

The Dimensions of Hegel's Dialectic

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Chapter 2

Dialectic as the “Self-Fulfillment” of Logic

Dieter Wandschneider

Translated by Anthony Jensen

The scope of my considerations here is defined along two lines, which seem to me of essential relevance for a theory of dialectic. On the one hand, the form of negation that – as a self-referring antinomical negation – gains a quasi-semantic expulsive force [Sprengkraft] and therewith a forwarding [weiter-verweisenden] character; on the other hand, the notion that every logical category is defective insofar as the explicit meaning of a category does not express everything that is already implicitly pre-supposed for its meaning. Both lines are tightly interwoven. This I would like to demonstrate with the example of the dialectic of Being and Non-Being at the beginning of the Hegelian Logic. I will first make visible the basic structures of dialectical argumentation (sections II and III) – whereby certain revisions will turn out to be necessary in comparison with Hegel's actual argument. Thereby it proves essential that the whole apparatus of logical categories and principles must be always already available and utilized for the dialectical explication: proving dialectic as a self-explication of logic by logical means: dialectic, as it were, as the self-fulfillment of logic (sections IV–VI).

I. Introduction

Without a doubt, the term “dialectic” refers to one of the most controversial themes of philosophy. Whereas Plato saw in it the possibility of ultimate grounding, the very highest goal of philosophy, for Aristotle it held the rank of a mere method of dialogical investigation. And in the two thousand years of Western philosophy since then, divergence in the content and meaning of dialectic cannot easily be disentangled. What is the relevance of dialectic debated, but also what the dialectic even is.

What this ongoing controversy shows after all is that dialectic does not deal with any secondary questions. In the modern period, Kant had assigned dialectic a prominent place in the *Critique of Pure Reason*; with Hegel the theme returned to the very center of philosophy. And after the rise of positivist-analytic philosophy, dialectic remains—even today—a philosophical stumbling block.¹ In particular, the rediscovery of Hegel at the start of the twentieth century has led to intensified occupation with the problem of dialectic. Hegel's objective-idealistic program is so closely tied to the possibility of a dialectical logic that the program itself stands or falls thereon. In this sense it is important to gain clarity about the *exactitude* of the dialectical form of argumentation. This, however, is possible only upon the foundation of a *theory* of dialectic. Here lies one of the main concerns of the present investigation.

At the same time, a question arises about the basic value of the *logic* employed for such an enterprise. For this must have already been demonstrated in advance; that is, the logical conditions of argumentation for a theory of dialectic are already presupposed and drawn upon. Of course, this counts for every form of argumentation and denotes no problem in “normal cases” since the logic itself is not in question. But when it comes to the question of *dialectical logic*—since a theory of dialectic aims at *it*—logic

itself becomes the topic, and this requires a fundamental reflection on the logical means utilized—naturally, once again, with logical means. But can logic at the same time fulfill and ground itself? We now see another fundamental problem of a theory of dialectic. My own thesis is that a “Self-Fulfillment” [Selbst-Einholung] of logic is in fact possible, and is indeed just the form of a *dialectical logic*.

On the question of dialectic there have appeared a series of interesting analyses of parts of the Hegelian *Logic*; beyond these, some approaches to a *theory* of dialectic itself have been formulated. Besides older works, for example, by Jonas Cohn, Robert Heiss, Gotthart Günther, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and others, some important contributions have appeared more recently by Klaus Hartmann, Wolfgang Wieland, Hans Friedrich Fulda, Dieter Henrich, Michael Rosen, Thomas Kesselring, and Vittorio Hösle, among others.² To their efforts we owe new insights into the structure of dialectical argumentation. On their attempts to find a convincing theory of dialectic we can rely for certain already-clarified determinations.³ Some further investigations on the *formalisability* of dialectic or else on a *formal* dialectic also deserve mention, for example those of Mike Kosok, Newton C. A. da Costa, Thomas M. Seebohm, and Rainer Hegselmann.

In connection with these investigations, I have also presented a sketch of a dialectical theory,⁴ which aimed primarily at a reconstruction of the logic of quality at the opening of Hegel's *Logic*. I will revisit these considerations here, but will restrict myself as much as possible to the beginning of the dialectic of being and nothingness as a paradigm. To avoid misunderstanding, I should mention that this is not presented as a faithful interpretation of the Hegelian text, but as an attempt to develop a strict and defensible line of argumentation that would not fear departing from Hegel's own line—should it prove necessary. My proposed reconstruction can thus be characterized as a *revision* of Hegelian arguments.

The scope of my considerations here is defined along two lines, which seem to me of essential relevance for a theory of dialectic. On the one hand, the form of negation that—as self-referring negation—gains a quasi-semantic expulsive force [Sprengkraft] and therewith a forwarding [weiterverweisende] character; on the other, the notion that every logical category is defective insofar as it does not encapsulate the entirety of possible meanings.

The first line concerns the special role of *negation*. As *self-referential* negation,⁵ it has, as can be shown, an *antinomical character*. Thomas Kesselring has tried to interpret the dialectic from this perspective, though admittedly without being able to work this out any further in a systematic sense. These approaches

are doubtlessly correct; I will develop here in detail just how antinomical structures play a key role in dialectics.

The second of these two lines stems from a notion formulated by Wolfgang Wieland⁶ and further explicated by Vittorio Hösle.⁷ According to them, every logical category (with the exception of a possible terminal category [Abschlussbestimmung])⁸ includes what I call a *semantic-pragmatic discrepancy*. This consists in the fact that the *explicit meaning* of a category does not express everything that is *already implicitly presupposed* for its meaning. In fact, the whole apparatus of logical categories and principles must be always already available and utilized for the explication of a meaning so that in each case what is presumed about the meaning is always much more than what is made explicit at that time. Thus, at the pragmatic level the act of explication presupposes much more than this already relatively explicit meaning, and contains, as it were, a certain meaning-surplus that requires its own explication, and so forth—referring back to the program of logical explication or, as I have called it above, to the *self-fulfillment* of logic.

Both lines are tightly interwoven. And this is something I would like to make clear through the example of the dialectic of being and nothingness at the beginning of the Hegelian *Logic*. In what follows, I will first make visible the *basic structures of dialectical argumentation* (sections II—III), in order to then analyze their function for a *self-explication of logic* by logical means (sections IV—VI)—whereby, as was mentioned, certain revisions are to be expected in comparison with Hegel's actual argument.⁹

II. The dialectic of being and non-being

The inception of the *Logic* with the category of being [Sein], according to Hegel's well-known argument, is grounded upon the very concept of beginning [Anfang]: that with which we begin must itself *be* something, though still in no way a determinate something. The beginning must be only such that it marks a difference with what had been there before it begun. Indeed, that this pure being is yet indeterminate means, on closer inspection, the same as *nothingness* [Nichts] and, conversely, nothingness means the same as pure being. Admittedly, the *expression* of the achieved result is incomplete if only the *identity* of being and nothingness is asserted.¹⁰ Such an assertion, as Hegel states, "is self-contradictory and cancels itself out,"¹¹ since in it being and nothingness are indeed *distinct*. Hence it is necessary that the opposing proposition also be added, that being and

nothingness are *not the same*. The account thus presents the form of an *antimony* [Antinomie],¹² an insoluble contradiction: a logically most problematic structure.

