinations of universality and particularity. Still, we must be careful to see why individuality belongs among these as a moment of itself, as well as why particularity encompasses the totality. Without grasping how individuality may be counted \textit{alongside} the moments ‘universality’ and ‘particularity’ we shall also fail to grasp the development of \textit{judgment}. We have already seen how universality constitutes both a moment and the totality. But let us now take a closer look at individuality and particularity.

Upon grasping what is \textit{unique} about individuality, one immediately grasps how individuality is grasped under the determination of particularity. Individuality offers a new determination: self-differentiation \textit{as} the unity of the universal and the particular. Insofar as individuality is constituted by this determination, it is \textit{different} from the moments of
universality and particularity in which either self-differentiation was an immediate, undifferentiated content, or self-differentiation was differentiated from its differentiations. In individuality, self-differentiation is simultaneously itself and its differentiations in which the differences are posited and unified with each other. Because individuality offers a distinct content from these other moments, it excludes the other moments from itself as distinct from it. The others, insofar as they are not individual, are not the totality of the concept. The particular is that universal which excludes what it is not, namely the determinate universal, and individuality excludes those universals that are not totalities. Since the act of exclusion brings individual in contrast to the particular, and this contrast makes individuality a determinate content, individuality is a determinate universal. Therefore, individuality itself is a determinate universal. In accordance with this result, we ought to list individuality or the unity of universality and particularity as one moment of the concept alongside, and over and against the other moments ‘universality’ and ‘particularity’.755

As a determinate universal, individuality falls under the general determination of particularity. Particularity, or the determinate universal, now includes every moment of the concept within itself: universal, particular, and individual. Because each moment is a distinct content differentiated from the others, each is a particular moment of the concept. Since the concept is fully constituted by the three elements of universality, particularity, and individuality, particularity itself must be the totality. As the totality, particularity is individuality as such.

755 I have employed the term ‘self-particularization’ throughout because the concept makes itself into a particular. This is true not just in the sense that particularity is a moment of the concept, but also in the sense that the individual itself makes itself into a particular moment of particularity. We could just have well said that the concept is self-individuating, for the concept does individuate itself. This self-individuation however, results in its own self-particularization, and therewith its own self-negation in the development of judgment.
Note that earlier only the universal and particular were species of the universal. In an earlier passage, Hegel pointed out that particularity is “(a) universality, (b) determinateness, (c) the simple unity of both […]” Before the rise of individuality, Hegel claims that particularity is the simple unity of universal and particular, yet he does not call this unity ‘individuality’. Upon the rise of individuality, Hegel recognizes the unity of particularity and universality by name, namely as individuality in his explicit recognition that “Individuality is now counted among them”. Given that there is already a unity of particularity and universality prior to the rise of individuality, what is different about particularity as individual from particularity understood prior to the development of individuality?

Earlier we concluded that individuality undermined the independence of the universal and particular constitutive of particularity. Using Hegel’s terminology, this means that the independence of either turned out to be merely illusory. Insofar as individuality posits the differences as illusory, individuality itself posits particularity itself to be illusory, namely that particularity cannot remain independent of individuality. Instead, in individuality particularity itself is comprehended as inseparable from individuality, or as individuality itself. Before the rise of particularity, particularity was grasped as independent of individuality, or that which is the self-negation of self-differentiation. Since individuality is the negation of particularity, particularity is grasped as the negation of particularity. For particularity to be grasped as its own self-negation means that it is comprehended in its unification with its opposite, and that it is only particular in virtue of being unified with its negation. Since the concept is just the universal that is unified and remains itself in what it is not, in individuality the particular is grasped as the concept. Prior to the development of particularity, particularity was not properly grasped in its concept. In each manifestation of particularity, particularity revealed itself as

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the genus and species, as the class, or the abstract universal. Indeed, it is the individuality of particularity in virtue of which it developed from the universal to the individual. Despite its presence, in each case, the self-differentiating universal rejected its own self-differentiating character. Simply put, in individuality the activity whereby the particular is originally determined is recognized and unified with what it determines. Prior to individuality, particularity continued to remain beholden to the difference between the universal and particular by limiting itself to particular forms of universality, for it did not comprehended that the fixedness of the difference entailed its own self-negation. Particularity without individuality is an incomplete thought. Independently of individuality, it is simply illusory.

Naturally, since individuality unifies all the moments of the concept, particularity as individuality is the negation of the separation of the moments. Even though each moment is a separate moment in particularity as individuality, each is grasped as particular, and thereby remains unified. To grasp particularity as individuality means to see particularity as universal, i.e. as the self-differentiating or self-negating activity by which the differences of particularity are posited, and as particular, i.e. as the difference between universal and particular itself. Since the identity of the activity of self-differentiation and the non-self-differentiating opposition of universal and particular is a contradiction, the comprehension of particularity as individuality is the comprehension of the particular as a contradiction. Throughout our discussion of particularity I constantly emphasized the contradictory aspect of the particular, and the identity of the particular with the concept. Still, such comments are only justified upon the development of individuality, and are only possible because particularity is in itself individual. Having undermined itself, particularity is now comprehended in its individuality, not in its mere difference or particularity. In individuality particularity no longer hides its own
self-differentiating activity, or shows itself as merely abstract. To the contrary, it presents itself as the individual.

Heretofore our analysis has shown that self-reference not only gives rise to self-particularization, but it also negates the very category that underwent that act of self-reference. In the case of individuality it is exactly the same. The key to grasping the development of judgment out of individuality is the particularity of individuality.

At the beginning of our discussion of particularity, we raised some questions concerning the relationship between abstract universality, the class, and the genus that requires us to investigate how these forms of determinate universality play a role in judgment and the concept. Hegel seems to argue that these forms of determinate universality first arise in judgment and yet they already appear in the concept. In order to make headway on this question, we must acquire at least a sense of how judgment arises from the concept. Earlier we noted that the return of the concept to itself in individuality is also its loss. Though it may appear that particularity has simply re-instated itself, the re-emergence of particularity as the form of individuality gives rise to an altogether novel category, the judgment. In section two of his treatment of individuality, Hegel addresses the transition of individuality to judgment:

2. But individuality is not only the return of the Notion into itself, but immediately its loss. Through individuality, where the Notion is internal to itself [in sich], it becomes external to itself [außer sich] and enters into actuality [Wirklichkeit]. Abstraction which, as the soul of individuality is the relation of the negative to the negative, is as we have shown not something external to the universal and the particular but immanent in them, and through it they are a concrete, a content, an individual. [Die Abstraktion, welche als die Seele der Einzelheit die Beziehung des Negativen auf das Negative ist, ist, wie sich gezeigt, dem Allgemeinen und Besonderen nichts Äußertches sondern immanent, und sie sind durch sie Konkretes, Inhalt, Einzelnes.] But as this negativity, individuality is the determinate determinateness, is differentiation as such; through this reflection of the difference into itself, the difference becomes fixed; it is only through individuality that the determining of the particular is effected, for individuality is that abstraction which, simply as individuality, is now posited abstraction.

