

CHAPTER FIVE

FROM RECOLLECTION TO LOGICAL MEMORY: ON THE GENESIS OF THE CONCEPT IN THE *SCIENCE OF LOGIC*

ELISA MAGRÌ¹

The deduction of the concept is the highest level achieved by the objective categories in the *Science of Logic* (from now on WdL), for the concept is the movement of pure thought that has finally acquired its own self-relation. I will argue that the genesis of the concept displays a logical memory, which completes and fulfils the rise of essence as being's self-recollection. Logical memory embodies the transition from the Objective Logic to the Subjective Logic, for it is the actuality that re-activates thought from passivity towards the realization of its rational freedom.

In order to explain my view, I will proceed as follows: first, I will justify the ontological meaning of the categories by stressing the importance of thought's activity within the WdL. Then, I will take into account the function of logical recollection at the beginning of the Doctrine of Essence. Finally, I will consider the development of essence focusing on the sublation of causality into reciprocity. I will argue that this process establishes thought's permanent and full-fledged self-activity. Logical memory is the permanent and objective movement of thought within itself.

¹ I wish to thank Professor Francesca Menegoni, Federico Sanguinetti and Valentina Ricci for their careful remarks and helpful suggestions. I am also thankful to Professor Alfredo Ferrarin and to Professor Luca Illetterati for reading earlier drafts of this chapter.

Preliminary Remarks

Hegelian scholars always stress the irreducibility of Hegel's conception of logic to subjective thought, as logic is the science of pure thought independent from concrete representations. Burbidge provided a different interpretation by taking into account a parallelism between logic and psychology.² In Burbidge's view, the Idea is divided into a theoretical and practical side and subjective spirit likewise includes a theoretical and practical development. Thus, Burbidge argues that logic and psychology share a fundamental isomorphism.

A difficulty in Burbidge's explanation is that he defends the analogy between logic and psychology only at the level of the Idea, but at the same time he claims that logic provides psychology with its scientific presupposition. Hence, the argument of the analogy is weak, and does not seem adequate to explain the similarities shared by the logical and psychological subject. Actually, the very concept of the subject appears long before the Idea, at the level of the concept. From this point of view, the transition from the Objective to the Subjective Logic may offer an important insight. As I will try to explain, it is one and the same process that underlies both logic and psychology at the level of the concept. This represents the appearance of self-reference, that is, the very beginning of the concept of the subject.

My reading also differs from Rossi Leidi's, since he justifies the function of recollection in terms of temporal succession. By focusing on the occurrence of *Erinnerung* at the beginning of the Doctrine of Essence, he claims that in the WdL recollection produces an ontological temporality in contrast to Aristotelian ontology, wherein essence is the same as a timeless present (*zeitlose Gegenwart*). This means that Hegelian logic replaces Aristotelian philosophy in so far as it explains essence as the self-movement of being in itself (*Selbstbewegung des Seins in sich*). Instead of explaining essence as a formal category, Hegel, according to Rossi Leidi, understands it as result of the inwardization of being.

But why should a temporal order be necessary within the WdL? By assuming temporality as model for essence, Rossi Leidi does not highlight the meaning of thought's *activity* as such and fails to provide any reason to justify the logical relevance of recollection.

A. Nuzzo has also given a stimulating interpretation of the role of recollection at the beginning of the Doctrine of Essence, focusing on the

² See J.W. Burbidge, "Das Erkennen und der endliche Geist," in *Der Begriff als die Wahrheit. Zum Anspruch der hegelschen "subjektiven Logik,"* ed. A.F. Koch, A. Oberauer, K. Utz, (Paderborn/München/Wien/Zürich: Schöningh, 2003), 211-222.

paradoxical character of the “turning inward” of being. Nuzzo has asserted that “*Erinnerung* is one of the forms that dialectic as method assumes in Hegel’s Philosophy of Spirit; the proof of its legitimacy as the method of thinking is provided by the logic.”³ Logical recollection is then acknowledged as the method to generate immanent transitions in the WdL, without claiming any correspondence to psychology or temporality:

in its speculative meaning, *Erinnerung*, is not the recollection of given contents which are thereby taken back from a past existence and made present. It is rather the act that for the very first time produces and institutes those contents that are then psychologically recollected and thereby exist as given and as past. This is the methodological paradox of dialectic: the past (the past of *Sein* as *gewesen* and the past of *Denken* as *Gedächtnis*) does not precede, but rather follows the act of thought that institutes it as past.⁴

Nuzzo correctly points out that recollection is not the movement of representing something from the past, but it is rather the process that allows the transition to a different order of thought, wherein something is reflectively distinct from its other. More precisely, logical memory is an *actuality* that does not presuppose the temporality or historicity of being, because it is memory that first posits temporality as meaningful. The task of the *Logic* is to bring to light this fundamental structure. As Nuzzo has pointed out in her recent essay:

paradoxically (but, truly, dialectically), for Hegel we do not remember ‘something’ (lost or forgotten or behind—not in the *Logic* (neither at the level of Being nor of Essence) and not even in the *Psychology*. In both cases we start rather from the illusory appearance, or *Schein*, of something given that seems to be recollected in order to discover that it is recollection which first posits something as given. There is nothing to remember.⁵

