Performing the Speculative:
A Feminist Departure from Kant and Hegel

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Abstract

This thesis defines the philosophical concept of speculation and assesses its emergence in Kantian and post-Kantian German philosophy, in the attempted construction of a post-Enlightenment "scientific" philosophy and alongside early work in anthropology and gynaecology. It argues that in the historical elaboration of the problem of speculation "race" and "sex" emerge as concerns for this newly defined scientific philosophy. Moreover, a concept of performativity is introduced in the attempt to think the ontological implications or "effects" of speculative thought. This thesis proposes that Hegel is the originator of such a concept of performativity, introduced as the conclusion to the *Science of Logic*. Here, performativity is defined as activity of form or determinate being in contrast to the empty notion of being pure being with which the *Logic* begins. Speculation, the *Logic* proposes, is not only a methodological necessity giving rise to an essentially epistemological problem, as Kant had defined it, but is also to be thought as ontological *Thätigkeit* (activity) proper.

Rewriting speculation as an ontological concept of form, Hegel uses, among others, social and political examples to illustrate the nature of speculative thought. The surprising appearance of the state and the sexual relation in the *Logic*, alongside the concepts of violence, resistance, power and freedom, demonstrates that speculative (theoretical and non-empirical) reason necessarily encounters political categories and suggests that these might be exemplary of its nature. While it remains unclear, in Hegel, precisely how the unfolding of conceptual form leads to political categories, both Irigaray and Butler offer answers to this question. In doing so, they separately outline ways of thinking the ontological dimension of speculative thought: Irigaray by modifying speculation as specula(riza)tion – an attempt to visualise speculation and to render its social dimensions visible; and Butler by formulating the concept of gender performativity. This thesis offers its own answer, too, by situating the emergence of speculation and performativity as philosophical concepts in the context of the history of modern gynaecology and the speculum. It reads these concepts alongside those of sexual difference, *Geschlecht* and gender, arguing that only in this way can speculation and performativity be thought.

Some men say an army of horse and some men say an army on foot
and some men say an army of ships is the most beautiful thing
on the black earth. But I say it is
what you love.

– Sappho

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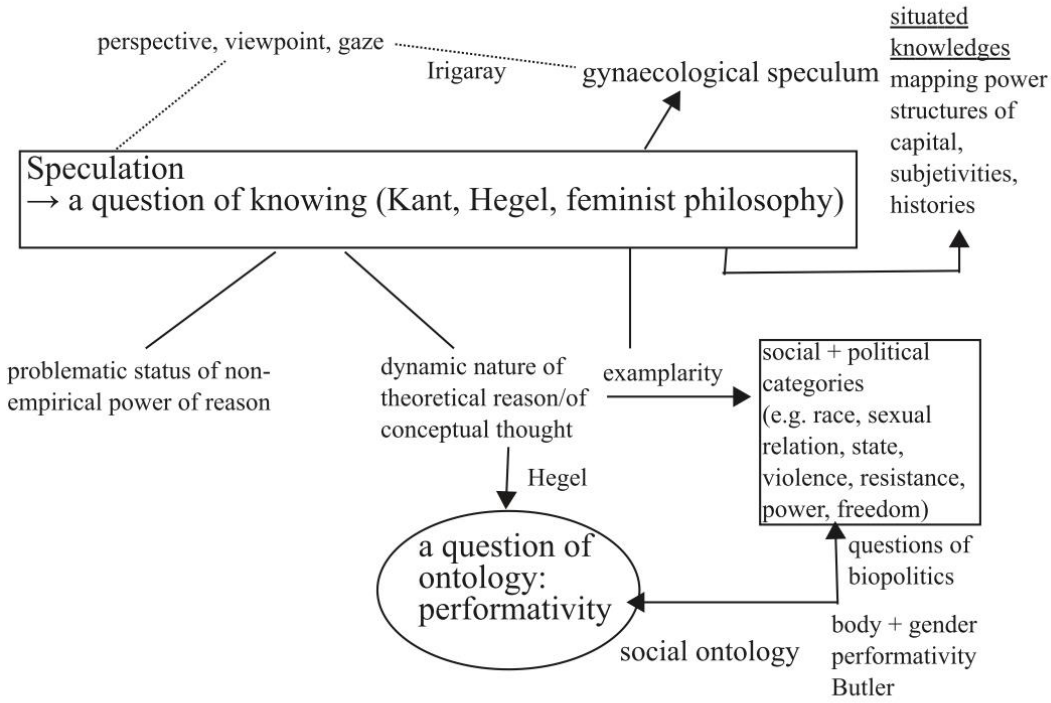
I would like to dedicate this thesis to my two grandmothers, Maria Loges and Christel Agnes Dahms, who taught me the essentials; and to all those who are looking for bodies in the abstract.