So goes Hegel's line of argument.¹³ It certainly suggests that the initial category of logic, pure being, should be *identical* with the absolutely negative, nothingness, because of its complete indeterminacy. But the first category would thus be identified as a *negative* and thus—in so far as the negative is meaningful only as the negation of a given positive—it would manifestly be a *mediation* [ein Vermitteltes]. This is why a primarily positive sense of being is to be kept up. Yet Hegel's argument for the identification of being and nothingness is not to be dismissed so easily. Paradoxically, *both* seem to be accepted necessarily—i.e., the identity *and* difference of being and nothingness—something that would in fact amount to an *antinomical structure*.

What has arisen meanwhile is nothing other than the "*inseparateness and inseparability*" of the opposing determinations of pure being and nothingness.¹⁴ Neither has its subsistence for itself; each emerges only with the other. In this sense, according to Hegel, they require the introduction of a *new category* which contains in itself both determinations, *both* as identical *and* as opposed. But how is this inseparability of these determinations to be understood in connection with the apparent antinomical structure? Let us make this *justification explicit*.

As a start: the fact that the negative always presumes the positive means that we cannot begin with the category of nothingness, since it already assumes the category of being. "*Non-being*" [Nichtsein] seems to me a better designation for this case. In the following reconstruction of the dialectic of being and nothingness, I will prefer this term—non-being—since Hegel himself had no objection to it.¹⁵

In following Hegel, we begin with pure being, without any further determination about what can be grasped in the proposition that something *is the case*. Here nothing determinate is stated. Instead, what is expressed is, first, only the condition of a possible determining.¹⁶ Furthermore, that something is the case is stated already with respect to the possibility of the opposite—that something is *not the case*. The *negation*, then, belongs essentially to the conditions of the possible determining.

Being and non-being are understood here primarily in a predicative sense, i.e., in the sense of the copula "is" or "is-not" respectively. But naturally "to be the case" and "to not be the case" always refers to an *existential* sense too¹⁷—where being admittedly may not be restricted, as it was by Kant, to physical-empirical being in a decisionistic manner.

I have designated the principle of the cohesion of the positive and negative the "complementarity-principle" [*Komplementaritätsprinzip*]¹⁸: complementary-opposing concepts are not simply *contradictory*, wherein the negation is completely undetermined (e.g., not-red). Moreover, "complementary" does not mean "contrary" [*konträr*] in the sense of remote extremes, such as "black" and "white" which admit inter-possibilities ("gray"). "Complementary" opposites are rather those that, as it were, "hinge on each other" without inter-possibilities, yet still—in distinction to a contradictory opposition—fulfill a delimited and well-determined "semantic-space", such as "furnished" and "unfurnished", which corresponds to what Hegel labels a "determinate negation." It lies only in the full indeterminacy of the initial determinations being and non-being that the complementary opposites here coincide with the contradictory, something no longer given in the further progress of the dialectical development of the *Concept*.¹⁹

In what follows, the conceptual content of a category, its *meaning* or *intension*, should be designated distinctively with angled brackets, such as <Being> and <Non-Being>. The *properties* [*Eigenschaften*] of a category are to be distinguished from the meaning. For example, the concept "red" has the meaning <red>; however, at the same time it has properties, some conceptual character perhaps, which is thus an immaterial being, etc. But as a *concept* it certainly does not have the *property* of being red. Conversely, the property of a rose's being red is not the *meaning* <red>. Rather, it is *corresponding* to <red>, or, as I wish to say briefly in the following, it is <red>-corresponding. One might say in a Platonic fashion that it *participates* in the *Idea* of Redness, or in a more familiar expression, it corresponds to the concept or to the definition of <red>.

With this, we return to the categories of <being> and <non-being>. As we argued, if this is to be understood as the first and most elementary condition of a possible determining, then what comes next is the question about the *relationship* between the two. The answer itself is obvious: <being> and <non-being> (with the abbreviations and <N> respectively and "=" for an equivalency of meaning) are complementary determinations which can be represented as:

$$(1) \quad \langle B \rangle = \langle \text{not-N} \rangle$$

which in any case implies:

$$(2) \quad \langle B \rangle \text{ is not equivalent to } \langle N \rangle.$$

With this “is not,” a *property* is now asserted of the category ⟨being⟩, namely that it is *not* its opposing category of ⟨non-being⟩. Thus, ⟨being⟩ of itself has something of non-being in it, or in the above-introduced terminology, ⟨being⟩ is correspondent to ⟨non-being⟩ with respect to its own properties,

(3) ⟨B⟩ is ⟨N⟩-corresponding.

However, the incidental “is” now indicates that, with respect to the category ⟨B⟩, something is the case (namely that ⟨B⟩ inheres the quality ‘⟨N⟩-corresponding’), that ⟨B⟩ thus possesses a property of being [Seinseigenschaft] and therewith the very same property through which ⟨B⟩ itself is defined,

(4) ⟨B⟩ is ⟨B⟩-corresponding.

Because of the complementarity of ⟨B⟩ and ⟨N⟩ in the sense of (1), the following also holds:

(5) “is ⟨B⟩-corresponding” implies “is not ⟨N⟩-corresponding”,

therefore also from (4)

(6) ⟨B⟩ is *not* ⟨N⟩-corresponding

and therefore an *opposing* proposition to (3). As before with the move from (2) to (3), what results on the grounds of the again-recurring ‘is not’ is the proposition

(7) ⟨B⟩ is ⟨N⟩-corresponding

and so forth. The predication continuously overturns into its opposite: that, however, is the mark of an *antinomical structure*.²⁰

As can be shown,²¹ an *antinomical concept* lies at the base of the antinomical structure, which in the present case possesses the form

(8) ⟨N⟩ = ⟨not ⟨N⟩-corresponding⟩.

Such a concept exactly reproduces the above-explicated antinomical overturning of one predicate into its opposite: the property “not ⟨N⟩-corresponding” for instance is correspondent to the conceptual content

of the antinomical concept in (8) (shown on the right side), wherewith we have "⟨N⟩-corresponding" (shown on the left side of (8) with the expression ⟨N⟩). This quality is in turn *not* correspondent to the antinomical concept ⟨N⟩ in (8), thus "not ⟨N⟩-corresponding." This again is in regard to (8) "⟨N⟩-corresponding," and so forth.

The substantially antinomical character of the concept in (8) emerges immediately if the opposing relationship (1) is kept in mind. Thus with (8) results

$$(9) \quad \langle B \rangle = \langle \text{not-N} \rangle = \langle \text{not-not-} \langle N \rangle \text{-corresponding} \rangle = \langle \langle N \rangle \text{-corresponding} \rangle.$$

Therefore (according to (1)), ⟨B⟩ is not only *opposing* to ⟨N⟩, but has *at the same* time the meaning of "⟨N⟩-corresponding"—a strange, contradictory ambiguity that reflects the antinomical character of the concept (8).

III. The dialectical contradiction

The emergence of an antinomical structure in the relation of ⟨being⟩ and ⟨non-being⟩ must seem quite alarming. Would an argument that contains such a contradiction be remotely convincing? For if the contradiction is permitted, then, as is well-known, any proposition can be "proven."²² But then argumentation itself would become a pointless undertaking.