According to Nuzzo, logical memory is a methodological recollection, which institutes reality through the regression towards an alleged logical past. Memory’s illusory scheme, whereby the search for something lost is the production of something that was never there in the first place, is the

³ A. Nuzzo, “Dialectical Memory, Thinking and Recollecting. Logic and Psychology in Hegel,” in *Mémoire et souvenir. Six Études sur Platon, Aristote, Hegel et Husserl*, ed. A. Brancacci and G. Gigliotti (Napoli: Bibliopolis, 2006), 94.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ See A. Nuzzo, *Memory, History, Justice in Hegel* (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 61-62.

main paradigm outlined by Nuzzo. From this point of view, memory is not that different from recollection and even the procedure of *Erinnerung* in the Psychology is twofold: memory in the most commonly used (psychological) sense and in the less commonly used (speculative) sense. The latter is developed on the basis of the *Logic*.⁶ However, Nuzzo seems to consider logical memory only with reference to the transition from being to essence. By stressing the meaning of actuality as the positedness of an illusory appearance, Nuzzo does not evaluate logical memory in light of the permanent relationship provided by memory between thought and reality.

To my mind, logical memory differs from recollection as a habituality, namely a permanent possession. Obviously, it is not that the reality of thought, once acquired, is safely stockpiled in “the wonderful palaces” of memory. On the contrary, logical memory is an actuality residing in the permanent movement of thought within itself,⁷ as I will argue focusing on the last sections of the Doctrine of Essence. More specifically, my aim is to explain that the deduction of the concept is a self-caused, unifying achievement. This may help clarify why the WdL is the “movement” (*Bewegung*) of truth and not simply the formal description of it. If the WdL consists of changes, then it is important to take into account how logic keeps its unified structure and how it is able to justify the speculative unity of being and thought.

As is well known, the concept is never immediately given, as it must be rationally developed in logic and psychology. Within psychology Hegel underlines the function of recollection and memory in facilitating the transition to thinking (*Denken*), whereas in the WdL substantial causality leads directly to the concept. In my view, logical memory also lies at the core of the deduction of the concept, as I will attempt to demonstrate without employing either psychology as a model for logic, or logic as a presupposition of psychology. The issue is to justify the deduction of the concept as the logical structure that orders and unifies objectivity. The ordering and unifying is not an achievement of subjective spirit, but rather it is embodied by the development of categories. This means that the WdL displays the categorical form by means of which objectivity becomes intelligible to itself by turning spontaneously into subjectivity.

⁶ See *ibid.*, 83-88.

⁷ On the meaning of actuality or activity in Hegel see: F. Menegoni, *Soggetto e struttura dell'agire in Hegel* (Trento: Verifiche, 1993) and A. Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 15-30.

1. Is Objective Logic a Logic of the Stone?

Certainly, it must be conceded that we have not the least conception of the ‘I,’ or of anything whatever, not even of the concept itself, so long as we do not really *think* [*begreift*, EM], but stop short at the simple, fixed *general idea* [*Vorstellung*, EM] and the *name*. It is an odd thought—if it can be called a thought at all—that I must already *make use* [*bedienen*, EM] of the ‘I’ in order to judge of the ‘I’ [...]. A stone does not have this *inconvenience*; when it is to be thought or judged it does not stand in its own way. It is relieved from the burden of making use of *itself* for this task; it is something else outside it that must give itself this trouble.⁸

This passage, taken from the last part of the WdL, could be used to clarify the role and the function of the first part, the so-called Objective Logic. Hegel focuses on the paradoxical character of the self: we are not given a clear conception of the “I,” although we make use of it in ordinary language. Unlike the stone, which requires an external thinker to become an object of thought, the subject must already refer to himself as an “I” in order to achieve self-consciousness. This means that inorganic nature is relieved from the burden of thinking of itself; only living beings experience the relation to their other as a contradiction.⁹ However, if we stop short at representation (*Vorstellung*) and language, we do not get any concept of the “I.” By speaking or representing one objectifies his own self, but one does not conceptually relate to it. As long as thinking is the same as representing, it is not self-referring, hence it does not fully determine itself. Thus, representation and language share with inorganic nature this fundamental lack of self-reference. Similarly, the Objective Logic contains the development of categories that must still attain their own principle of determination. This is the reason why the Objective Logic deals with the gradual development and manifestation of the concept, thereby exhibiting the speculative transition from inorganic nature to self-referring being.¹⁰

⁸ *WdL II*, 194, [777-778].

⁹ *Ibid.*, 192-193, [776]: “Since spirit is not only infinitely richer than nature, but also, its essence is constituted by the absolute unity of opposites in the *concept*, it exhibits in its phenomenal aspect and relation to externality contradiction in its extreme form.” Actually, following the German text, we should read: “[...] its essence is constituted by the absolute unity of the *opposite* in the concept [...].”