Contents

Introduction: Performing the speculative



How do the two concepts of speculation and performativity relate to each other? And what is their philosophical relevance, both historically and into the contemporary period? This thesis sets out to answer these two questions. While speculation has in recent years made a return in theory, circulating in academic, artistic and activist discourses under various banners of speculative realisms and materialisms, this thesis addresses itself to an alternative 'speculative turn', one firmly anchored in feminist, queer and black studies, in which speculation is used as a methodological tool—for instance, in the works of Hortense Spillers, Luce Irigaray (specula[riza]tion), Donna Haraway (speculative fabulation) and Saidiya Hartman (speculative fiction and history). Here, speculation becomes inherent to the critique of philosophy as such, as well as to the possibility of constructing alternative philosophical concepts. But what does it mean, first, to speculate in philosophy? And, second, to speculate on the future of philosophy? Despite the seeming familiarity of the term, our grasp of speculation remains rather vague and its relation to performativity unexplored.

Performativity, too, is often described in terms of a "turn" which, prior to the (re)turn of speculation, affected the humanities and social sciences, in particular linguistics, anthropology, history, philosophy, feminist and queer studies, and which led in large part to the founding of a new (inter)disciplinary field, that of performance studies. Whether as a theory of speech act (J. L. Austin, John Searle, Jacques Derrida), of gender and queer performativity (Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgewick), or of visual and performance art (Peggy Phelan), performativity focuses on the aspect of the social construction of language, gender, bodies, works of art, etc. and foregrounds social and political contexts, institutions and norms in the analysis of particular phenomena. Like speculation, performativity has been employed to construct alternative theories of subjectivity, linguistics, ethics, art, etc., that do not abstract from social and political contexts. As such, performativity and speculation both function not only as means of criticizing the canon, philosophical or otherwise, but also as tools for philosophizing.

Speculation

The word "speculation" originates in late sixteenth century Latin and old French, *speculat*-meaning to 'observe from a vantage point or watch tower', and the verb

speculari, 'to look at', or 'to view', as well as to 'contemplate'.[1] From the 1570s, a divergence in meaning, the disparaging sense of 'mere conjecture' is recorded. From 1774, speculation also describes the activity of buying and selling in search of profit from the rise and fall of market value. The *speculum*, moreover, based on its Latin definition as mirror, is the name for the gynaecological speculum that is used to make the insides of the vagina and cervix visible to human eyes.

While the following analysis illustrates that these meanings overlap, speculation will be analysed not in general but as a philosophical concept, and as such within a very specific context. Immanuel Kant, it will be argued, is the first to identify speculation as a specifically philosophical and more precisely, a modern problem. This thesis attempts to situate philosophical speculation in Kantian and post-Kantian German philosophy, and to outline the role of speculation in the attempted construction of a post-Enlightenment "scientific" philosophy, as well as its effects on the newly emerging academic disciplines of anthropology, biology, comparative anatomy and gynaecology. It will be argued that in elaborating the problem of speculation, "race" and "sex" emerge as concerns for this newly defined scientific philosophy. This is because these concepts function in Kant and Hegel as examples to outline a legitimate use of non-empirical, speculative reason. In this function, concepts like "race" and the "sexual relation" are crucial for the definition of modern European philosophy – its attempt to set its own boundaries and to define itself as science. Philosophy, and those specialised disciplines that are descended from it, therefore have a common interest, namely the attempted scientific investigation and definition of these terms. This thesis will focus in particular on the example of the "sexual relation" in Hegel's *Science of Logic* and the connection of theoretical speculation to the speculum. For this reason, the relation between modern European philosophy and the "science of woman" emerging as an academic field in the nineteenth century will be analysed.

Throughout this thesis, speculation is defined as the activity of theoretical (as distinct from practical or empirical) reason, and as such is synonymously referred to as "speculative reason", first by Kant and Hegel and subsequently by Irigaray and Butler.