757 Hegel, Science of Logic, 621, 299.
For a Hegel scholar, there may perhaps be nothing more surprising than the following sentence: “Abstraction which, as the soul of individuality is the relation of the negative to the negative, is as we have shown, not something external to the universal and the particular but immanent in them, and through it they are concrete, a content, an individual.” Though we have shown that individuality, the self-differentiation of self-differentiation, is immanent in universality and particularity, abstraction is what individuality overcomes for abstraction encodes the difference between universality and particularity that individuality undermines. Insofar as abstractions do not unify themselves with their opposites, in Hegel’s language, Hegel often calls abstractions ‘dead’. The soul in this metaphor is the principle of life, or the internal principle of motion. Thus, we might ask, how could abstraction be the ‘soul of individuality’? This passage emphasizes once more the necessity of viewing abstraction in multiple senses. Abstraction cannot be a merely external grasp of the universal, for it is immanent in the determination of universal, particular, and individual. We know that abstract universality is the soul or living principle of particularity, but how could it be the soul or internal principle of motion of that which is the ultimate determination of the concept?

If we reflect on the identity of particularity with individuality we arrive at the abstract character of individuality. Individuality is the totality of its determinations. As such, we pointed out that individuality must be differentiated from the other elements of the concept, for the other elements of the concept, qua elements, are not the totality. Individuality as such is different from the other moments. Accordingly, individuality excludes the other moments, and is listed alongside the others. Insofar as it is itself, yet excludes the other moments, we pointed out that individuality is a determinate universal. Because the determinate moment is
the *particular* moment, and particularity is constituted by the abstract universal, individuality must be an *abstract universal*. That self-differentiation is inherently abstract is evidenced by its relationship to universality and particularity. Insofar as universality and particularity are differentiations of the concept, and individuality as self-differentiation excludes these moments from itself, individuality *excludes its own differentiations from itself*. The unity of the moments now appears as an *immediate identity* opposed to the differentiations of the elements. Insofar as individuality excludes its own differentiations from its universality, individuality *qua* individuality initiates a *distinction* between its own universality and its particulars. As is evident, by identifying individuality with particularity, individuality is shown to be an abstract universal that is separate from its particulars or its moments. Thus, individuality as individuality is, as Hegel points out, “posited abstraction”.

In the passage above Hegel points out that individuality, as the determinate determinateness, is nothing other than individuality understood as a *determinate universal*. Individuality, in virtue of what it is has become a content that is just what it is and fails to admit what it is not. After all, individuality, as a negation of negation is that which it is not. Thus, it must admit to being what it is not: *the abstract universal*. As Hegel claims, insofar as the concept is ‘internal to itself’ it must be ‘external to itself’. Since abstract universality is constituted by the separation of universality and particularity, and individuality just is their unification, individuality has become external to itself. Upon applying individuality to individuality, individuality becomes the self-identical content ‘individuality’ and nothing more.

One might raise the concern that the concept has simply reverted back to the stage of particularity, and is therefore doomed to reiterate a vicious cycle from particularity to

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individuality and back again. Thankfully, we cannot return to the previous stage of particularity. For at that stage individuality had not yet developed. Indeed, particularity itself, as well as every other moment of the universal, has been transformed into individuality. The new content at hand is *individuality as abstract* that is, as a *fixed determination*, which is a novel determination. Hegel further illustrates the novel content that is the abstract universality of individuality as an act of self-repulsion:

The individual, therefore, as self-related negativity is the immediate identity of the negative with itself; it is a being for self. Or it is the abstraction that determines the Notion according to its ideal moment of being as an immediate. In this way, the individual is a qualitative one *[Eins]* or this *[Dieses]*. With this quality it is first, repulsion of itself from itself *[Repulsion seiner von sich Selbst]*, whereby the many other ones are presupposed; secondly it is now a negative relation towards these presupposed others, and the individual is in so far exclusive *[ausschließend]*. Universality, when related to these individuals as different ones—and related to them it must be because it is a moment of the Notion of individuality—is merely their common element *[das Gemeinsame]*. When one understands by the universal, what is common *[gemeinschaftlich]* to several individuals one is starting from the indifferent subsistence of these individuals and confounding *[eingemischt]* the immediacy of being with the determination of the Notion. The lowest conception one can have of the universal in its connexion with the individual is this external relation of it as merely a common element *[Gemeinschaftlichen]*.759

Before diving into the concept of ‘self-repulsion’ I would like to note that Hegel employs a new term for the abstraction that has arisen in the place of individuality. Hegel uses the word ‘gemeinsam’ and various grammatical forms thereof. ‘Gemeinsam’ is related to the term ‘Gemeinschaft’, which means ‘community’. The term offers the starkest contrast with ‘Allgemeinheit’, or universality proper. Note that ‘Allgemeinheit’ also shares the root ‘gemein’ in common with ‘gemeinsam’. For Hegel, German has captured this relationship. What is ‘Gemeinschaftlich’ is related to ‘Allgemeinheit’, for both signify forms of universality.

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The dialectical situation is quickly sharpened when we consider the abstract individuality in conjunction with the development of individuality itself out of particularity. Individuality, as it arose from particularity, could not in principle be separated from its moments. Both universality and particularity, as separate moments, were nonetheless identified with individuality. Evidently, it is the identification of individuality with particularity that leads to abstract individuality. In addition, the very content ‘that which is the unity of particularity and universality’ is the specific content that constitutes individuality as the abstract universal. Because individuality is initially the overcoming of abstraction in particularity, the development of itself as an abstraction is nothing other than its positing of itself as other than itself.

Particularity is individuality, and individuality must be separate from particularity. Likewise, universality is individuality and individuality must be separate from universality. Given our earlier result that both universality and particularity are individuality, and given that abstract individuality must be separate from both universality and particularity, it follows that individuality must be separate from itself. In other words, individuality divides itself into three separate individuals, each of which is individuality as such. Each moment is the whole of individuality, and for this reason, each is its own separate determination. Insofar as each is individuality itself, each ceases to be a moment of individuality, for each is the independent concept as such. Individuality, as one content, ‘repulses itself’ from itself, and puts forward three individuals. Each section of the Logic illustrates this, for each sequence of moves in the Logic is constituted by three categories. Indeed, individuality as that content in which the

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760 We ought to note that earlier in the Logic of Being, Hegel shows how repulsion as a category follows from the category ‘one’. In this section there is a repetition of this sequence, though in the form of individuality. Abstract individuality is not repulsion itself, but a novel form of repulsion. In the Logic of Being between repulsion and unity stands the concept of the void. Here there is no mention of void, but its re-incarnation is also implicit. The simplicity of the ones is also the void of difference in the ones. It is the exchange of one and void that originally gives rise to the repulsion of the one from itself.
concept is its moments, must divide itself. Thus, individuality must exclude itself from itself.

This is the meaning of ‘ausschließend’ or ‘exclusive’ in this context. The individual acquires an exclusive relationship towards itself. This is judgment or the original partitioning of the one concept into self-subsistent unities.\(^\text{761}\)

The Notion, as this relation of its self-subsistent \(Selbständigen\) determinations, has lost itself; for as such it is no longer their posited unity, and they are no longer present as moments, as the illusory being, of the Notion, but as subsistent in and for themselves. As individuality, the Notion in its determinateness returns to itself, and therewith the determinate moment has itself become a totality. Its return into itself \(\text{Die Rückkehr}\) is therefore the absolute, original partition \(\text{ursprüngliche Teilung}\) of itself, or in other words, it is posited as judgment \(\text{Urteil}\).\(^\text{762}\)

Because each moment of the concept is now utterly independent of the others, they are no longer moments or elements of one concept. For this reason, it is fitting to claim that through the abstract determination of individuality the concept has ceased to be the concept and for this reason has ‘lost itself’. Earlier in the domain of particularity, each moment was conceived in terms of an illusory reference. The illusion at that stage consisted in the illusion of their independence. Now, the illusion of their independence has ceased to be an illusion, for it has become the reality. The return to particularity in abstract individuality is the shattering of the unity of the concept, as well as the illusory references that constituted particularity.