¹⁰ See the Introduction, *WdL III*, 45, [61]: “Thus, what is to be considered is the whole concept, firstly as the concept *in the form of being*, secondly as the *concept*; in the first case, the concept is only *in itself*, the concept of reality or being; in the second case, it is the concept as such, the concept existing *for itself* (as it is, to

Actually, Hegel also states that “what has here been called Objective Logic would correspond in part to what with him [*Kant*, EM] is transcendental logic.”¹¹ This means that, as opposed to formal logic, a new logic is necessary in order to explain how the concept refers *a priori* to objects and why the origin of our cognition cannot be ascribed to the objects. But, how may logic correspond to inorganic nature and, at the same time, deal with the rules of pure thinking?

A possible solution lies in the fact that Hegelian logic is the scientific exposition of the identity between being and thought. It is certainly an idealistic logic in so far as it explains the nature of the object by answering to the following question: how can something be rationally determined? Starting from the simplest category, i.e. being, logic advances by reconstructing categories from what is more limited and not-fully-determined to the highest level of substantiality. Therefore, the Objective Logic is the exposition of being’s ontological development as well as of being’s rational determination. There is no split between ontology and intelligibility within the WdL, because each and every category indicates a pure unity of being and thought.

Contradictions arise when one-sided determinations are supposed to be self-grounding, whereas their logical form is not self-referring. This is the reason why the WdL does not deal with *Sachverhalten*, because it is a genuine critique of formal metaphysical categories (such as the Kantian thing-in-itself) and a complex reconstruction of thought’s self-determination.¹² As being is always being-determined-by-thought, we cannot separate the ontology from the process of rational determination. As a result, there are no objects as things in themselves in the WdL, for the same notions of being, object and existence need justification as different degrees of ontological determinations.

However, if categories display the unity of being and intelligibility, then the determinations of quality, quantity, measure, relation and modality

name concrete forms, in thinking man, and even in the sentient animal and in organic individuality generally, although, of course, in these it is not *conscious*, still less *known*; it is only in inorganic nature that it is *in itself*.” Significantly, this remark does not appear in the first edition of the WdL.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 47, [62].

¹² For the sake of brevity, I will not deal with the well-known and complex debate concerning the metaphysical vs ontological implications of WdL. In my view, the discussion is still open, but it could be much more vitalized by taking into account the interrelation of the different parts of Hegel’s system and by reconstructing the activity of *Denkbestimmungen* in the *Logic*. To this end, the WdL gives an answer to the question “What is *x*?” in so far as it investigates *what the thinking of x is*.

exhibit the pure form of understanding. It is not that *we* know being by means of understanding, but rather it is the pure form of understanding to be rationally determined as objectivity. This implies that the Objective Logic is not analogous to physics,¹³ for logic does not *describe* the laws of nature, but rather it is the *rational intelligibility* of reality that underlies mathematics and physics. Yet, as the physics of inorganic nature is replaced by the living being in the Philosophy of Nature, in the same way the Objective Logic develops into reason and then realizes itself as pure “I.” According to this point of view, the Objective Logic is thought in its *unconscious* way of being and only in this sense does it exhibit the ontological development from inorganic nature to the pure form of the “I.”¹⁴ Instead of dealing with the mere deduction of formal categories, the Objective Logic explains the dynamics by means of which being takes itself as object, i.e. becomes self-referential.

Hegel’s logic is a “movement” precisely because the activity of thought moves it forward, thereby determining being as objectivity. However, if objectivity is a self-moving process, this implies that different strategies are involved in the transitions leading up from sheer being to the concept, which is the most fully determined and completely self-referential activity. Here I will focus on two special movements: the rise of essence as being’s self-recollection and the sublation of essence as substance’s highest recollection of itself. The latter is the process leading from substance to the concept and I will explain why this displays the sublation of understanding into reason by establishing a logical memory.

2. Essence and Understanding

Hegel introduces essence as being’s self-recollection by claiming that “not until knowing [*das Wissen*] *inwardizes, recollects* [*erinnert*] itself out of immediate being, does it through this mediation find essence.”¹⁵ We

¹³ For a different interpretation, see: G.M. Wölflé, *Die Wesenslogik in Hegels “Wissenschaft der Logik”*. Versuch einer Rekonstruktion und Kritik unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der philosophischen Tradition (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1994).

¹⁴ One could also say, recalling Aristotle’s metaphysics, that Objective Logic is the result of *nous* that makes itself passive. This interpretation has been definitively reconstructed by A. Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle*.