Fortunately, this is not the case here. Upon closer examination it will be clear that, because of its antinomical character the dialectical contradiction²³ is not a "normal" contradiction, but one that is actually only an *apparent* contradiction. While the reciprocally overturning predications *appear* to contradict each other, they actually relate to *different aspects* of the argument: In (2) the emerging "is not" leads to the categorization through ⟨N⟩ and with it to the predication "is ⟨N⟩-corresponding" in (3). This predication *thereupon* gives rise to a new predication: the now-resulting "is" leads to a categorization through ⟨B⟩ and so results in the opposing predication "is ⟨B⟩-corresponding" in (4) or else, because of the oppositional relationships of (1) and (5) respectively, "is not ⟨N⟩-corresponding." Here the resulting "is not" *of itself* leads to categorization through ⟨N⟩ and with it again to the opposing predication "is ⟨N⟩-corresponding," and so forth. Each predication leads *through categorization* of its inherent "is" or "is not" to a new predication, this predication to another in turn, and so on. Each predication presumes the preceding one and forms out of itself the basis of a new induced predication, etc. It arises, in other words, from a reflection

upon the respectively realized form of predication and its own subsequent categorization and is in such a way the result of a *reflexive transition* to a new level of predication. The antinomically overturning predications are thus located on *different predication levels* and therefore, when rightly understood, do not contradict each other. What first appeared as a contradiction in fact turns out to be merely an *apparent* contradiction and thus does *not* affect the argument.

Now it should be noted that the *antinomical character* of the continually reciprocal-overturning [Ineinanderumschlagens] of the predication is based substantially on implication (5), according to which “is $\langle B \rangle$ -corresponding” can be converted to “is not $\langle N \rangle$ -corresponding” (naturally the justification for this rests in the opposing relationship (1); in fact, this is only clear because “is $\langle N \rangle$ -corresponding” and “is $\langle B \rangle$ -corresponding” are not only *distinct*, but also *complementary* predications.). *Without* this possibility, the “is” in the predication “is $\langle B \rangle$ -corresponding” would only lead to a categorization through $\langle B \rangle$ and thereupon to “is $\langle B \rangle$ -corresponding,” and so on with this new predication, etc. This means that the argument would provide nothing new at all. Yet, this is not the last word. Because the predication “is $\langle B \rangle$ -corresponding” (which is not perpetuating *per se*) can be converted to “is not $\langle N \rangle$ -corresponding,” the argument can almost begin afresh with an “is not”-predication (cf. the move from (2) to (3)). The recourse to implication (5), which for its part is based on the opposing relationship (1), turns the argument back to its beginning and thereby provides the circular structure of the continually reciprocal-overturning [Ineinanderumschlagens] that is characteristic of antinomical predications. To summarize: The move from “is $\langle B \rangle$ -corresponding” to “is not $\langle N \rangle$ -corresponding,” as was formulated in (5), is decisive for the essentially *antinomical character* of dialectical argumentation. Or, in different terms:

(10) “Being” with respect to $\langle B \rangle$ implies “non-being” with respect to $\langle N \rangle$.

Hence, there is a link between “being” and “non-being,” but *in different respects*—naturally, because the two categories are complementary to each other: what the one signifies, the other does not signify, and vice versa. So it is precisely the *opposition* between the two that at the same time grounds their *conjunction* [Verbindung] (albeit in different relationships). The pair can be unified without contradiction. What was thought an ambiguity of meaning actually concerns different aspects. Rightly understood, there can be no talk of *contradiction*.

Moreover, it is clear that being in the one respect and non-being in the opposite respect are *inextricably linked*—the being of the key is *at the same time* the non-being of the keyhole, so to speak. This refers to a new sense of "being" that is "respect-dependent" [hinsichtsabhängig]—a sense that permits differing respects and is thereby an *in-itself differentiated being*. For this new kind of being Hegel uses the category *⟨Dasein⟩*²⁴ (determinate being) which I take over here. *⟨Dasein⟩*, in the sense of the argument we have so far developed, designates a being that is differentiated in itself. It is on the one hand being *opposite* to non-being and yet on the other hand is also non-being at the same time, the latter, however, in another respect. *⟨Dasein⟩* thus represents the *synthetic unity* of opposition and association of *⟨being⟩* and *⟨non-being⟩*. The antinomical-dialectical overturning is rightly understood as the expression of the inextricable connectedness between the opposition and conjunction of the two categories (in different respects), and in this way requires the *formation of a synthesis* [*Synthesebildung*].

According to *Hegel's* argument in the *Science of Logic*, the synthetic unity of *⟨being⟩* and *⟨non-being⟩* (what Hegel calls *⟨Nichts⟩*) is initially the category of *⟨becoming⟩*, while in the present context is immediately passed over into *⟨Dasein⟩*. Elsewhere I have discussed this position extensively.²⁵ The main points of my argument concern the temporality that is bound to *⟨becoming⟩*. But, as a characteristic of natural reality, it still has no place here. Were *⟨becoming⟩* understood non-temporally, however, perhaps as a "conceptual transition," it still would not pertain to the inception of the *Logic*, but to the methodological reflection of the dialectic. Ultimately, it is a being that at the same time *is* a non-being, hence a kind of being which is more accurately categorized as *⟨Dasein⟩* (while according to Hegel's definition, *Dasein* is a "quiet result" of the "ceaseless disquietude" of becoming,²⁶ which appeals to the concrete intuition and which thus cannot actually be called an argument).

For there to be such an in-itself differentiated being that binds together being and non-being, it would have to be *determinate*. Indeed a thusly-determined being [so-bestimmtes Sein] is already at the same time the non-being of an otherwise-determined being [anders-bestimmten Sein]. Determinateness is here the *condition* of the formation of a synthesis and thus requires the introduction of a further category *⟨determinateness⟩* [Bestimmtheit]. This explicates the condition under which *⟨Dasein⟩* is the synthesis of opposition and conjunction of the conceptual pairing of *⟨being⟩/⟨non-being⟩* and can for that reason be designated an *explicative*

category [explicative Bestimmung]. If the synthetic category ›Dasein‹ is the fulfillment of the demand of a synthesis that emerges out of the dialectical argument, then the relevant *conditions of fulfillment* will be explicated through the explicative category ›determinateness‹. Indeed, both belong together.

Along with the explicative category there appears at the same time a *new dimension of meaning*. Indeed, the synthetic category ›Dasein‹ already contains something new, namely, a “new form of being [neue Seinsart]”, which is still comprehensible in terms of the earlier categories ›being‹ and ›non-being‹: as a being that is equally non-being in a different respect. With the explicative determination ›determinateness‹, being—precisely as a *determinate* thing—will be bound expressly as a being different from other kinds of being. With it is now posited a *new opposition*: A “thusly-determined” being is everything that an “otherwise-determined” being is not. The explicative category ›determinateness‹ thus immediately “dissociates” [dissoziiert] into two new opposing categories: ›being-thus‹²⁷ and ›being-other‹ [›Sosein‹ und ›Anderssein‹].