The determinate moment has truly become the totality, not merely the illusion of the totality. Instead of the concept, what is present is the judgment that the individual is universal. In the form of judgment the predicate excludes its negation: ‘the individual is universal’ does not mean ‘the individual is not universal’. In the judgment ‘the individual is universal’ the subject

\(^{761}\text{Judgment in German is ‘Urteil’, which is literally ‘the original separation or partition’.}\)

\(^{762}\text{Hegel, Science of Logic, 622, 301.}\)
does not admit the negation of the predicate. Instead, we are in the presence of what Hegel is fond of calling a ‘one-sided’ determination.

In our analysis of Kant, we showed how his inability to identify an independent conceptual content distinct from predicates in possible judgments as the source of the vicious circularity of his account of categories. Hegel, by contrast, develops and elucidates the concept of the concept independently of judgment. Upon developing an account of the concept that is independent of judgment, Hegel shows how this independent content creates judgment in virtue of that very content. Pippin, in his book The Satisfaction of Self-Consciousness confuses the conceptual content of judgment with that of the concept. He writes:

The determinacy of the concept is not (or is not wholly and not fundamentally) a function of such abstraction, according to Hegel; instead the concept’s determinacy (its own particularity or content) is primarily a function of the role it can and cannot play in judgments, judgments that originally determine the particular as the distinct particular that it is. Hegel is following Kant here in understanding concepts as “predicates of possible judgments” and likewise insisting that to understand a concept is not to represent some abstracted common quality, but to understand how to use it in a variety of judgments.763

Pippin does indeed contrast the concept with abstraction, yet fails to see the affinity of abstraction with the concept of the concept as a “predicate of possible judgments”. In stark contrast to Kant, Hegel is not following Kant here, for the concept cannot be identified with a predicate of possible judgments. Judgments, for Hegel, follow from the concept. Instead of following Kant here, Hegel is giving the condition for the possibility of any judgment whatever: the self-differentiating concept. As Hegel points out, speculative truths, and in this case the concept, cannot be properly expressed in judgment. In judgment, the

particular has been separated from its concrete unity with the universal and individual, and if anything, fails to express the concept proper.

Given that the individual is the abstract universal, all the features of the abstract universal come to bear upon the individual. Because individuality is the totality of its moments, each individual is self-subsistent. Each individual is self-differentiation, and as the totality excludes all the others. Each of the others is given or presupposed as another individual, but it is an individual that is by itself. This is what Hegel means by ‘being for self’. As the totality each transcends all otherness. For this reason, Hegel uses the term ‘indifferent’. Each individual has no relation to the others. Each individual takes itself to be the totality, all there is.⁷⁶⁴

The determination of each individual is exhausted in the concept ‘this individuality’. Each is individuality, though none of them are reducible to the others. For this reason, each is unique individuality. Each is a unique individual, though there is nothing to which we could appeal to further individuate them. There are only two terms at hand: the individual as ‘this’ and the individuality that is attributed to ‘this’. It is just individuality as ‘being’ or ‘immediately there’ without any further qualification. ‘This’, in contrast to ‘such and such’, denotes an individual qua individual.

The concept of the individual as a ‘this’ is the abstract rendering of the individual. As a result, when I say ‘this’ in reference to an individual, the only conceptual content that is there is ‘being a this’ or ‘being an individual’. Indeed, each has been reduced to the common content ‘individuality’. Because each is an individual, they have nothing in common except

That they are each individuals. This is as if one were to point to a plurality of unique individuals and say ‘they are all unique’. Indeed, it is the relation of exclusion that constitutes their universality. In the common term ‘individuality’ what individuates them cannot be determined. All that is certain is that each individual is an instance of individuality per se. Each has the ‘this’ in common, for as a ‘this’ each is indistinguishable from the others, and cannot be separated from them. This, if you will, is the moment of ‘attraction’. Yet, each is not the other, for each is ‘the this itself’, and so each is its own ‘this’. As Hegel points out, because the individual is in the form of particularity, the universal is excluded, yet must in virtue of that exclusion, nonetheless be related to the various particulars:

This act of abstraction by the individual, being the reflection of the difference into itself, is first a positing of the differentiated moments as self-subsistent and reflected-into-self. They immediately are; but further, this sundering [dieses Trennen] is reflection as such, the illusory being of one in the other [das Scheinen des einen im anderen]; thus they stand in essential relation. Further, the individuals are not merely inertly present in relation to one another; such plurality belongs to being; the individuality, in positing itself as determinate, posits itself not in an external difference but in the difference of the Notion. It therefore excludes the universal from itself; yet since this is a moment of individuality, the universal is equally essentially related to it.765

Each individual, as a separate determination, excludes the universal from itself. For this reason, one might exclaim that there is nothing universal here at all, only particulars. After all, as abstract the individual is in the form of one of its differences or moments, namely particularity. Yet, insofar as each is separate, each has this in common, namely being separate, or being an individual. Each appears as the other, or presents itself as the other. This is the ‘illusory being of one in the other’, for each excludes the other. The separation of each determination from the other presents each individual as inseparable from the others in that very content ‘separateness’. For this reason, Hegel points out that the contents are not inert.

765 Hegel, Science of Logic, 622, 300-301.
They are actively unifying and separating themselves from each other in virtue of what they are. The universal ‘individuality’ appears in the exclusion of universality. The individual, as individual, is universal. This university is abstract because it is the common term ‘individuality’ shared by individuals that it cannot differentiate. Because each individual is indistinguishable from the universal content ‘individuality’ the various individuals themselves are abstract universals.

We should note, as Hegel does, that no individual is an individual in virtue of someone pointing it out. When the individual is a ‘this’ in virtue of some external act, the individual is posited as abstract in virtue of something other than the activity of individuality per se. When individuals are merely pointed out, the immediate existence that is denoted is separate from the act of mediation, or the act by which they are posited as immediate, namely the pointing:

The individual, which in the sphere of reflection exists as a this, does not have the exclusive relation to another one which belongs to qualitative being-for-self. This, as the one reflected into itself, is for itself and without repulsion; or repulsion in this reflection is one with abstraction and is the reflecting mediation which attaches to the this in such wise that the this is a posited immediacy pointed out by someone external to it. The this is; it is immediate; but it is only this in so far as it is pointed out. The ‘pointing out’ is the reflecting movement which collects itself inwardly and posits immediacy, but as a self-external immediacy. Now the individual is certainly a this, as the immediate restored out of mediation; but it does not have the mediation outside it—it is itself a repelling separation, posited abstraction, yet in its very act of separating, it is a positive relation.766

Each individual is an individual, or a ‘this’, in virtue of the transformation of individuality.767 Indeed, the meaning of ‘posited abstraction’ is just this: individuality divides itself into a plurality of abstract individuals. In other words, the activity of the self-division of

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individuality is the activity by which individuality determines itself to be a triad of self-exclusive abstractions. Because it is individuality that gives the plurality of abstract universals, it is only through individuality that, as Hegel says, ‘the particular is determined’.\textsuperscript{768} The act by which the abstractions are differentiated and determined is not separate from or external to individuality per se. Judgment cannot fully contain the concept, for it determines the individual through one self-identical predicate.