[1] John Simpson and Edumd Weinter, eds., 'Speculation' in *The Oxford English Dictionary, Second Edition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 171-174.

It is the relevance of this meaning of "speculation" that will be assessed here, focusing on these four thinkers in particular. Even though defined by Kant and Hegel as entirely non-empirical, speculative reason will be contextualised throughout this thesis, which will bring its empirical conditions and effects to light. Historical and political contexts are important because both Kant and Hegel rely on socio-political concepts to exemplify and justify the use of non-empirical speculative reason. It will be argued here that these examples matter, even when they are only referred to in passing, such as Hegel's reference to the "sexual relation" (*Geschlechtsverhältnis*) in the *Science of Logic*. These examples are of significance because they are meant to prove that speculation is not imposed onto "nature," but instead inherent to human experience and to what we consider "material."

While other examples are also employed, social and political categories in particular demonstrate that certain concepts and categories, even though they are not properly empirical as such, are also not *merely* logical – where the latter is understood as being without any connection to experience (Kant) or life (Hegel). With reference to these concepts, Kant and Hegel both attempt to redefine in their own ways the relation between the logical and the empirical. This thesis outlines, first, how an investment in these concepts links philosophy to the newly defined sciences of anthropology, biology, gynaecology and comparative anatomy, which collectively develop the modern concepts of "race" and "sexual difference" alongside philosophy. Secondly, it will be argued that speculation, defined as the activity of theoretical or speculative reason, has consequences not only for thinking and only for philosophy, but also has an impact on life outside of philosophy, as it plays a role in how we come to conceptualise social and political categories such as sexual difference and gender as Luce Irigaray and Judith Butler illustrate.

Performativity

In this thesis performativity will be both implied as well as explicitly discussed as a philosophical concept. As such, performativity will be defined as ontological concept, distinct from its meaning as language, speech act and/or (art) performance. The relationship between an ontological notion of performativity, and speculation as epistemological problem and possibility, is discussed with regard to the work of Hegel

and Butler in particular. This is because these two thinkers propose a speculative concept of being, defined as performative ontology. While in Kant speculation is strictly epistemological, a problem as well as a possibility for knowledge, it becomes clear in Hegel, Irigaray and Butler that speculative reason does in fact have ontological effects. What this precisely means differs for each thinker. Hegel, it will be argued, proposes an implicit concept of the performative to signify the ontological dimension of speculative thought.

This thesis proposes that performativity as ontology is thought for the first time in Hegel's work, but is subsequently named and redefined by Butler. Both Hegel and Butler aim to think a speculative concept of being which is not static, but which is constituted by and as its own past and future acts. While Butler's claims about ontology work in relation to Hegel, as will be shown, she also redefines performativity *with* and *against* Hegel as a social ontology. Her project is to construct not only a concept of being that is open to change but one that includes an understanding of social temporality in its definition. This is an attempt to move both philosophy and feminist theory away from ontological essentialism and towards a speculative ontology that is neither a voluntarism nor entirely pre-determined. Such a philosophical concept of performativity then serves in Butler's work as a foundation for explaining the working of gender.

While Butler's claims about ontology work in relation to Hegel, they also clarify what remains unexplained in Hegel, namely the references to violence, resistance and freedom, and the use of social and political categories – which appear rather abruptly at the end of the *Science of Logic* – to exemplify the working of speculative reason. Butler illustrates that claims about ontology are inherently political, even when presented as neutral claims about being. It will therefore be concluded that after Butler, performativity has to be understood as social ontology.

Aim, method, structure

The first chapter introduces the problem: the role of speculation for philosophy. The thesis begins with Kant and his *Critique of Pure Reason* because it is here that speculative reason is first defined. Kant explains what is at stake in speculative reason,

and he uses the delimitation of the latter to reach a definition of philosophy as scientific. Because it is a form of thought that cannot possibly be verified by experience, the first *Critique* calls speculative reason into question. Speculation, according to Kant, is to be limited to those instances where it is unavoidable and intrinsic to making cognition, knowledge, and science possible.

While speculative reason oversteps the secure bounds of human knowledge by using formal concepts and principles in abstraction from the sensible conditions under which objects can be experienced, it nonetheless also has a positive use. Throughout Kant's three *Critiques*, speculation names a number of related activities that work together to make knowledge possible. Most importantly, speculative reason enables the systematic ordering of cognitions, of knowledge and of empirical laws. As such, according to Kant, it makes a system out of a mere aggregate of knowledge and thus transforms ordinary cognition into science. This definition of speculation, as synonymous with systematicity and science, is adopted by Hegel, despite the latter's critique of the Kantian limitations of reason.