To summarize: the synthetic category brings together the previously opposing determinations. The explicative category brings *new opposing categories* into play—and indeed in service of the antecedent formation of a synthesis, which requires, as seen, *different respects* for the synthetic, contradiction-free reconcilability of the opposition and equivalence of the previously opposed categories. The dialectical argument thus moves outward from the oppositional pair ›being‹ and ›non-being‹, through the synthetic category ›Dasein‹ and the explicative category ›determinateness‹, to a new oppositional pair, ›being-thus‹ and ›being-other‹.

It is important to see that in this way only the premises of the argument have “fulfilled” themselves by their explication. Since, as we have seen, the argument depends rather decisively on the fact that the category ›being‹ is *not* the category ›non-being‹, and is not so because both categories are actually *determined* differently and are therefore themselves already *case examples* of ›determinateness‹, ›being-thus‹, and ›being-other‹. Thus the dialectical development of categories—this must be stressed—does not depend on arbitrary incidences and contrivances, but is only the explication of what is already presupposed for the argument.

The fact that new opposing categories emerge here—›being-thus‹ and ›being-other‹—renders structural correspondences visible. As can be shown,²⁸ the relationship between these two opposing categories leads to a further antinomical structure. Out of this comes the resulting demand to form a synthesis and to introduce an explicative category as the condition

of its fulfillment. This now leads to a new differentiation into opposing categories, and so forth. As the argument *repeats* itself in this way, it effectively runs through a *dialectical cycle*, which is characterized through four categories: the two opposing categories, the synthetic, and the explicative category. In place of the classical three-part schema—thesis, antithesis, synthesis—we have a four-part one.²⁹ I have more thoroughly detailed this schema elsewhere,³⁰ so would here only mention it in passing.

It is important to note here that the argument cannot be carried out *schematically* in essential parts. That especially affects the retrieval of the explicative category. But it also affects what perhaps seemed to be the genuinely schematic part of the dialectical argument. In the work mentioned above,³¹ the reconstruction of the four-cycle dialectical category-development has shown that the dialectic of the opposing categories is developed differently in every cycle. This means that, for a start, an intuitive understanding of contextual content must be reached before it can be converted into a demonstrable argument.

The argument developed here may have suggested the semblance of a *formalization* of dialectic. But the appearance is deceiving. Of course, practically everything can be formalized after it has been understood. But to give rise to such an understanding in the first place—that is just the point in performing the dialectical concept-development.³²

IV. Implicit utilization [Implizite Inanspruchnahme] of the fundamental logic

We must now return to the logical means introduced in our argument. By that we mean the fundamental conditions for the possibility of argumentation generally, which as such have a *transcendental* character. In what follows, I term this complete fundamentally-transcendental logical structure as *fundamental logic* (as I had in earlier works³³). I turn now to the second of the two main objectives of this study mentioned in the introduction. First, however, some general considerations.

So that I am not misunderstood: What is characterized as "fundamental" logic is not one of many "logics" by which one understands the various systems of formal logic. These in fact concern *constructs*, which as such always contain *conventional* elements. Fundamental logic, on the other hand, inheres a *transcendental* character; that is, it is to be understood as a condition of the possibility of argumentation in general, and thus in the end as always forming the basis of those various "logics."

There arises thus a basic problem with the fundamental logic: For its investigation it must be argued in advance. But the "means for argumentation" are themselves elements of this fundamental logic, which ought to have been cognized first. The very first thing to be cognized must evidently already be assumed for its own cognition—a typically recurring problem, as soon as cognition sets out to cognize the transcendental conditions of cognition itself.³⁴

In the introduction to the *Phenomenology*, Hegel argued that cognition could not step out of itself in order to ground itself from the outside at the same time; this is something it does not need to do anyway, since it has, "its own criterion in itself."³⁵ Such explanations are formulated very generally. So let us examine a *concrete example*: the verdict postulated by skepticism that "truth is impossible." This position is well-known as demonstrably self-contradictory in the sense that it requires precisely what it denies—truth—for that denial itself; a contradiction that proves such position itself untenable³⁶—according to the principle of non-contradiction.

Now, the *principle of noncontradiction* [*Widerspruchsprinzip*] itself is not explicitly grounded here as a principle of argumentation and, insofar, is not explicitly available for the argument here. Hence, it has not been explicitly taken up in the explanation either. Nevertheless, the significance of the violation of the principle of noncontradiction [*Widerspruchsausschluss*] is evident. Why?

The contradiction cannot be permitted since it would level the difference between assertion and negation, and remove with it the possibility of demarcation and determination.³⁷ If both assertions—"truth is possible" and "truth is impossible"—are permitted in the same way, then the predicates "possible" and "impossible" would no longer be differentiated; and so on in all other cases ("red"/"not-red," "good"/"not-good," etc.). In short, there would be no negation at all. But without negation, there can be no determination since all determination, per Spinoza, is demarcation.³⁸ Accordingly, there could not be concepts with determinate content; that is, the possibility of meaning would be negated overall. Determination and meaning can only exist if negation exists, and this can only exist if contradiction itself remains prohibited. In other words, whoever uses sensible, meaningful concepts *has* always already prohibited contradiction *implicitly*, without having had to formulate this *explicitly* as a principle of argumentation. The principle of non-contradiction is *exercised implicitly* in all argumentation; it is in a certain way "latently" ["*untergründig*"] efficacious.

With this, a question arises. If the conditions stated for the principle of noncontradiction can hold generally, is the fundamental logic efficacious

in an entirely latent way? This question appears to be unanswerable insofar as it treats the fundamental logic in its entire, yet still unknown complexity. On the other hand, were the fundamental logic not always already efficacious *as a whole* in all argumentation, nothing could be argued for anyway, since that requires not only the principle of non-contradiction, but—basically—the *entire* fundamental logic. But can there be doubt about the possibility of argumentation, even in principle? This would admittedly concern even this doubt itself; that is, it too could not have been doubted even once – since whoever doubts must already argue, must already use sensible concepts, etc. Such a radical doubt is thus self-defeating. In the sense of this general transcendental argument, one can thoroughly see that argumentation is possible and—basically—that the entire fundamental logic is already involved and implicitly "efficacious" therein. The consequence is that it can be argued stringently without the entire logical instrumentation being *explicitly* available—how, for instance, it is also possible to prove through mere counting that one and one is two without having to explicitly resort to the Peano-Axioms (which are of course implicitly utilized in counting). This is a significant fact, since it means that cognition itself, although it does not *explicitly* dispose of the entire fundamental logic, can still draw on a latent potential that does lend soundness to its argumentation.

The question we have formulated concerning the cognition of the fundamental logic itself can be answered thusly: What should only be cognized must and can already be implicitly operative for cognition. And at the same time it thereby becomes possible to extend our limited knowledge of the fundamental logic. After what has been said about limited explicit knowledge, it is to be understood that what is efficacious *implicitly* in such arguments becomes increasingly *explicit*. The cognition of the fundamental logical structures is to be understood as their explication by implicit fundamental logical means and as such is a sort of *self-explication* of the fundamental logic.³⁹ Just insofar, cognition has only a "discharging" [entbindende], explicating function: to fulfill [einzuholen] and to explicate, that by which it is implicitly always already led and determined—a genuinely Hegelian perspective.