\textsuperscript{768} There is one predicate, but three individuals are abstractly determined.
Having elucidated the structure of universal, particular, and individual we are in a position to address the problems that we raised earlier regarding the immanence of the forms of determinate universality: abstraction, the class, and genus and species. First, we noted that at the very outset of the analysis of universality Hegel claims that the concept is not abstractly determinate. Second, the abstract universal seems to first enter only after the three determinations of the concept have been elucidated in *Judgment* as the form of predication in judgments of existence. Here we essentially have one problem: the determinate universal qua determinate appears to be banished from the concept as such, and as determinate it arises in judgment. Yet, Hegel introduces the abstract universal in his analysis of the concept proper, where it plays a special role in providing for the transition to individuality. By addressing these issues we shall have the opportunity to address the more general question concerning the relation of the concept to the forms of determinate universality that we raised at the outset of our inquiry: how can the self-differentiating universal account for, or be a source of, universals that are not self-differentiating, such as the abstract universal, the class, and the genus and species? More generally stated, what is the relation between individuality and the particular universals, namely the abstract universal, the class, and the genus?

If we consider the nature of judgment in Hegel’s philosophy, we soon realize that in principle abstraction cannot first arise in judgment. Throughout the *Science of Logic*, Hegel continually points out that judgment is a defective means to express the concept. For

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example, consider Hegel’s comments about the insufficiency of judgments to express the identity and non-identity of Being and Nothing:

In this connection we must, at the outset, make this general observation, namely that the proposition in the form of a judgment is not suited to express speculative truths; a familiarity with this fact is likely to remove many misunderstandings of speculative truths. Judgment is an identical relation between subject and predicate; in it we abstract from the fact that the subject has a number of determinatenesses other than that of the predicate, and also that the predicate is more extensive than the subject. Now if the content is speculative, the non-identical aspect of subject and predicate is also an essential moment, but in the judgment this is not expressed. It is the form of the simple judgment, when it is used to express speculative results, which is very often responsible for the paradoxical and bizarre light in which much of recent philosophy appears to those who are not familiar with speculative thought.\footnote{Hegel, Science of Logic, 90.}

For Hegel, the concept hides in the judgment. Speculative content expresses the identity and non-identity of categories. In the judgment, ‘S is P’ the predicate only expresses the identity of itself with the subject, but fails to express the non-identity of itself with the subject, namely that ‘S is not P’. For this reason, Hegel infers that judgments do not properly express speculative content. Regarding the abstract universal, Hegel is clear that it intrinsically unites all three elements of the concept: universality, particularity, and individuality.\footnote{Hegel, Science of Logic, 608-609, 283-284. Hegel’s words are “It is (a) universality, (b) determinateness, (c) the simple unity of both”} Given that judgments cannot express the identity and non-identity of the concept with its negation, and the abstract universal contains its opposing determination, namely the self-differentiating universal, the abstract universal cannot in principle first arise in judgment as a predicate. Again, if it were to first arise in judgment, then the abstract universal could not in principle express the unity of oppositions that is inherent in the concept, a unity that cannot be properly
expressed in the judgment. Indeed, in particularity the abstract universal appears as inherently united with the concept. Further, given the insufficiency of judgment to express the unity of opposition, if the abstract universal were to first arise in judgment, then the abstract universal would not be able to contain its opposing determination. If in principle the abstract universal could not contain its opposition, then it is unclear how it would be possible for the abstract universal to develop into the class and the genus within the sphere of Judgment, for in itself the abstract universal would exclude these determinations. Indeed, Hegel points out that it is the inner unity of the determinate concepts that enables them to develop further in Judgment and the Syllogism, and it is in the concept that the inner unity of the forms of determinate universality is first expressed. It is the inner unity of each form of determinate universality in the concept of the concept that enables speculative development in the sphere of Judgment.

Still, Hegel is also clear that what kinds of determinate concepts there are first arise in judgment. For this reason, we appear to be at an impasse. If abstraction must arise prior to judgment in the concept, then it appears that the determinate concepts that arise in judgment simply re-play what has already arisen in the concept. Naturally, this is problematic, for judgment offers new determinations, not replays or a mere re-hashing of the same content. Moreover, if abstraction and the other forms of the determinate concept already arise in the concept, then we have another interpretative problem, for Hegel insists that it is in judgment that the forms of determinate universality first arise. It would appear that taking Hegel at his word regarding the concept is giving us trouble reading Judgment coherently.

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773 The inability of the judgment to express the unity of the concept means that in the judgment the concept is not self-referential or self-particularizing.

774 Hegel, Science of Logic, 597.
I propose that Hegel offers a middle way: we must reject two theses. On the one hand, it cannot be the case that the forms of determinate concepts as determinate are already present in the concept. On the other hand, it cannot be the case that the forms of determinate concepts are completely absent from the concept. Thus, there is only one possibility: the determinate concepts can only be present in the concept as Being in and for themselves, or as individuality. In order to clarify what this means, let us consult Hegel’s brief synopsis of subjectivity. In the Concept, Hegel writes:

In the immediate unity, its difference or positedness is itself at first simple and only an illusory being, so that the moments of the difference are immediately the totality of the Notion and are simply the Notion as such.\(^{775}\)

In the Logic of the Concept, every difference is illusory. Earlier we pointed out what this means: what is illusory has the appearance of being independent, but it is not. Although each difference in the concept is present in the concept, none cannot be differentiated from the concept as such. Every effort to differentiate the differences results in the collapse of those differences and their identity. In other words, every attempt to separate out some difference as independent of other differences results in the negation of its independence. In the concept, every difference of the differentiation of universal from particular, for instance, must be reducible to particularity as such. For this reason, abstract universal, the class, and the genus are only present in the concept as illusory differences. Each embodies the separation of universality and particularity, yet in the concept, in individuality, that separation is not true; it is illusory. But that does not mean that the differences are not in the concept at all, for they are there as “immediate” or identical to the concept. Conceptual differences are

\(^{775}\) Hegel, Science of Logic, 599.
determinate just insofar as there is contrast with some other. Yet, in the concept, every attempt to contrast the differences undermines the separation of terms upon which that contrast is grounded. For this reason, the forms of universality are present in the concept as ‘indistinguishable from the concept.’ There is no determinacy to the differences apart from the concept.

Already in our discussion of the development of individuality, we showed how individuality determines the independence of each term to be wholly illusory, or as only appearing to be independent. Particularity qua independent of individuality is incomplete. In virtue of what it is, particularity must be identified with the concept as such. In individuality the activity of self-differentiation and the differences of that self-differentiation are unified. In individuality each element of the concept, ‘universal’ and ‘particular’, are really only ‘universal-particular’ and ‘particular-universal’. As such they have one and the same content: individuality. In individuality, each of the elements of universality is not really independent. Instead, there is only individuality. Individuality shows the impossibility of their separation. Because particularity is individuality, and the particular universals are inherent in the concept of particularity as such, individuality is inseparable from the content of the particular universals themselves.776 Each of the forms of determinate universality is an individual.777 For this reason, the abstract universal, the class, and the genus and species are each individuals. This means that each universal is a unity of the activity of self-differentiation and the differences that it creates. Though this unification, the contradiction of particularity, is the inverted concept, it is nonetheless the concept.