Chapters two and four look at the final sections of Hegel's *Science of Logic* – from 'Mechanism' (first chapter of 'Objectivity') through to 'The absolute idea' (final chapter of 'The Idea') – and their attempt to rethink the Kantian definition of speculative reason. Initially, the *Logic* adopts Kant's understanding of speculation as the systematic but non-empirical positing of relations independent of sensibility and the understanding. However, Hegel makes two significant interventions in relation to the Kantian definition of speculation. First, he purposefully alters the Kantian question whether it is possible to derive knowledge from speculative reason. Instead, Hegel asks whether reason, in its speculative capacity, needs to exercise any violence in order to make the object of knowledge conform to its conceptual structures. In the *Logic*, the question of speculation is thereby turned into a discussion of power, violence, resistance and freedom. Though speculation is entirely non-empirical, these political concepts are, following Hegel, necessary for an analysis of conceptual form. Chapter two therefore looks at Hegel's use of these terms and at his deployment of the concepts of the state (in the 'Mechanism' chapter) and the sexual relation (in 'Chemism') to exemplify the nature of speculative reason. The political dimension of speculation,

hinted at in the final chapters of the *Science of Logic*, is explored in particular as it relates to questions of sex and gender.

Hegel's second intervention is the proposition that speculation is to be understood not only epistemologically but also ontologically. It is at this point that the concept of performativity becomes relevant. Chapter four therefore examines Hegel's attempt to construct an ontological definition of speculative reason. Performativity, it will be argued, is implicitly put forward by Hegel as a speculative concept of being. Speculation, Hegel argues, is not only of epistemological relevance but should equally be thought as ontological *Thätigkeit* ('activity'). For Hegel, to speculate is not merely to think being abstractly – speculation is furthermore a "doing," a performative act, which has ontological as well as epistemological consequences.

Even though the history of speculation and performativity in modern and contemporary European philosophy is narrated in a linear/chronological fashion, beginning with Kant and ending with Butler, this thesis intentionally works with interruptions throughout. These displace the chronological order but also the focus on the individual philosopher, be it Kant, Hegel, Butler, or Irigaray. Thus, while chapters two and four offer a close reading of the concluding chapters of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, chapter three disrupts this chronological textual analysis and situates the *Logic* – and specifically its reference to the "sexual relation" – in its broader historical context. This is done by looking at the meaning of *Geschlecht* (sex, gender, race/ancestry) in 18th and 19th century Germany. Moreover, this chapter looks at the relation between Hegel, the philosophy of nature (*Naturphilosophie*), and the emerging science of gynaecology, and the respective roles of each in further determining the notion of *Geschlecht* as sex/gender, as well as their attempts at elaborating a modern concept of sexual difference as essential not only for medicine and health care but also for the theoretical understanding of nature and of culture. Since Hegel's reference to the "sexual relation" in the *Logic* has so far been overlooked in the vast (and otherwise notably thorough) scholarship on Hegel, an attempt is made to explain and contextualise its use. This chapter concludes by demonstrating that certain examples, such as the "sexual relation," are not accidental. Sexual difference was in the process of being constructed as a scientific concept at the time when Hegel was writing. Moreover, at this time a broader shift in the meaning of

the terms *Geschlecht* (sex/gender) and sexual difference took place across a range of disciplines.

Chapters five and six further investigate the material reliance of speculative thought. In chapter five this is done by looking at the history of the gynaecological speculum, which is analysed alongside Irigaray's *Speculum of the other Woman*. While chapter three looks at the influence of the gynaecological concepts of *Naturphilosophie*, a second moment within the history of gynaecology will be analysed in the context of Irigaray's work in chapter five. Here the reinvention of the speculum by James Marion Sims, the "father" of American gynaecology and a key figure within American medical history, is examined more closely. Sims is of interest because his practice is exemplary for what Irigaray tries to uncover, namely a masculine philosophical and medical gaze and mode of inquiry that claims for itself the name of science. However, an analysis of Sims' practice also brings to light the limits of Irigaray's work. The example of Sims demonstrates that the categories of "woman", "femininity" and "embodiment" are more complex in their constitution than Irigaray allows them to be in her analysis. These concepts, as the history of American gynaecology makes evident, must also be understood along axes of race and class, and not solely along that of sex/gender.