¹⁵ *WdL I*, 241, [389]. Although this quotation does not occur in the *Encyclopedia* Logic, Hegel always underscores the meaning of essence as *In-sich-zurückgegangen*, which is the pure form of recollecting. See also Rossi Leidi, *Hegels Begriff der Erinnerung*, 104 ff. and M. Bordignon in the present volume.

know from the Psychology of the *Encyclopedia* that recollection is always involved in the origin of representation, as it provides the distinction between the immediacy of empirical content and the mediation of image.¹⁶ In the context of the WdL, where no mental process is implied, recollection plays a crucial role as well, because it allows a shift of reference in the constitution of the categories. Once being has achieved its unitary determination passing through quality, quantity and measure, it coincides with substrate, which encompasses and empowers sheer being. Whereas quality and quantity have the tendency to disappear into otherness and are devoid of self-subsistence, the substrate does not depend on an indeterminate otherness, but rather stands in relation to itself. This is the reason why Hegel says that “being recollects itself”: only when being has a unitary determination in itself, does it allow a mediation within the same. Hence, self-relation entails that being splits into two sides of its own: its self-identity and *its* other. Therefore, the transition from being to essence is provided by the emerging distinction between being-in-itself and being-for-itself.

One might notice that this transition mirrors the structure of representation, as it is described in the Psychology of the *Encyclopedia*:

But the other side of the direction [*of the attention, EM*] is to posit the form as infinite reflection in itself, the awakening of intelligence in this content, *its own self-recollection in that content*; in this way, the content belongs to intelligence, and the immediacy and the finding of the former is no longer necessary—this is *representing*.¹⁷

Erinnerung is “*Reflexion in sich*,” it is spirit’s awakening from immediacy, for it allows intelligence to distinguish itself from its other. Similarly, logical recollection is the way by which being splits up into opposite sides *of its own*, thereby displaying the form of objective understanding. This is the model that underlies appearance as the form of understanding that does not know itself while being directed to the object. Indeed, understanding is opaque to itself.

Therefore, the new categories of essence are characterized by one-sided relations that do not exhibit their own principle. This is the same issue

¹⁶ See E. Magri, V. Ricci, F. Sanguinetti in the present volume.

¹⁷ *Enz B*, § 450, 331. (My translation). The passage deals with the rising of representation out of intuition, when intelligence is totally externalized in its concrete content. *EG* is slightly modified, though the meaning is the same. This statement does not occur in the 1817 edition.

discussed both in the *Phenomenology*¹⁸ and in the Logic of the *Encyclopedia*:

The absence of thought in sense-knowledge, which takes everything limited and finite for something that [simply] is, passes over into the stubbornness of the understanding, which grasps everything finite as something-identical-with-itself, [and] not inwardly contradicting itself.¹⁹

Understanding is “stubborn” because it takes into account only the posited object, but it does not acknowledge the conditions of its “positing.” Then, within essence, understanding is not the formal intellect dealing with judgments and syllogisms, but rather it is the one-sided form of intelligibility that grounds the most basic relations between objects.

As understanding is not able to attain the relation to itself, the categories of reflection are characterized by reciprocal oppositions ruled by the law of non-contradiction. By contrast, the categories of modality allow a different form of exposition, which aims to overcome the oppositions of essence in order to achieve a unifying structure of self-reflection. What is then the novelty that gives essence its proper organization, so that it is not an external relationship any longer, but rather an *absolute* connection? Within essence a mediation occurs, the manifestation of the absolute (*Manifestation*):

The actual is therefore *manifestation*; it is not drawn into the sphere of *alteration* by its externality, nor is it the *reflecting* of itself in *an other*, but it manifests itself; that is, in its externality it is *itself* and is *itself* in that alone, namely only as a self-distinguishing and self-determining

¹⁸ It is evident that the sections of the *Phenomenology* devoted to force and understanding correspond to the logical development of essence. On the difficulties of this correspondence, see the discussion between: O. Pöggeler, “Die Komposition der Phänomenologie des Geistes,” in *Materialien zu Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. H.F. Fulda and D. Henrich (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), 329-390; and H.F. Fulda, “Zur Logik der Phänomenologie” in *Materialien zu Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. H.F. Fulda and D. Henrich, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), 391-433. See also the reassessment of the problem provided by P. Cobben, “The Logical Structure of Self-consciousness,” in *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit: New Critical Essays*, ed. A. Denker and M. Vater, (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 2003), 193-212.

¹⁹ *EL*, § 113, *Zusatz*, 235, [178]: “Die Gedankenlosigkeit der Sinnlichkeit, alles Beschränkte und Endliche für ein Seyendes zu nehmen, geht in die Hartnäckigkeit des Verstandes über, es als ein mit-sich-identisches, sich in sich nicht widersprechendes, zu fassen.”

movement.²⁰

The manifestation of the absolute is different from the alteration of being as well as from the oppositions of reflection, for it is not based upon the form of *reference* to something else, but upon the movement of self-distinguishing. This is a novelty, as it implies a more complex dynamics corresponding to what Kant would have explained under the category of modality. Whereas recollection means that the logical form has been divided from itself and confronted with its other, absolute actuality shows how the form becomes active towards itself.²¹

Understood in this way, one may see why reflective relationships, such as whole-and-parts, force-and-expression, inner-and-outer, are still incomplete and do not achieve the status of the concept. The problem lies in the fact that, until the categories are simply related to each other, instead of conditioning and being conditioned by their other, externality persists as the necessary distance implied in every relation. In order to acquire the logical form that explains how thought *is* the unity with its other, what needs to be overcome is the form of *relation* as such.