776 This is evident in Hegel’s identification of every moment as individual. The particular moment is the individual insofar as it contains all the determinations of the concept: universal, particular, and individual. Upon grasping each as a moment of the concept, the particular contains all of the determinations of the concept, and is the individual. As we pointed out, this immediately undermines individuality and gives rise to judgment.

777 It is important to emphasize that even in individuality the forms of determinate universality are concepts, but they are concepts that have inverted the form of conceptual determination. Each is the concept inverted.
Nonetheless, immediately upon achieving its own separate determination, *individuality* is conceived as *particularity* and puts itself forward as the *abstract universal*, or the common form of the elements of the concepts. Exactly at the point at which the particular universals are individuals, individuality undermines itself. The moment that the particular becomes individuality, and the differences of the moment are rendered absolute, the individual ceases to be what it is.

Individuality is the universal that is particular, or the particular that is universal. Since each form of particular universality is a *particular universal* or a *universal particular*, each form of particular universality must be *an individual*. If we insist that the abstract universal, the class, and the genus and species only arise in judgment, then these particular universals cannot be identified as particular universals in the first place, for in judgment each is separated from individuality, and is a one-sided determination.

In *Judgment* the forms of determinate universality are not identical with the concept. Concerning judgment Hegel writes the following:

[…] This positing or differentiation is characterized by the fact that the moments become indifferent to one another and each becomes for itself; in this partition, its unity is still only an external connexion. As such connexion of its moments, which are posited as self-subsistent and indifferent, it is judgment.\(^{778}\)

In *Judgment* each of the differences acquires its own independence or self-subsistence and enters into an external connection with the other differences. In judgment, insofar as each category is no longer immediately reducible to the concept, each category of determinate universality can appear as its own *determinate* form of universality separate from the other determinations of the concept. The basic form of determinacy in judgment is the opposition

\(^{778}\) Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 599.
of the abstract universal with the individuals that have its form. In positive judgment the abstract universal is a content that is separate from the individuals that instantiate it. Although the unity of the concept has disappeared in judgment\textsuperscript{779}, the determinacy of each form of determinate universality appears. To put it simply, in the concept the determinate forms of universality are developed as determinate in judgment.

At the outset of the section on Judgment, he points out that the determinate concepts have already been considered on their own.

The Notion’s determinations, or what we have seen to be the same thing, the determinate Notions, have already been considered on their own; but this consideration was more of a subjective reflection or subjective abstraction. But this Notion itself is this abstractive process, the opposing of determinations is its own determining activity.\textsuperscript{780}

There are various senses of ‘subjective’ that Hegel employs in different places in the text.\textsuperscript{781} By “subjective reflection” and “abstraction” Hegel is pointing out that the determinate concepts have only been considered in respect to their subjectivity, which in the technical sense of this chapter signifies their existence as merely conceptual.\textsuperscript{782} In this passage Hegel identifies the subjective with the inner principle, that which sets opposing terms into a unity.

\textsuperscript{779} Hegel, \textit{Science of Logic}, 599.
\textsuperscript{780} Hegel, \textit{Science of Logic}, 633.
\textsuperscript{781} On one reading, Hegel means that the determinate conceptions are not internal to the concept but external and contingent to it. If this reading were correct, then we would be unable to make sense of Hegel’s identification of the concept with the abstractive process. If the subjective abstraction were a process external and continent to the concept, then it would be improper for Hegel to identify the concept with the abstractive process.
\textsuperscript{782} Hegel, \textit{Science of Logic}, 597. “But the identity of the Notion, which is precisely their inner or subjective essence, sets them dialectically in movement, which the result that their separatedness vanishes and with it the separation of the Notion from the object, and there emerges as their truth the totality which is the objective Notion.” Hegel also connects the concept of subjectivity with immediacy and formal determination. See Hegel, \textit{Science of Logic}, 599. Insofar as each determination of the concept does not achieve its own independent determinacy, and only has illusory being, each of the differences is immediately the concept and is thereby subjective in this sense. The content of the concept is ‘subjective’ because each of its differences must be posited as external to the concept. In judgment, the concept as such separates elements out of itself and posits its differences as distinct from the original unity of determinations.
A reflection that is merely conceptual has not yet recognized the independence each determination. Instead, each has only been considered as the concept, or as an element of the concept. Hegel reminds us that the determinate forms of the concept have their origin in the abstractive process of the concept itself. When we consider the determinate concepts (such as abstraction) merely in the terms of the concept, the determinate concepts cannot be separated from the concept itself.

What does it mean to say that the concept is the “abstractive process”? It means that the concept separates out or abstracts what is immanent in the concept and determines it as something independent of the unity to which it originally belongs. When we consider the determinate concepts in the concept, we are considering them only in respect to their original and inner unity in the concept, not as the result of the self-separation of the concept’s moments from itself. The concept is the power by which the abstraction happens, and the power that makes it possible.

In order for individuality, as the abstractive process, to put the abstract universal forward, the abstract universal must already be given in that from which it is abstracted. Given that the abstract universal is abstracted from individuality, the abstract universal must already be given in individuality itself. Indeed, this has been our aim: to elucidate the abstract universal that is already immanent in individuality. Naturally, the abstract universal as immanent in individuality is not the same as the abstract universal as abstracted from individuality. Abstraction as immanent in individuality is abstraction as inseparable from individuality, or better, as individuality itself. Abstraction qua abstracted from individuality is

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Note that the immanence of the abstract universal is not like a series of Russian dolls, in which each is already contained in the other as a fully determinate entity. Instead, it is more like the abstract universal is there potentially. It is only potentially separate from the concept. Husserl in his Logical Investigations is also concerned with showing how the abstract universal must already be given in that from it is abstracted before it can be abstracted, though unlike Hegel he relies on intuition in order to establish the possibility of abstraction.
abstraction as a one-sided determination for it has been separated from the individuality of which it is the element and the whole. Each form of judgment considers individuality as one form of determinate universality. Since individuality is not ultimately reducible to any of these forms, each of the forms of judgment entails an opposition of individuality to forms of determinate universality. As a predicate of a judgment it is no longer the whole and the element thereof. Because abstract universality is individuality, abstract universality is indeed still individuality in judgment, for judgment states that ‘the individual is universal’. Still, this identity of individuality and universality is now one-sided, for in judgment the universal is a predicate that does not admit its own negation.

Individuality is the activity whereby the particular universals, abstraction, the class, and the genus/species are determined. Individuality, as the abstractive activity, separates out the particular universals from their original unity with the concept and presents them as separate and distinct forms of universality and judgment. The result is evident: without individuality, the particular universals abstraction, the class, and the genus/species would not be possible. We pointed out that individuality permeates each form of determinate universality in the concept. Insofar as the determinate universals are also posits of individuality, in Judgment individuality is only an external condition for the possibility of the particular universals, for individuality does not penetrate the universal themselves, for it is only their condition. Having already discussed the way individuality permeates the different forms of determinate universality, let us proceed to discuss the way that individuality externally conditions the forms of determinate universality in judgment.