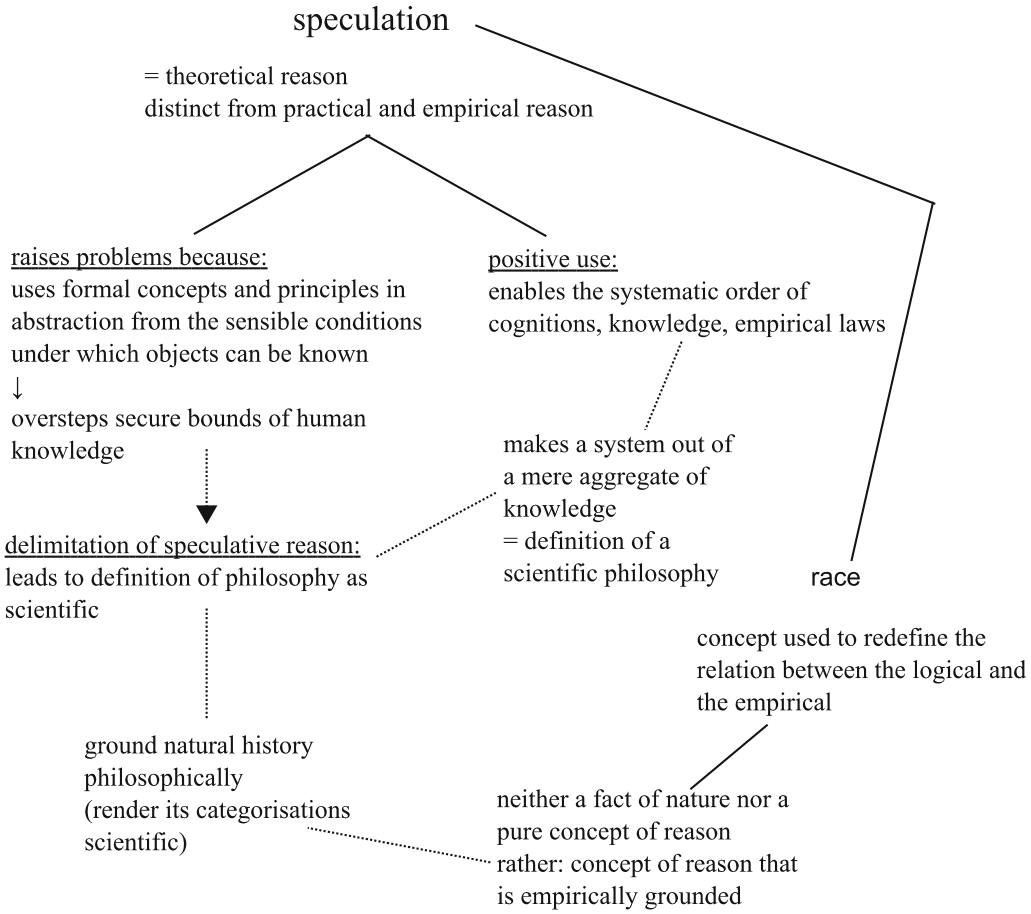
Chapter six outlines the extent to which Butler's concept of (gender) performativity relies on a Hegelian notion of the *Thätigkeit* or "doing" of conceptual form. Though Butler herself is critical of ontology, it will be shown that a different understanding of ontology comes out of her work, more precisely out of her conception of performativity. While Butler, like Hegel, seeks to demonstrate that there is no preestablished ontology and that ontology does not constitute a foundation of any sort, her argument differs from Hegel's in that she proposes, in line with Foucault, that ontology should be understood in terms of a series of normative injunctions that operate by installing themselves into political discourse as the latter's necessary ground. Any ontology thus understood will always ask questions about power, violence, resistance and freedom. By reading Butler's formulation of performativity alongside Hegel's, it becomes evident that ontology is always fundamentally political, even when it presents itself as a neutral discourse on being.