This is the reason why Hegel uses a different word for absolute relation, which is *Verhältnis* instead of the more commonly used term *Beziehung*. Whereas *Beziehung* refers to an external connection, *Verhältnis* points out an inner relation:

It is relation [*Verhältnis*, EM]²² because it is a distinguishing whose moments are themselves its whole totality, and therefore absolutely *subsist*, but in such a manner that there is only *one* subsistence and the difference is only the illusory being, the reflective movement, of the expository process, and this *illusory being* [*Schein*, EM], the *reflective movement*, of the expository process, and this illusory being is the absolute itself.²³

²⁰ *WdL I*, 381, [542].

²¹ *Ibid.*, 385, [546]: “Real actuality *as such* is in the first instance the thing of many properties, the existent world; but it is not the Existence that resolves itself into Appearance, but, as actuality, it is at the same time the in-itself and reflection-into-itself; it preserves itself in the manifoldness of mere Existence; its externality is an inner relationship *to itself* alone. What is actual *can act* [*wirken*, EM]; something manifests its actuality through what which it produces.” For brevity, I cannot reconstruct the different logical transitions leading from relation to modality.

²² It is difficult to translate the difference between *Beziehung* and *Verhältnis* into English. Miller himself does not make any distinction between the two (both are intended as “relation”). From now on, I will use the German words whenever it is necessary to highlight the difference between them.

²³ *WdL I*, 393, [554].

Subsistence (*Bestehen*) contrasts the disappearing of being into otherness as well as the reflection of essence. Furthermore, subsistence includes appearance as its own difference, that is, as its own way to manifest itself in the same way in which light “is neither something nor a thing, but its being is only its showing or shining.”²⁴ In this sense, absolute relation is substance “as relation [*Verhältnis*, EM] to itself.”²⁵

The metaphor of light is not accidental, since it highlights the difference between substantiality and the previous logical determinations. Contrary to being and essence, substance explains the dynamic movement of the logical form without introducing any other opposition. This is due to the fact that substance is the totality of being, which has integrated reflection into itself. Reflection is no longer the operation of external negation, but rather the proper differentiation of substance. Hence, passing through the categories of modality, a new process takes place that completes and realizes the self-recollection originally outlined by the substrate. This passage is accomplished by the self-movement of substance and it corresponds to a logical memory, as I will attempt to clarify in the following section.

3. The Concept as Substance’s Supreme Recollection of Itself

Substantiality is the category that exhibits essence’s sublation into the concept. This process mirrors a logical memory in so far as it provides objective understanding with the structure of its own self-relation. It is necessary that being neither recollects itself, nor relates to itself in terms of opposition; having become essence, it must connect to its past movement as to its own actuality. Such a process entails that categories are finally ordered and recognized as different moments of the same process. Thus, the concept is the independent and organized totality of being and essence, which is, at the same time, the unifying structure of self-referring thought. Only in this way does the logical form of essence become the concept, i.e. the pure “I” or self-consciousness. Hence, the WdL explains from an absolute (objective and subjective) point of view how being actualizes and recognizes itself as reason.

Hegel understands substantiality as the progressive realization of the power of self-reference and self-manifestation. Instead of the relational structure of essence, we are now dealing with the logical form of modality,

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 392, [553].

which establishes the first dynamic relation between objective understanding and itself. Going through the movement of accidentality, causality and reciprocity, substance manifests itself as *causa sui*, that is as an independent totality, which is no longer determined by its other. This means that conceptual thinking arises once the categories are no longer external determinations needing to be referred to something else, but complete totalities related to an active principle of determination.

Hegel proceeds by deducing the causal activity of substance as emerging from the plurality of its accidents. Substance develops itself by embracing the flux of accidents, so that they have no independent meaning without it.²⁶ Note that substance does not *posit* itself as the ground of accidents, but rather

this *middle term* is thus unity of substantiality and accidentality themselves and its *extremes* have no subsistence of their own. [...] Substantiality is, therefore, merely the relation [*Verhältnis*, EM] as immediately vanishing [...].²⁷

Since there is no more externality, there are no extremes; substantiality is mediation as such, *the pure generation of its own self-differentiation*. In this sense, substance is the same as the accidents, but it is still different from them, for it has the power to determine their ceasing-to-be and coming-to-be. Therefore, substance distinguishes itself from its accidents as *causality*, that is, as “the *self-subsistent source of production from out of itself*.”²⁸ By causality, substance does not split from itself, but rather it *acts* upon itself, i.e. it conditions itself by determining its accidents.