Upon splitting itself into three independent individuals, the universal, the particular, and the individual, individuality presents itself as three independent individuals. In judgment, each particular universal, the abstraction, the class, and the genus and the species, depend
upon the givenness of individuals. In judgment, abstract universal is a common term abstracted from a plurality of individuals in which it inheres. Since the abstract universal is only the common term of its instances, it cannot differentiate its instances from one another. Indeed, the abstract universal leaves each of its differences undifferentiated. Abstract universality is not the principle by which its particulars are individuated. Far from being a principle of individuality, abstract universal assumes individuality as its condition. The abstract universal cannot be abstracted from individuals if there are no individuals given at the outset. For this reason, the abstract universal depends upon individuality dividing itself into a plurality of individuals. Indeed, at the very close of individuality, individuality separates itself from itself and presents itself as three distinct individuals, each of which has the abstract universal ‘individuality’ in common. Without individuality, the abstract universal would fail to possess the foundation upon which it is possible. In judgment, the abstract universal cannot account for individuality, for individuality is its foundation.

When we consider the class we discover a similar dependence upon the givenness of individuality. Unlike the abstract universal, the class is an aggregation of individuals. The class is simply all the particulars or the totality of them. Insofar as each particular or member belongs to the class, each is a member of the class. However, neither does the class account for what differentiates each member, nor does the class account for the givenness of each particular that is set into or aggregated into the class. For this reason, without the givenness of individuals, individuals cannot be aggregated into a class.

Like the abstraction and the class, the genus and species is also dependent upon the givenness of individuality. In Kinds of Universality in Section III we discussed this form of universality in some depth. Genera are universals that contain their particulars, namely their species. These species are themselves genera for other species. At the lowest rung of
conceptual determination the infima species is not a genus, for it does not contain any
universals. To the contrary, only individuals fall under the lowest species. Any species that is
not a genus for other species, the infamous species, will not have any conceptual means for
differentiating the particulars falling within it, since there is no lower species to differentiate
the particulars falling within the species. For this reason, the lowest species cannot
differentiate its individuals. Hence, at the lowest differentiation, the species is a class whose
members are distinguished by a principle external to the genus and species. Because the
lowest species cannot account for the individuals that fall under it, the species must assume
the givenness of individuals, in order for it to be possible.

In sum, the genus and species, the class, and the abstract universal are all indebted to
the givenness of individuality. None are able to account for the individuality of their species,
instances, or members, and for this reason require the givenness of individuals in order to be
possible. Individuality, by dividing itself into a plurality of independent individuals, abstracts
its moments from itself, and thereby makes possible the abstract universal and class
membership. In each case the dependency of the particular universal is an external
dependency. Neither the abstract universal, nor the class, nor the genus and species are
themselves individuals. Instead, each kind of universal is dependent upon an individuality that
is distinct from itself.

In judgment individuality provides the given starting point, but does not constitute
the content of the universals themselves. At the close of the concept, individuality completes
its development and only thereafter posits judgment. Individuality, insofar as it is complete
prior to the development of judgment, stands outside of the forms of judgment and the
forms of universality that is at work in those judgments. In judgment it is exactly because the
individual abstracts its own elements from their original unity in the concept that
individuality conditions the concepts in the forms of judgment externally. Because each form of judgment and the concept active therein is presented in a one sided way and fails to contain the original unity within itself, the forms of the concept are devoid of individuality in themselves.\footnote{Hegel includes four forms of judgment, the last of which is the concrete universal or the judgment that includes the self-differentiating universal. Everything that I have claimed about the other forms of judgment applies here as well. Here we find that the judgments of actuality, possibility, and necessity express the particular moment ‘individuality of the concept’ in a particular way, i.e. as distinct and divorced from its own constituents. In other words, this form of judgment expresses the concept of individuality as such insofar as it is separated and distinct from all of its other moments. In this way, even the judgment of the concept fails to properly express what individuality is, and excludes it from its content. In the most general sense of abstraction, the judgment of the concept is an abstract rendering of individuality.}

At the outset of our investigation into particularity, we noted an important passage in which Hegel claims that “abstraction is the soul of individuality”. Since we have identified the abstract universal with particularity, Hegel is here claiming that the particular is the soul of individuality. The metaphor of “soul” as the principle of life implies that abstraction is the principle of its own determinations and its own development. Earlier we pointed out that in individuality the activity by which the differences in particularity are posited by self-differentiation is identical to the differences that are posited.\footnote{See pages 439-440.} Now we have the opportunity to elaborate more on what this means. Individuality is the abstractive process, namely that process by which the abstract universal is given. But individuality is not just the abstractive process, for it abstracts the abstract universal from itself. Individuality puts itself forward as the abstract universal. Accordingly, in individuality the abstractive process is identical to the abstract universal. Indeed, as the abstractive process and the abstraction, the universal and particular are inseparable. Accordingly, in individuality or in the concept the abstract universal is not abstract. As individuality, it is identical with its opposite, that which is not abstract. Because the abstract universal entails the separation of the universal and particular, by positing itself as the abstract universal, individuality places itself outside itself or
in one of its determinations. Insofar as the abstractive process makes itself abstract, it ceases to be individuality, for it is no longer a unity of oppositions. As judgment, this unity is precluded by the attribution of one predicate that excludes its negation. Indeed, the process by which individuality becomes abstract is nothing other than the process by which individuality separates itself from itself, namely the separation of the abstractive activity from the abstract universal itself.

One might wonder how it could be that the very abstractive process could also be the abstract universal, or the result of that process. To see how this could be, we only need point to the structure of particularity. Particularity, as the self-negation of self-differentiation is the abstract universal: the separation of universality from particularity. Particularity is immediately the universal as differentiated into universal and particular. This is the universal as non-self-differentiating universal and as abstract. Yet, particularity is also the very process by which self-differentiation is negated. The negation of self-differentiation is the abstractive process whereby the universality that is defined by the opposition between universal and particular is determined, namely the abstract universal. For this reason, in particularity itself we already find the unity of the abstractive activity and the abstract universal. Still we must emphasize once again that this is only recognized as such in individuality.

This solution accords with Hegel’s texts and offers a middle way out of the impasse. First, it recognizes that as determinate, the abstract universal first appears in judgment, as Hegel claims. For this reason, it is not wrong that the abstract universal as determinate first appears in judgment. Yet, as Hegel himself insists, this solution also recognizes that the abstract universal has a place in the concept, though not as determinate but as individuality, or absolute determination. In the concept its separation from individuality is illusory. It is only in this qualified sense that the differences exist in the concept. Indeed, in the development of
To put it reflexively, since particularity is the determinate concept, it is only in judgment that particularity becomes particular, or the determinate concept becomes determinate. Or what is the same: the abstract universal becomes abstract.

Having reconstructed Hegel's *Logic of the Concept* we are now in a position to sum up the results of our inquiry into the concept. At the outset of our investigation, we put some leading questions forward as guides to our inquiry. Among these is the most difficult question: how can the self-differentiating universal solve the four paradoxes of self-reference?