V. Dialectic as progressive self-explication of the logic

What in particular does this mean for our previous discussion of the dialectic of <being> and <non-being>? Concerning the explication of the fundamental logic, the question first arises how an *entrance* to it can

be found at all. Or, in Hegel's well-known formulation, "With What Must the Science begin?"⁴⁰

Now, a usual characteristic of the beginning is typically the *lack of presuppositions* [*Voraussetzungslosigkeit*]. According to what has been said, however, that appears to be a misunderstanding. Since for all argumentation, the entire fundamental logic (as the transcendental condition of the possibility of argumentation) is always already *presupposed*. All the more should the question of the beginning be understood as a question of a beginning relative to the *explication* of the fundamental logic: so, what would be supposed as the first step of explication?

But first, what actually is "explication?" Apparently, it is the expression of what is implicitly the case—whereby a first thing that is already put out is explicated, namely: in the process of explication what receives expression is that something *is the case*, or, in short, that something *is*. Without the existential determination [*Seinsbestimmung*] "is" nothing can be explicated. This explication—that *being* (in the sense of *being the case*) is above all the condition of the possibility of explication—thus constitutes the beginning of the explicating.

With the explication of *being* we now have a first explicit, and this means also that a *determinate* category is generated. *Being* indeed has the *meaning* of indeterminate being, but is as such a perfectly determinate category. And as a *determinate* category, it is related to the category of its *opposing determination*: *non-being*. In other words, the explicit introduction of the category *being* immediately requires the introduction of the opposing determination *non-being*. *Being* means something indeterminate, indeed; but it is also, through this establishment of meaning, something determinate that is at the same time determined as opposite to its determinate opposite which it thus *presupposes*.

With this duplicity of the explicated determinations *being* and *non-being*, a *new constellation* has developed, which implies the same question we saw before about the *relationship* between the two determinations. The emerging *antinomical structure* has already been worked out in detail in section II; it would be useful to revisit its underlying argument afresh.

First, it is important to note that each one is the negation of the other. This means that the category *being* is *not* the category *non-being*. Immediately *being* itself turns out to be a case of *non-being*. It still *means being* but is shot through with "non-being" since it is *not* the meaning of *non-being*. *Being* has at the same time the *property* of non-being in itself and, insofar, is "in the mode of non-being"; I will call this "non-being-like" [*nichtseinartig*]. Admittedly: to the extent that *being* is "non-being-like,"

it again takes on the property of *being* and is thus "being-like" [seinsartig]. "Being-like" in turn is *not* "non-being-like," so that it again takes on the property of "non-being," and so forth. The category <being> alternately reflects the qualities of being and non-being. To the extent that it, as it were, *oscillates* simultaneously between "being-like" and "non-being-like", it actually possesses an antinomical character.

As demonstrated (section II), this oscillating in the category <being> at the *property-level* has the consequence that even the *category* <being> itself has an *antinomical* character and that means that it is not only opposed to the category <non-being>, but is also affinitive to it. This proves that <being> is inextricably bound with <non-being> and vice versa. As demonstrated, too, this necessitates the introduction of a new *synthetic* category <Dasein> and further to the *explicative* category <determinateness>: The Dasein of something that is determined is already at the same time a non-being, in the sense that it is-not an otherwise determined thing—a connection pointed out in Plato's *Sophist*.⁴¹ Parmenides' central thesis that being can never be non-being has become obsolete for Plato⁴²: his—metaphorical—"patricide" upon Parmenides.⁴³

So while thus-determinateness [So-Bestimmtsein] and not-thus-determinateness [So-nicht-Bestimmtsein], i.e., otherwise-determinateness [Anders-Bestimmtsein], belongs to the sense of "determinateness", a new *oppositional pair* of categories is engendered therewith, one which can be termed <being-thus> and <being-other> [*Sosein* und *Andersein*]. With the emergence of this new pair of opposites, the question concerning the relationship of these two categories to one another presents itself anew, with the consequence—something that cannot be more thoroughly detailed here⁴⁴—that an antinomical structure emerges anew and hence, as before, proves the necessity of a synthetic conjunction of opposing categories, and so forth.

This *process of successive explication* of the fundamental logical categories thus always leads to antinomically structured opposing categories, which demand a new synthetic and explicative category that for its part "dissociates" anew into antinomical opposing categories. At base, the process has—as per Hegel—the form of a dialectical conceptual development [Begriffsentwicklung]. However, an essential difference of the procedure sketched here in comparison to Hegel, is to be seen in the systematic revelation of *antinomical structures*. These provide, as I have detailed elsewhere,⁴⁵ only a *ground and justification* of the formation of a synthesis. It is significant that herewith is basically found a *procedure* of explication of the system of fundamental logic that at first was merely implicit. Let us consider

these developed considerations once again while keeping in mind this *procedural-aspect*.

The act of explication can always explicitly fall back only on what is already quite explicitly available. As was detailed above, the argument also necessitates the usage of other, at first still implicit, elements of the fundamental logic. But in order to be *provable*, the procedure must abide by that what is explicitly available. Now the beginning is characterized precisely through the fact that it is not yet explicit. But then how can the procedure begin at all? The answer given here is based on the explication of the possibility of explication itself: what this explicates must in any case “be the case,” or in short: it must “be,” no matter how we describe it. The claimed here category ⟨being⟩ is thus to be understood as the first explicit category of the fundamental logic. With this first explicatory step, however, a second is already initiated: As the *determined* category which “being” categorizes, it is *not* its opposite ⟨non-being⟩—whereby the category of non-being is also immediately engendered: the explication of “being” unavoidably entails that of “non-being.”

At the same time, there emerges a *new constellation* of explicit elements: after the *two* explicit categories are now at hand, the question about their *relationship* arises. As said, this leads to a complex structure that upon closer inspection bears an *antinomical* character. The next step is thereby indicated: The antinomical relationship between ⟨being⟩ and ⟨non-being⟩ implies that both belong inseparably together and in such a way that requires the introduction of a *synthetic* relationship that *binds* the sense of ⟨being⟩ with that of ⟨non-being⟩—an effectively new sense of ⟨being⟩, which is conceptualized as ⟨Dasein⟩ and as its condition of fulfillment ⟨Determinateness⟩. That is, as a being that as the being of a thus-determined thing is at the same time the non-being of an otherwise-determined thing. ⟨Being⟩ in the sense of ⟨Dasein⟩ and ⟨Determinateness⟩ therefore requires the introduction of a new oppositional pair, ⟨being-thus⟩ and ⟨being-other⟩, that for their part make visible an antinomical structure which in turn necessitates a new synthesis and explication, and so on. In this way, the process of dialectical conceptual explication [Begriffsexplikation] provides a sequence of categories in the sense of a progressive explication of semantically fundamental categories.⁴⁶

That this approach is *not arbitrary*—for otherwise it would lack explanatory value—arises from the fact that in its reflexive employment it takes up only what had become explicit in the preceding step of the procedure. Accordingly, it is essential that *even through the act of explication itself* a new

situation is created. A new explicit element, so to say, appears on the stage of explication and therewith a new constellation of explicit elements is realized: a new state of affairs which for its part is *not yet* conceptually grasped and insofar still has an *implicit* character itself. So, every step of explication at the same time generates a new implicit case, which as such now posits the *next task for explication* and with it motivates a new step of explication. In other words, every step of explication itself always further induces a *discrepancy* between what has just become explicit and what—through the newly instantiated implicit aspect—now further demands a new step of explication. This incongruence—that directs the explication-procedure of each explicit object and of the newly produced implicit object, which is produced at the same time by the act of explication itself—is what I designate an "*explication-discrepancy*" [*Explikations-Diskrepanz*].