This notion of causality focuses on the becoming-other of substance, thereby leading to the difference between passive and active substances. Since causality is a relation between conditioned sides, substance splits into opposite sides of its own. However, the passive side, by being conditioned, receives its own relation to substance, thereby reacting against the other side. Hence, active and passive substances stand now in

²⁶ Ibid., 395, [556]: “The accident as such—and there is a plurality of them since plurality is one of the determinations of being—have no power over one another [...]. In so far as such an accidental seems to exercise power over another, it is the power of substance which embraces both within itself; as negativity it posits an unequal value, determining the one as a ceasing-to-be and the other with a different content as a coming-to-be, or the former as passing over into its possibility, the latter into actuality [...].”

²⁷ Ibid., 396, [557].

²⁸ Ibid., 398, [559].

the relation of action-reaction, which corresponds to mechanism.²⁹ It is important to distinguish between the mechanical character of the action-reaction relation and the mechanism described in the Subjective Logic as a specific moment of Objectivity. Whilst the latter deals with the emergence of the concept into existence, the former deals with that of the concept itself. One could say that a mechanical feature always lies in the structure of conceptual activity and Hegel himself introduces mechanism in the Subjective Logic as a general trait:

This is what constitutes the character of *mechanism*, namely, that whatever relation obtains between the things combined, this relation is one *extraneous* to them that does not concern their nature at all, and even if it is accompanied by a semblance of unity it remains nothing more than *composition, mixture, aggregation* and the like. *Spiritual* mechanism also, like *material*, consists in this, that the things related in the spirit remain external to one another and to spirit itself. A *mechanical style of thinking* [*Vorstellungsweise*, EM], a *mechanical memory, habit, a mechanical way of acting* [*Handlungsweise*, EM], signify that the peculiar pervasion and presence of spirit is lacking in what spirit apprehends or does. Although its theoretical or practical mechanism cannot take place without its self-activity [*Selbsttätigkeit*, EM], without an impulse and consciousness, yet there is lacking in it the freedom of individuality, and because this freedom is not manifest in it such action appears as a merely external one.³⁰

Mechanism is the lack of essential connection from an objective and subjective point of view. As the relation between objects is a mere aggregation, when it is devoid of a principle of constitution, in the same way a mechanical *Vorstellungsweise* needs self-consciousness in order to transform habit into a complete and free self-activity. Thus, mechanism is not simply a moment of Objectivity, but rather the logical structure preceding freedom. It belongs to the sphere of the concept as originality (as the structure mediating the emergence of the concept) and not-originality (as one of the concept's determinations).³¹

Causality as such also consists in a mechanical relationship, but as Hegel states, "the causality of substances is *only a subjective conception*

²⁹ Ibid., 407, [569]: "*Mechanism* consists in this *externality* of causality, where the reflection of the cause *into itself* in its effect is at the same time a repelling *being*, or where, in the *self-identity* which the causal substance has in its effect, the cause equally remains something immediately *external* to it, and the effect has *passed over into another substance*."

³⁰ *WdL II*, 133, [711].

³¹ See L. Illetterati's commentary on this part of the *Science of Logic: Sul meccanismo, il chimismo, l'organismo e il conoscere* (Trento: Verifiche, 1996).

[*nur ein Vorgestelltes ist, EM*].³² The mechanical relation described in the Doctrine of Essence is important to stress the contradiction deriving from the opposition between activity and passivity. Action-reaction implies that the substance which is acted upon also becomes cause, leading into infinite progress, i.e. into infinite reciprocal action. Actually, mechanism is the externality of causality, but it is not an external connection as such, in so far as it highlights a movement by means of which substance *reproduces* its self-identity *within itself*. Therefore, the infinite progress of causal action is merely apparent and it is sublated once substance is finally unified to itself without any constraints. This goal is accomplished through mechanism, because it habituates substance to relate to itself dynamically. Hence, passivity is not an inert power, but rather a different form of activity. Couched in different terms, Hegel argues that passivity is not so much the power to *resist* to an external agent, as the power to *be reactivated*. As a result, action-reaction is sublated into reciprocity, by means of which substance actualizes itself as a unified self-activity. In fact, when reciprocity is completely established,

mechanism is sublated; for it contains first the *vanishing* of that original *persistence* of the *immediate* substantiality, and secondly the *coming-to-be* of the *cause*, and hence *originativeness* as *self-mediating* through its *negation*.³³

By acting upon itself, mechanism makes its own self-relation transparent and substance as ontological persistence is thereby overcome and finally explicated as a dynamic self-relation. By performing this process, mechanism establishes a habit that facilitates substance's self-relation. In this way, substance achieves its own independence from external constraints. Substance reproduces itself through mediation, turning difference into free actuality in such a manner that it reaches its own "*originativeness*" (*Ursache*).³⁴ In other words, substance turns out to be the same as the concept:

Causality has hereby returned to *its absolute concept*, and at the same time has attained to *the concept itself*. At first, it is real necessity; absolute *identity* with itself, so that the difference of necessity and the related determinations in it are substances, *free actualities*, over against one

³² *WdL II*, 137, [715].

³³ *WdL I*, 407, [569].