With the development of individuality, we have the opportunity to comment on the relationship between Hegel and Ancient Greek philosophy. One of the central questions of Ancient Greek philosophy is the question 'What is Form?'. For the Ancient Greeks the concept of Form contained a paradox: on the one hand, each Form is both particular, or one in number, and universal, or one in kind. For Plato, the duality of Form as universal and particular results in the third man regress. For Aristotle, the duality of Form leads to the problem of the differentia. In each case, the duality of Form as universal and particular leads to paradoxes. As an avid student of Ancient Greek philosophy, Hegel recognized that only by unifying the universal and particular could these paradoxes be solved. He also recognized

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787 "Judgment is the determinateness of the Notion posited in the Notion itself" (Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 623). By my lights, what first arises in judgment is the abstract universal as separated from individuality and universality as moments of the concept. Abstract universality in judgment is no longer inseparable from the concept, but now has the form of judgment. Abstract universality is immediately connected to the other moments of the concept in the *Logic of the Concept*. In judgment, its immediate unity with those moments is suppressed. In any case, Hegel indicates that judgment is the result of the return of the determinate concept to itself, not its initial arrival. In judgment the determinate concept is now determinate and not in the immediate or indeterminate relationship of identity with universality and individuality.
788 See the discussion of Aristotle in Section I.
that in order to do so he must abandon key assumptions that had generated these paradoxes in the first place. By re-thinking universality as individuality, Hegel freshly engages Ancient Greek philosophy by offering a novel way out of both paradoxes.789

In the course of our reconstruction of Hegel’s concept of the concept, we have painstakingly reconstructed Hegel’s argument that the universal individuates itself. In virtue of its self-differentiating character, the universal differentiates itself into two distinct forms: the particular and the universal. Upon differentiating itself into these distinct forms, self-differentiation differentiates itself once again. This time, however, self-differentiation negates the separation of universality and particularity that is constitutive of particularity, thereby giving rise to individuality. Having painstakingly showed how the concept individuates itself, let us now employ this knowledge to shed light on our guiding questions.

The dogmatic separation of the principles of universality and particularity has engendered a re-occurring complaint against philosophy, namely that it cannot think what is individual with concepts. As common terms, for instance, concepts cannot lay hold of what individuates. As long as the concept remains imprisoned in this division, the only recourse for philosophy is some form of mysticism, a view to which we have returned time and again in our historical investigation, from Plato to Martin Heidegger. Traditionally, because the concept is not individual, the individual was understood as that which transcends the concept. In mysticism, philosophy can only bring us to the threshold of individuality, but no further. If we wish to go further in philosophy, we must take a radical turn. Since the universal and the particular cease to be separated in individuality, in order to make

789 Schelling already recognized that Hegel’s project aimed at enlivening an older ontology in his Munich lectures. Regarding Hegel’s attempt to make concepts principles of existence he writes that “The attempt to make concepts the principles of existence and movement is an attempt to give life to an old ontology.” Schelling, On the History of Philosophy, 143-144.
individuality conceivable, Hegel recognized the need for this radical turn: philosophy ought to show how the concept must be conceived as a unity of universality and particularity. If we follow Hegel, we can avoid the objection that the concept cannot grasp the individual. Because the concept is itself individuality, and we know the concept, we can know individuality. Indeed, we know individuality just insofar as we know what the concept is. Because they are identical, the individual is no longer beyond the concept, for anything that is individual must be conceptual or at least have a conceptual component. To think individuality, we must endorse Hegel’s self-differentiating universal. Hegel’s self-differentiating universal appears to be the only alternative to total mysticism.

Our original question ‘what is the concept’ demanded that our answer be both self-referential and existentially implicative or, what I have called for the purposes of this section, ‘self-particularizing’. Unlike the dogmatic appropriation of the concept as a formal principle that abides by the principle of non-contradiction, self-differentiation abides by the conditions of the question concerning universality. The self-contradiction of self-differentiation in virtue of which the concept becomes individuality is not possible without the self-referring activity of self-differentiation. Self-differentiation, in virtue of being what it is, applies its own conceptual content to itself. For this reason, self-reference is a necessary feature of the concept. The self-referential feature of self-differentiation necessitates that the concept particularize itself. Through its self-particularization, the concept achieves individuality. Without self-particularization, there would be no individuality whatever.

790 In sense certainty in the Phenomenology of Spirit Hegel points out that philosophy is not concerned with the individuality of the sensual individuals, such as ‘this pencil’. Yet, in a certain way, individuality itself individuates itself into a series of individuals, each of which is a ‘this’. For this reason, the self-individuation of the concept in the Science of Logic may itself form the foundation of the ‘this’ in the philosophy mind, namely the ‘this’ that is taken for granted in sense certainty.
Our historical and systematic investigation into the question ‘what is the concept?’ lead us to four dogmas of universality from which four paradoxes of self reference followed. The four dogmas are the principle of non-contradiction, finitude of the concept, the separation of principles of universality and particularity, and the appeal to foundations. From these we showed that four paradoxes followed: the problem of the missing difference, the problem of participation, psychologism, and onto-theology.\(^{791}\) Because the paradoxes follow from the four dogmas, any solution to the four paradoxes of self-reference must show why the four dogmas are unfounded.

On the face of it, it appeared that Hegel’s construal of the universal as self-differentiation solved the four paradoxes of self-reference in one single blow. Because the self-differentiating universal is both the principle of its universality and its particularity, self-differentiation is no longer beholden to the separation of the principles of universality and particularity. Moreover, it undermines the principle of non-contradiction, for as the principle of universality and particularity it is identical to itself only in its differentiation from itself. Since it is the principle of its own difference, there is no difference outside of itself to which it must appeal in order to be differentiated. For this reason, self-differentiation eschews the appeal to foundations. Lastly, as that which is identical to what it is not, there is no difference outside of the universal that could in principle limit it. For this reason, it is also infinite. Having elucidated the universal, we appeared to have already achieved our goal: to discover an account of the concept of the concept that did not fall victim to the four paradoxes of self-reference.

Upon closer inspection however, we discovered that the self-differentiating universal differentiated itself into particularity. Insofar as the universal self-differentiated itself into

\(^{791}\) See section III.
particularity, we discovered, much to our dismay, the four dogmas of universality lying in wait. Because the particular is self-differentiation in the form of negation, the particular is that which is not self-differentiating. Naturally, since the separation of universality and particularity entails the rejection of self-differentiation, the dogmas of universality are constitutive of particularity. Both the universal and the particular, as particular species of the concept, are self-identical concepts that exclude their negations. As such, each is a finite determination governed by the principle of non-contradiction. In addition, since the universal and the particular species exclude each other, particularity is defined by the separation of the principles of universality and particularity. Finally, since neither is the principle of its own difference, the origin of the content is outside itself in two ways: in the very act of self-differentiation as well as in another universal or particular distinct from itself. This is the self-externality of the particular, in which the content of the particular is determined by another particular external to it.

Indeed, since particularity is constituted by the differentiation of the concept into the difference between the universal and the particular, particularity appeared to reinstate the very assumption of the separation of the principles of universality and particularity that Hegel’s introduction of self-differentiation sought to undermine. Accordingly, because the four dogmas give rise to the four paradoxes of self-reference, and the particular contains the four dogmas, the self-differentiation of the universal into the particular inadvertently raised the threat that the four paradoxes of self-reference, such as the problem of participation, that follow from the four dogmas would undermine the intelligibility of the concept. For

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792 See page 349.
793 See pages 353 and 380-384.
794 See page 403.
this reason, our initial argument in *Hegel's Alternative: The Self-Determination of the Concept*\(^{795}\) that self-differentiation solves the four paradoxes of self-reference by undermining the traditional dogmas of universality cannot be sufficient. Indeed, we must go further to show that the four dogmas constitutive of particularity are undermined by the development of individuality.