Under *this* aspect, let us observe once more the initial category <being>. First, it does have the *meaning* of indeterminate being. However, as the *categorization* of this meaning it possesses the *property* of determinacy, which brings the *determinate* category <being> onto the scene with its opposing *determinate* category <non-being>. With this opposition of <being> and <non-being>, however, a new implicit case is instantiated, namely, that the category of <being> is *not* <non-being>. Thus, irrespective of its *meaning* <being>, its emerging *property* is "non-being-like" ["nichtseinsartig"]: an *explication-discrepancy* that gives rise to a new step of explication and that, as was shown, leads to the synthesis of <being> and <non-being>.

VI. The perspective of finite knowing

Here it can be recognized that the dialectical explication procedure is determined *out of itself* and thus—strictly speaking—all arbitrariness is erased. Every step of explication is determined by the preceding one. So, not just *any* implicit content becomes explicit, but precisely that implicit content which had become *generated* at each step of the procedure itself, through which it is concretely apprehensible and further directs the procedure through the thusly instantiated explication-discrepancy.⁴⁷

The dialectic therefore in no way stands under the unrealizable condition that it must have in mind already, as a guiding-principle, the *final goal*—the completed system of fundamental logic, which for Hegel is the *Absolute*. The self-referent reflexive employment of the procedure upon the previous step at each stage is in fact decisive, thereby capturing the specifically

emerging explication-discrepancy on every explication level, and sublating it by a new act of explication—which, admittedly, always induces a new explication-discrepancy.

The cognitive act, therefore, constantly includes “along the way” an act of reflexive self-verification [Selbstvergewisserung] with respect to the *completeness* of cognition at each of its levels. But why should such a completeness be sought? Evidently, because the Absolute asserts itself underhandedly, as it were, forming the furtive motive of cognition. The logic—in the sense of Fundamental logic—is asserting itself implicitly by means of itself; in the very act of thinking we have already assumed its absolute power, willingly or unwillingly. All the cunning of cognition, in trying to seize hold of the Absolute, would be idle and in vain according to Hegel’s famous formulation in the *Phenomenology*, “if it were not and wasn’t necessarily in and for itself already with us.”⁴⁸

Essential for the dialectical procedure is thus the reflection upon the implicit state of affairs through which each previous step of explication had first been generated, that is, upon the logical specifications that have been carried out in the immediately previous step of explication through the procedure itself. These specifications are thus themselves to be understood as the transcendental condition of the next step of the procedure. A logical potential, so to speak, is induced with every step of the procedure that, while it is reflected thereon, provides the argument with new material content and drives the process along thereby: a *methodologically regulated reflection*. It is reflected not in a private speech-act that as such could promise immediate certainty,⁴⁹ but in the very *logic* that is effectively implicit within it.

Out of this, however, no “immediate” knowledge can be had, no “immediate” evidence, so that the *possibility of error* cannot really be ruled out. From here some light falls on the question of the *fallibility* of knowledge: Not that the intentions accompanying my speech-acts, which are immediately accessible and evident to me, could count as a criterion of knowledge. Such a criterion can only be the universally accessible and objectively comprehensible logical confirmation [Ausweisung] of knowledge which as such, however, is admittedly also *prone to error*. Hegel notes that Plato altered the *Republic* seven times; for the task of editing the Hegelian *Logic*, Hegel would have been happy to have had, “the free leisure to have been able to work through it seventy-seven times.”⁵⁰

Incidentally, the knowledge developed in the *dialectical* argument can be no “final” knowledge, since it is process-dependent knowledge that is *in principle able to be overtaken*—able to be further developed, able to be made

more precise. But the possibility of the determinations being overtaken does not hinder the *exactitude* of its dialectical reconstruction. And that means also that categories that can be overtaken are not "false" categories. The "correct" meaning of a category is rather that which belongs to *each respective state of the procedure*. The determination belonging to a progressive state of the procedure is not the correct category, but only the more determinate one. And the argument that underlies it is in no way more exact than what we had in the case of an earlier category.

It is essential that the clarification of the applied concepts must correspond to the *stage of the procedure*. So, for example, one can argue quite exactly with a still thoroughly indeterminate concept of truth (even with respect to the possibility of absolute truth), without needing to have *definitively solved* the problem of truth before handling those various theories of truth: for the disproof of the skeptical objection to know it appears sufficient that a proposition is always bound to a truth claim (section IV). Or: in the developed dialectical argument, it has been repeatedly asserted that something is *correspondent to a concept*. But what is a *concept*? There are some thoroughly different notions about that. "Concept" for Hegel has a completely different sense than it does for Wittgenstein. But that is besides the point for our purposes. In what concerns us here, where we have supposed that there is something like a "*correspondence with a concept*", it is implied that a *norm-character* [Normcharakter] accords to the concept—by definition; since only with respect to a "norm" can talk of "correspondence" be meaningful. Doubtlessly, this is no sophisticated determination of what "concept" means, but—and this is decisive—the characterization of "concept" is manifestly sufficient in view of the context of the argument addressed here ("to be correspondent to a concept"). In this context, an absolutely complete and exact definition is just not necessary.

Essential to the task of reconstructing the fundamental logic, it is at last certain that in the course of reconstruction *all* presuppositions are "fulfilled" in the end, that is, explicated and legitimized—hence also, for example, the constantly presupposed principle of noncontradiction. Only through the total reconstruction of the fundamental logic, through all logical means (as these must be already laid out "along the way" in the execution of every single argument) can these individual arguments *finally* be legitimated too. Their *ultimate* justification refers to the *termination* [Abschluss] of the entire endeavor in whose service they stood. Hegel's thought that the proof for the correctness of the *Science of Logic* can only be its fully achieved system certainly strikes a central note for the

reconstruction of the fundamental logic. Only if it concludes itself in the end in *the way that all* the required for reconstruction logical means are thereby reconstructed as well, only then can we say that the pursued project of reconstruction of the fundamental logic *by its own means* has been successfully carried out, and that means its *self-fulfillment*.

The way to this end is the self-grounding, continual determination of the dialectical argument out of itself, which leaves behind all arbitrary incidences and presuppositions. The dialectical development of the fundamental logical structures in its systematic coherence is thus the self-reconstruction of the fundamental logic as a *system* in the sense of a *self-supporting whole*.⁵¹ This internal closedness [Geschlossenheit] is the expression of the *absoluteness of the fundamental logic*, i.e., the impossibility of founding it through anything other than itself, insofar as the founding itself is of an unavoidably logical nature. In the sense of the current debate over “ultimate-groundings,”⁵² this would count as the *ultimate grounding of the fundamental logic*—a broad and still wide open field of philosophical research!