³⁴ On the meaning of *Ursache* as final causality with relation to the Aristotelian notion of *aitia*, see: A. Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle*, 209-220.

another. Necessity is, in this way, *inner identity*; causality is the manifestation of this, in which its illusory show of *substantial otherness* has sublated itself and necessity is raised to *freedom*.³⁵

The concept rises to freedom once substance develops causality as the manifestation of its inner identity. Substance is no more externally conditioned, but it explicates its identity as the necessity deriving from its original being. In other words, the structure of the concept implies the *recognition* of the development of substance as necessity. As Houlgate remarks, “necessity, for Hegel, is not an immediate, evident feature of the world, but is what there turns out *in essence* to be. We do not begin with necessity, therefore, but rather *come* to the thought of necessity through considering what there *actually* is.”³⁶ Note that this does not mean that *every* mechanism should lead to the concept, but that the *concept of mechanism* allows the concept’s actualization. Through the logical form of mechanism substance loses its immediacy and the same distinction between passive and active disappears, for substance “remains at home with itself,” i.e. reaches its own “*bleibende Wechselbewegung*”³⁷ by turning into the concept. Therefore, when Hegel identifies action-reaction relation with violence, claiming that “to this extent it [*substance*, EM] suffers *violence*,”³⁸ this does not mean “to force” contrary determinations until one of them can establish itself as true.³⁹ It is not an asymmetry between independent determinations, but rather the inner articulation of the same element, since the distinction between a passive and an active side belongs to substantiality. More precisely, I hold that the mechanical relation establishes the substance’s *habit* to refer to itself.⁴⁰

³⁵ *WdL I*, 408, [570].

³⁶ S. Houlgate, “Necessity and Contingency in Hegel’s *Science of Logic*,” *The Owl of Minerva*, 27/1 (1995): 38.

³⁷ See *EL*, § 158, 303, [232]: “[...] the truth of *substance* is the *concept*, i.e., the independence, that is the repulsion of itself from itself into distinct independent [terms], [...] and which is this movement of exchange with itself alone that *remains at home with itself*.” See the German text: “[...] die *Wahrheit* der *Substanz* ist der *Begriff*, die Selbstständigkeit, welche das sich von sich Anstoßen in unterschiedene Selbstständige, [...] und diese *bei sich selbst* bleibende Wechselbeziehung nur *mit sich ist*.”

³⁸ *WdL I*, 405, [567].

³⁹ A different interpretation, referring to asymmetrical relations and tragic conflicts at the heart of Hegel’s *Logic*, has been reconstructed by K. De Boer, *On Hegel. The Sway of the Negative* (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 79-98.

⁴⁰ See also F. Sanguinetti in the present volume for the explanation of *habit* within

This dimension of causality mirrors the way memory works within psychology. Memory plays an active role as a causal agent, because it is not a deposit of representations, but its very development rather represents the sublation of subjectivity into objectivity. This is a process mediated by language, as intelligence distinguishes itself from representations and confers to them independent being (*Dasein*) using linguistic signs.

Since his first studies on subjective spirit in Jena, Hegel speaks of memory as the persistent relation (*feste Beziehung*) between the self and being.⁴¹ He also highlights that memory is essentially related to thinking and focuses on the different levels of its development: the creation of signs, reproductive memory and mechanical memory. By means of language intelligence gets used to alienating itself into signs, i.e. to refer to the world by means of words, without taking into account intuitions and sensible representations.⁴² Therefore, through memory, intelligence gains its own self-subsistence, since it does not depend on the content of its representations anymore, but its being becomes the universal space of names as such. This means that, in so far as intelligence thinks, as it does in normal life, spirit is universality, unreflectively using words according to their semantic and syntactical relations without taking into account their intuitive element. Therefore, universality has at this point nothing to do with the speaker's meaning or intentions, because

the mechanical feature in memory lies merely in the fact that certain signs, tones, etc. are apprehended in their purely external association, and then reproduced in this association, without attention being expressly directed to their meaning and inward association.⁴³

When it is fully developed, memory is a strong connection of signs devoid of any external content and this represents the external mode of thinking. This passage is one of the most important of the entire Psychology, for it shows that thinking is not something distinct from memory, but rather it develops inside memory itself. Once memory has turned every external and subjective content inward, thinking can freely relate to the world, because reality is just the way we know it and speak of it. Furthermore, since memory does not depend on intuition, we can say that thinking acquires its own actuality by simply referring to itself.

Anthropology.

⁴¹ See *JS III*, 194-195.

⁴² See *Enz A*, § 383.

⁴³ See M. Inwood, *Commentary on Hegel's Philosophy of Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 511.

Thanks to memory, thinking only depends on its own activity, so it does not act as conscience does toward an object, but it is the unity of objectivity and subjectivity.⁴⁴

The same progression from accidentality to conceptual actuality is accomplished by substance in the paragraphs on the absolute relationship. As spirit achieves thinking by recollecting **itself**,⁴⁵ the concept is likewise reactivated by substance's causal activity over itself. It is then substance that "recollects" itself, and not the concept that imposes itself on substance. Whereas psychological recollection points out spirit's awakening to itself and spirit's transition to thinking, logical causality makes substance self-oriented and free from external constraints. Only in this way does substance become the unified totality of being, which has its own principle of determination.