Although our initial motivation of Hegel’s solution was not sufficient to allay all concerns regarding the classical paradoxes of self-reference, already in our analysis of particularity some concerns had already been put to rest. First, because the separation of the principles of universality and particularity, the finitude of the concept, the principle of non-contradiction, and the appeal to foundations are structures of particularity that follow from the self-differentiation of the concept, they cease to be dogmas. They are no longer dogmas because they are not the products of a baseless assumption, but instead they are results of the creative activity of the concept. Though the specter of the four paradoxes of self-reference raised its head again in the moment of particularity, with the rise of individuality Hegel lays to rest any concern that the self-differentiating universal could in principle be threatened by the four paradoxes of self-reference.

Individuality arose from particularity in virtue of the self-negation of particularity. Because particularity as the self-negation of universality had to remain itself, it necessarily negated itself. By negating itself, the self-negation of universality removed its own negation of universality. Through its self-negation, or differentiation of itself from itself, universality was restored to particularity. This restoration of self-differentiation to particularity or the unity of universality with particularity is individuality. As we pointed out earlier, individuality is not a mere repetition of universality, for individuality is only universal in and through the

\(^{795}\) See pages 274-276.
very self-negation of particularity. Because the distinction between the universal and particular that is constitutive of particularity is undermined in the development of individuality, the self-differentiating concept undermines, once again, the assumptions that give rise to the four paradoxes of self-reference. At the outset the universal was simply given as self-differentiating, and had not yet overcome the dogmas in virtue of its own activity, but was simply given as that which overcomes them. Unlike the moment of universality, in individuality it is the very activity of the concept, the very self-negation of particularity, in virtue of which the difference between universal and particular is overcome. If the self-differentiating universal did not overcome the dogmas on its own terms, then the self-differentiating universal would have only overcome the dogmas in a stipulative way, which would have undermined itself. This internal overcoming of the classical dogmas is important, for it shows that the self-differentiating universal overcomes them within itself on its own terms, and that the rejection of the dogmas is not itself a merely stipulative act.

Self-differentiation is that which remains itself in all of its self-differentiations. Accordingly, upon contradicting itself, self-differentiation remains itself even at the point at which it admits its negation. For this reason, self-contradiction does not explode into everything and nothing upon its self-differentiation. If we think back to Section III, we remember that when the principle of non-contradiction is taken as an absolute principle, that is, as the unconditioned form of universality, it contradicts itself. As an absolute principle, the principle of non-contradiction is not self-differentiating. Because it is not self-differentiating or subservient to a self-differentiating principle when it is taken as the absolute principle of conceptual determination, the contradiction that follows from the four dogmas does not
result in the preservation of the conceptual content, but a complete explosion of that content into everything and nothing.

Just as the four dogmas of universality are contradictory, so is particularity contradictory. But unlike in Section III, the dogmas have now been integrated into particularity, a moment of the concept that follows from the self-differentiation of the universal. As a moment of the concept, the particular is not just that which is not self-differentiating, but that which is not self-differentiating is itself as differentiation of self-differentiation. In virtue of being what it is, the self-negation of self-differentiation negates itself, and this is nothing more than its self-contradiction. Because particularity is a moment of the concept, the self-contradiction of particularity does not lead to everything and nothing, but back to the concept itself as individuality. In virtue of being what it is, particularity contradicts itself. Self-differentiation is what it is only in virtue of its self-contradiction. Seen in this light, the universal is the individual in virtue of the self-contradiction of particularity. The self-contradiction of particularity, as we have labored to show above, resuscitates the universal concept as individuality. By integrating the four dogmas into the structure of particularity, the contradiction endemic to those dogmas no longer explodes, but is the very means by which the concept achieves its individuality.

In Section III we showed that the four dogmas of universality govern the three forms of particular universality: the abstraction, the class, and the genus. Each of these

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796 The emptiness of the formal concept is another way of expressing its lack of self-differentiating content. There is either no content, or there is self-differentiating content, and the contradiction works differently in each case. If we put this distinction in terms of self-reference and self-particularization we may put it as follows: the self-differentiating universal is self-referential in virtue of differentiating itself. By making itself particular, self-differentiation renders itself non-self-referential. The contradiction in particularity is a union of the self-reference of self-differentiation and the lack thereof insofar as it is not self-differentiation. By not referring to itself as what is not self-differentiating, particularity refers to itself or differentiates itself, thereby giving rise to the self-referring universal as individuality, i.e. the self-referring universal that has a self-referring and non-self-referring moment. It is in virtue of the contradiction in the self-reference of self-differentiation that the concept particularizes itself as individuality.
particular universals is immanent in the concept itself, though they are inseparable from the concept itself. Upon achieving individuality, each form of the difference between universal and particular expressed in the forms of determinate universality were determined to be illusory differences, namely differences that disappeared into the concept per se or individuality. Because each of these particular universals exemplify the dogmas, and each of the particular universals only has an indeterminate or illusory being in the concept, so too then, must the dogmas of universality only have an illusory being, i.e. a being that cannot be separated from individuality. On their own they are nothing. They too only subsist in the self-differentiation of the concept.  

To put this it in the most general terms, the concept only solves the paradoxes of self-reference by integrating the assumptions from which they are generated into the very structure of the concept itself. By depriving the classical dogmas of universality their absolute status, and thereby making them relative to the moment of particularity, the contradiction inherent in the concept ceases to be explosive, and the universal is able to achieve determinate content in virtue of its self-contradiction. Only through the self-differentiation of the universal into the particular, and the self-negation of particularity can individuality arise. By integrating the dogmas into the concept, Hegel has breathed life into an ancient city. By giving the dead materials the organizing principle of self-differentiation, the difference of the principles of universality and particularity becomes enlivened with the power and life of the concept.

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797 One might speculate that one reason philosophers have constantly identified the concept with one of these forms of determinate universality is because each presents itself as the whole concept, as individuality.

798 In Hegel’s remark on *Universality, particularity, and individuality* in his *Science of Logic* (612-618) Hegel points out that the self-differentiating concept is not psychological. It does not concern itself with psychological distinctions such as ‘obscure’, ‘clear’, or ‘distinct’. (613) Naturally, Hegel avoids having to identify the concept with psychological content because he takes himself as having eschewed what I have called the four paradoxes of self-reference. As long as one insists on the difference between universal and particular, as is the case in mathematics, Hegel points out that we will be unable to understand the relations of universal, particular, and
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individual. For instance, the universal is not just more extensive than the particular. In this representation of the concept, the concept cannot refer to itself, or particularize itself, because it cannot quantify over itself. Universality is not a merely quantitative determination. For Hegel, to hold on to this perspective is to treat the universals as fixed concepts that are externally related to each other. Naturally, the universal cannot be reduced to a mathematical determination as long as the separation of universality and particularity has been undermined. (617) Hegel’s comments in this Remark illustrate that he intends his account of the concept to overcome the pitfalls that befall the philosopher who continues to insist on the classical dogmas of universality.