Notes

- ¹ See, for example, Karl Popper “What is Dialectic?” in *Conjectures and Refutations*, London: Routledge, 1976, pp. 312–335.
- ² In his impressive magnum opus, Manfred Wetzel (*Dialektik als Ontologie auf der Basis selbstreflexiver Erkenntniskritik. Neue Grundlegung einer ‘Wissenschaft der Erfahrung des Bewusstseins’ und Prolegomena zu einer Dialektik in systematischer Absicht*, Freiburg/München: Alber, 1986; see also *Reflexion und Bestimmtheit in Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik*, Hamburg: Fundament-Verlag Sasse, 1971) where he goes entirely his own way, which leads him to position the dialectic in the scope of a “self-reflexive critique of cognition”. Wetzel’s concern is above all aimed at a “new foundation of a ‘science of the experience of consciousness.’” His analyses on the dialectic are accordingly epistemologically oriented and in this sense are above all a “Prolegomena” to a dialectical logic still to be worked out. In the present context, however, it is decidedly all about the concrete structure—even and just in regard to the process—of such a dialectical logic (see title formulations in *Dialektik als Ontologie auf der Basis selbstreflexiver Erkenntniskritik*).
- ³ For a good overview of the present attempts, see Thomas Kesselring, *Die Produktivität der Antinomie. Hegels Dialektik im Lichte der genetischen Erkenntnistheorie und der formalen Logik*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1984, 22ff. See also the recently published investigation by Christian Krijnen, *Philosophie als System. Prinzipientheoretische Untersuchungen zum Systemgedanken bei Hegel, im Neukantianismus und in der Gegenwartsphilosophie*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann 2008, Ch. 3.
- ⁴ Dieter Wandschneider, *Grundzüge einer Theorie der Dialektik. Rekonstruktion und Revision dialektischer Kategorienentwicklung in “Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik”*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta. 1995.

- ⁵ See Dieter Henrich, "Hegels Grundoperation. Eine Einleitung in die 'Wissenschaft der Logik'", in Ute Guzzoni, Bernhard Rang, and Ludwig Siep, eds, *Der Idealismus und seine Gegenwart. Festschrift für Werner Marx zum 65. Geburtstag*, Hamburg: Meiner, 1976, pp. 208–230; Dieter Henrich, "Formen der Negation in Hegels Logik," in Rolf-Peter Horstmann, ed., *Seminar: Dialektik in der Philosophie Hegels*, Frankfurt, a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1978, pp. 213–229.
- ⁶ Wolfgang Wieland "Bemerkungen zum Anfang von Hegels Logik," in Rolf-Peter Horstmann, ed., *Seminar: Dialektik in der Philosophie Hegels*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1978, pp. 194–212.
- ⁷ Vittorio Hösle, *Hegels System. Der Idealismus der Subjektivität und das Problem der Intersubjektivität*, 2 Bde., Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1987, Ch. 4.1.2.
- ⁸ In accordance with the author's wishes, both "Bestimmungen" and "Kategorien" are translated throughout as "categories." –Tr.
- ⁹ Bernd Braßel is illustrative on this point (see "Vorzüge einer Theorie der Dialektik," in Vittorio Hösle and Wolfgang Neuser, eds. *Logik, Mathematik und Naturphilosophie im objektiven Idealismus. Festschrift für Dieter Wandschneider zum 65. Geburtstag*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2004, pp. 91–112). As a basic clarification in this context, see also his excellent investigation *Das Programm der idealen Logik*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005, which especially focuses on the possibility of a logical "ultimate grounding" through transcendental argumentation.
- ¹⁰ Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller, New York: Humanities Press, 1969, p. 90; Hegel, G.W.F.: *Werke in 20 Bänden*, ed. by E. Moldenhauer and K. M. Michel, Frankfurt, a.M.: Suhrkamp 1969–1971 (henceforward quoted as *Werke*, followed by volume and page number), vol. 5, p. 92.
- ¹¹ Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, p. 90; *Werke*, 5, 93.
- ¹² Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, p. 92; *Werke*, p. 5, 94.
- ¹³ Instructive here is Ruth-Eva Schulz-Seitz. See "'Sein' in Hegels Logik: 'Einfache Beziehung auf sich,'" in Helmut Fahrenbach, ed., *Wirklichkeit und Reflexion. Walter Schulz zum 60. Geburtstag*, Pfullingen: Neske Stuttgart, 1973, pp. 365–383.
- ¹⁴ Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, p. 91; *Werke*, 6, 94.
- ¹⁵ *Hegel's Science of Logic*, p. 83; *Werke*, 5, 84.
- ¹⁶ John Burbidge, *On Hegel's Logic. Fragments of a Commentary*, Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1981, p. 38; Krijnen, *Philosophie als System*, p. 140.
- ¹⁷ Michael Theunissen (see *Sein und Schein. Die kritische Funktion der Hegelschen Logik*, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1980, 385ff.) discusses the various types of copula (predicative, existential, veritative, identicative: "is", "is existing", "is true", "is identical"). Yet the predicative form is always included with all of these types and in this sense is to be considered *fundamental*.
- ¹⁸ Wandschneider, *Grundzüge einer Theorie der Dialektik*, p. 55.
- ¹⁹ For more on this point, see *Grundzüge einer Theorie der Dialektik*, chapters 3.2 and 4.6.
- ²⁰ For more detail, see Dieter Wandschneider, "Das Antinomienproblem und seine pragmatische Dimension," in Herbert Stachowiak, ed. *Pragmatik*, Bd. IV: *Sprachphilosophie, Sprachpragmatik und formative Pragmatik*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1993, pp. 320–352.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, section 3ff.