Thus, passing through the categories of quality, quantity, relation and modality, pure thought exhibits different levels of reality as well as different forms of intelligibility. However, once the categories enter the dimension of the concept, they are all comprehended and organized as different determinations grounded on the self-activity of the pure "I". Therefore, the psychological and logical processes overcome the distinction between internal and external, inwardization and exteriorization, in order to provide the exposition of an independent activity. Accidentality turns into free actuality by passing through a necessary and self-driven mechanism. The goal is not to reduce difference to self-identity, but rather to make self-identity actual by relating it dynamically to its other. As thinking arises through the externalization provided by language, so is the concept generated by the self-movement of substance.

Based on this analysis, the development of essence does not simply deal with an ontological process, but *at the same time* with thought's activity. Recollecting the first quote I cited, we are now able to clarify how the principle of subjectivity is gradually developed in the WdL. At the level of the concept, the *Logic* mirrors the dimension of pure self-consciousness,⁴⁶ because being is made absolutely self-relating and is

⁴⁴ See also S. Houlgate, "Hegel, Derrida and Restricted Economy: the Case of Mechanical Memory," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 34/1 (1996): 79-93, who defends Hegel's mechanical memory from Derrida's criticism.

⁴⁵ See again *EG*, § 463, 281, [201]: "This supreme recollection of representing [*des Vorstellens*, EM] is the supreme self-externalization of intelligence, in which it posits itself as the *being*, as the universal space of names as such, i. e. of senseless words."

⁴⁶ *WdL II*, 18, [585]: "The object therefore has its objectivity in the *concept* and this is the *unity of self-consciousness* into which it has been received; consequently

simultaneously deduced as principle of determination of substantial totality. Hence, passing through essence, being recollects itself and acquires its own *Beisichsein* thanks to a mnemonic substantial process based on causal activity over itself. This is the logical form of universal self-reference, which is, at the same time, the liberation from inorganic nature and the rising of conceptual freedom that belongs to every being. Furthermore, this is the condition of the successive development of thought within the Subjective Logic. Indeed, the deduction of the concept as freedom allows logical determinations to develop further as self-relating rationality. Understood this way, memory is the most powerful *habit* of rational being and its proper “transition into the activity of the *thought*” (*Übergang in die Thätigkeit des Gedankes*).⁴⁷

Conclusions

In this chapter I have reconstructed the mnemonic pattern underlying the genesis of the concept in the WdL. As A. Nuzzo has pointed out, there is nothing that is psychologically remembered within the *Logic*, for this deals with actualities of thought and not with subjective contents. More specifically, conceptual thought is the explanation of how objectivity is rationally shaped and determined in itself. It is the exhibition of this process that allows the unfolding of the activity of thought’s self-determination within the second part of the WdL. Hence, this chapter is an attempt to *articulate* the unity of being and thought that gives rise to the concept.

In my view, the genesis of the concept depends on the logical memory established by thought’s causal activity over itself. I have argued that Hegel’s treatment of causality is the actuality leading to substance’s self-relation, whereby substance turns out to be the same as the concept. By achieving its own self-relation, objectivity gains the *permanent and intrinsic relation to thought as to its own principle of determination*. Only when being gets to its highest and complete self-relation, does objectivity show itself as an organized and interconnected totality, wherein thought is free to determine itself. This is the reason why the self-relation of substance mirrors the role of memory within psychology.

The relevance of memory lies not so much in its psychological features as in its essential relation to thought. In Hegel’s view, memory does not

its objectivity, or the concept, is itself none other than the nature of self-consciousness and has no other moments or determinations than the *I* itself.”

⁴⁷ *EG*, § 464, 282, [202].

retain anything, for it is not a mere deposit of representations, but is rather the capacity to organize thought as substantial totality, which is neither subjective, nor objective. Memory provides thinking with its own self-relation so that, at the same time, by the very movement of alienating itself into language, thinking manifests itself. Then, when referring to external reality and the world, thinking is always “at home,” because reality is nothing but the order shaped and determined by thought. Similarly, the passages dealing with the transition to the concept correspond to spirit’s self-liberation from every external constraint. More specifically, this process is the exposition of how substance reactivates itself from passivity. Conceptual thinking is the freedom that comes from unconsciousness; it is individuality, because it does not depend on something external, but it differentiates itself on its own. As a result, the concept is achieved once objectivity develops into an organized system of ontological relations.

Hence, the analogy between psychological memory and logical essence is not intended to affirm an isomorphism between psychology and logic, as if psychology should be submitted to logic or vice versa. On the contrary, it highlights the relevance of the concept as the grounding principle of ontological categories. In my view, we should be able to analyse logic and psychology as different *Gestalten* of the same process. By *Gestalt* I intend the different kinds of manifestation achieved by thought from a systematic point of view. In this sense the paradigm of memory helps to clarify why objectivity is nothing but thought’s realized self-activity.