- ²² If we accept as true the contradictory conjunction $A \wedge \neg A$, then from that follows the validity of A and the validity of $\neg A$, and consequently the validity of the implication (*) $\neg A \rightarrow X$ for any proposition X . On the other hand the validity of $\neg A$ also follows from the admitted contradictory conjunction and in such a way, together with the implication (*), the arbitrary proposition X .
- ²³ Note that the concept of *dialectical contradiction* is also used in another sense. For example, see Vittorio Hösle, "Begründungsfragen des objektiven Idealismus," in Wolfgang R. Köhler, Wolfgang Kuhlmann, and Peter Rohs, eds. *Philosophie und Begründung*, Frankfurt, a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1987, pp. 212–267, 253f., where dialectical contradiction is perhaps understood as an "essentially performative contradiction."
- ²⁴ Cf., for example, Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, 109ff.; *Werke*, 5, 115ff.
- ²⁵ Wandschneider, *Grundzüge einer Theorie der Dialektik*, Ch. 3.3.
- ²⁶ Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, p. 106; *Werke*, 5, 113.
- ²⁷ "Being-thus" ["Sosein"] is here naturally not understood as the opposite of "being-that" ["Dasein"], thus not in the sense of "essence" ["Wesen"], but quite literally as a "thus-determined" being ["so-bestimmtes" Sein].
- ²⁸ Wandschneider, *Grundzüge einer Theorie der Dialektik*, Ch. 3.5
- ²⁹ It is interesting in this context that Hösle in his excellent investigation *Hegels System*, argues for a principally *tetradic* structure.
- ³⁰ Wandschneider, *Grundzüge einer Theorie der Dialektik*, Ch. 4.8.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² At any rate, formal means are not to be rejected out of hand. They can help to form the coherence of the argument more transparently. In certain cases they can also contribute to its verification. It can thus be shown, for example, in a very formal way—something that cannot be detailed here—that the sequence of the first four dialectical cycles form a *systematic unity* in the sense that with it a certain argumentative completeness is reached (Dieter Wandschneider, "Letztbegründung und Dialektik," in Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, ed., *Diskurs und Leidenschaft. Festschrift für Karl-Otto Apel zum 75. Geburtstag*, Aachen: Verlag der Augustinus Buchhandlung, 1996, pp. 317–336).
- ³³ For example, Wandschneider, *Grundzüge einer Theorie der Dialektik*.
- ³⁴ Cf. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, pp. 46–47; *Werke*, 3, 69; similar to Plato's *Theaetetus*, 196d–e.
- ³⁵ Hegel's *Phenomenology*, p. 53; *Werke*, 3, 76.
- ³⁶ Admittedly this holds only if the "third" is excluded. Thus even the principle of *tertium non datur* holds here. However, this principle appears obsolete in view of the existence of *polyvalent* logics in which "the third" is no longer excluded. An example is the *reflexion logic* with six truth-values developed by Ulrich Blau; this was developed to deal with logical indeterminacy and paradoxes (cf. Ulrich Blau, "Die Logik der Unbestimmtheiten und Paradoxen," in *Erkenntnis* 22, 1985, pp. 369–459). Generally it is being discovered that such polyvalent logics are constructs in which certain validity-possibilities are *settled by convention*. It is essential that even such constructs presume fundamental logical means on the *meta-level*—namely, for their introduction and functional determination. At this level, however, at least the logic operating on each highest meta-level is *bivalent*. Since here (and I adopt this argument from a personal conversation with Blau)

there is again only the alternative "true" and "false," perhaps with respect to the question as to whether or *not* a third truth value *accords* to a proposition in the scope of a trivalent logic: since again there cannot be a third term. But the "highest" meta-level—in the founding theoretical perspective relevant here—is the transcendental logical level. In the sense of these considerations, the fact that it is plainly irreducible means that its logic is *bivalent* and therein the *principle of the excluded third* holds. In terms of transcendental logic, therefore, this principle is just as inviolable as the non-contradiction principle and the principle of the non-equivalence of affirmation and negation. The recourse to the principle of the excluded middle in the preceding considerations is thus legitimated transcendentially.

- ³⁷ Following Aristotle. See in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 2 vols., ed. Jonathan Barnes, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984, *Metaphysics*, Γ3–6.
- ³⁸ "Determinatio negatio est" (cf. Höhle, *Hegels System*, p. 195).
- ³⁹ Cf. Wandschneider, *Grundzüge einer Theorie der Dialektik*, Ch. 6.3, and Dieter Wandschneider, "Ist das System der Fundamentallogik ohne das System der Fundamentallogik rekonstruierbar?" in Ludwig Nagl and Rudolf Langthaler, eds., *System der Philosophie? Festgabe für Hans-Dieter Klein*, Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2000, pp. 225–240.
- ⁴⁰ Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, p. 67; *Werke*, 5, 65.
- ⁴¹ For example, Plato, *The Sophist: A Translation with a Detailed Account of Its Theses and Arguments*, trans. James Duerlinger, New York: Peter Lang, 2005, 256d ff.
- ⁴² See also Klaus Düsing, "Dialektikmodelle. Platons 'Sophistes' sowie Hegels und Heideggers Umdeutungen," in Dieter Wandschneider, ed., *Das Problem der Dialektik*. Bonn: Bouvier, 1997, pp. 4–18.
- ⁴³ See Plato, *Parmenides*, 241d.
- ⁴⁴ See Wandschneider, *Grundzüge einer Theorie der Dialektik*.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, ch. 2 & 3.
- ⁴⁶ At this point, the question concerning the *completion* of such an explicatory process must remain open. On this, see the considerations of Karen Gloy, *Einheit und Mannigfaltigkeit. Eine Strukturanalyse des 'und'. Systematische Untersuchungen zum Einheits- und Mannigfaltigkeitsbegriff bei Platon, Fichte, Hegel sowie in der Moderne*, Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1981, 166ff., 174ff.; Dieter Wandschneider, "Die Absolutheit des Logischen und das Sein der Natur. Systematische Überlegungen zum absolut-idealistischen Ansatz Hegels," (*Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, Bd. 39, 1985, pp. 331–351), 343ff.; Dieter Wandschneider, "Das Problem der Entäußerung der Idee zur Natur bei Hegel," in *Hegel-Jahrbuch*, Heinz Kimmerle, Wolfgang Lefevre, Rudolf W. Meyer, eds, Bochum: Germinal Verlag, 1990, pp. 25–33, section 2; Höhle, *Hegels System*, 196f.
- ⁴⁷ Robert Brandom has shown in detail that the function of logical terms consists in making explicit what is implicitly presupposed in the practice of discourse. He himself here recognizes his Hegelian perspective (e.g., Robert B. Brandom, *Making It Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994; see also Robert Brandom, *Articulating Reasons: An Introduction to Inferentialism*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). All the same, the difference with our position here is not to be overlooked: Brandom is not concerned, as we are here, with the project of a *systematic*

development of the implicit to be made explicit, whereby in the present context the real point is its *procedure-dependent generation* [*verfahrensbedingte Generierung*]. In contrast, Brandom treats the inferential potential contained implicitly in (empirical) concepts, which he understands as socially constituted. The systematic development of (fundamental-)logic is just not his issue. (See my detailed argument in Dieter Wandschneider, "In-expressive Vernunft". Abschied vom 'sich vollbringenden Skeptizismus' in Robert B. Brandoms pragmatistischem Positivismus," in Brady Bowman and Klaus Vieweg, eds., *Die freie Seite der Philosophie. Skeptizismus in Hegelscher Perspektive*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann 2006, pp. 199–216).

⁴⁸ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 47; *Werke*, 3, 69.

⁴⁹ Transcendental Pragmatism (Karl-Otto Apel, Wolfgang Kuhlmann, among others) sees in it the possibility of *infallible* knowledge.

⁵⁰ Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p.42; *Werke*, 5, 33.

⁵¹ On the sense and possibility of a systematic philosophy today, see Christian Krijnen, *Philosophie als System*, esp. Ch. 6.

⁵² For example, Vittorio Hösle, *Die Krise der Gegenwart und die Verantwortung der Philosophie. Transzendentalpragmatik, Letztbegründung, Ethik*. München: C. H. Beck, 1990; Dieter Wandschneider "Letztbegründung und Dialektik,,"; Dieter Wandschneider, "Letztbegründung unter der Bedingung endlichen Wissens. Eine Hegelsche Perspektive," in Wolf-Jürgen Cramm, Wulf Kellerwessel, David Krause, and Hans-Christoph Kupfer, eds, *Diskurs und Reflexion. Wolfgang Kuhlmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann 2005, pp. 353–372.