The aim of this thesis is to show that the concepts of speculation and performativity rely, in their very constitution and definition, upon categories such as race and sexual difference, and thereby upon the categorisation or conceptualisation of certain bodies thought to be external to philosophy or thought. While these concepts seem abstract and often remain vague, they have a very specific history, as the thesis sets out to demonstrate. The historical "interruptions" in each chapter illustrate this point. Thus, in chapter one reference is made to Kant's attempt to contribute to the project of natural history. In chapter two, an analysis of Antigone and Goethe's social novel *Elective Affinities* is included in a discussion of Hegelian 'Mechanism' and 'Chemism'. Chapter three looks at Carl Gustave Carus, a German philosopher of nature, as well as medical practitioner and gynaecologist, and the relation between philosophy of nature and gynaecology in 19th century Germany. Chapters five and six further examine the concepts of sexual difference and gender alongside the history of medicine, chapter five by looking at Sims' reinvention of the speculum in the context of slavery and chapter six by highlighting the clinical origin of the concept of gender in post-World War II attempts to establish a scientific treatment protocol to "correct" and control intersex and trans bodies.

These interruptions give a sense as to how speculation and performativity rely, in their definition as philosophical concepts, upon social and political categories. As Irigaray and Butler demonstrate, even though theoretical reason is distinct from other types of reason, there is no apolitical, ahistorical power of reason. Thus, the questions raised by Kant and Hegel about speculative reason still require a response. But if our responses are not sufficiently historically situated, then speculation, as well as performativity, remain obscure. However, the relation of speculation and performativity to political categories matters for yet another reason. Speculation, as well as a notion of the performative, is needed for a definition of political concepts and categories, as becomes evident in the analysis of Butler's gender performativity. This thesis, accordingly, is a first attempt to illustrate how, on the one hand, the concepts of speculation and performativity are necessary for an explanation of social and political concepts such as "race", "sexual difference" and "gender", while on the other hand these very concepts exemplify the nature of speculative, performative thought.

Chapter one

An *a priori* necessity of reason: The role of speculation in Kant's critical philosophy



Introduction: Speculation as philosophical problem

We might ask, with Derrida, what is there to be gained in approaching a philosophical question by beginning with and thus seeking authority from Kant: 'What benefit do we still derive from a discussion or explication with Kant?'[2] It will be argued in the following that Kant defines a specific philosophical problem, the question of speculation, that had an effect beyond the Kantian oeuvre. In returning to Kant, mainly the first and third *Critique*, we will attempt to re-situate this question and to outline the philosophical stakes of speculation in nineteenth- and twentieth-century European philosophy, its role in the attempted construction of a "scientific" philosophy, as well as its effects on the emerging disciplines of anthropology, biology, comparative anatomy and gynaecology.

It will be argued that in elaborating the problem of speculation, "race" and "sex" emerge as concerns for the newly defined scientific philosophy, though "sex" is not a scientific question or structuring principle in Kant and will only be developed as such by Hegel, Schelling and the project of *Naturphilosophie*, as will be outlined in chapters two and three. "Race" in Kant and "sexual difference" in Hegel and Schelling function, though not in a critical way, as an orientation for thinking[3] by means of which the problematic nature of speculative reason can be addressed. The limits but also the possibilities that speculative thought opens up for scientific research, for instance for the newly defined disciplines of anthropology, biology and later gynaecology, is outlined with reference to these terms. The chapter will work towards explaining this latter claim, to outline how speculative reason is formative in this regard. At first, however, a number of explanatory questions need to be addressed. The chapter thus begins with a definition of speculation in Kant, to outline what Kant addresses under the heading of this term. The definition given at the start will then be looked at more closely throughout the entire chapter as it unfolds. In so doing, the consequences of speculation, as defined by Kant, for philosophy and the natural sciences will be elaborated.

[2] Jacques Derrida, *Who's Afraid of Philosophy?: Right to Philosophy 1*, trans. Jan Plug (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 48.
[3] See Stella Sandford, "Race and Sex in Western Philosophy: Another Answer to the Question 'What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?'," *Critical Philosophy of Race*, 6, no. 2 (2018): 180–197.

Definition of speculative reason

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (hereafter *CPR*), Kant explains that reason is a human faculty which, in a certain mode, is speculative. Speculation, in consequence, is what reason does in this mode. By speculative reason Kant means theoretical as distinct from practical reason. The terms "speculative reason" and "theoretical reason" are mostly synonymous and used by Kant interchangeably; however, as we will see, there are certain instances where theoretical reason does not seem particularly speculative. In these instances, reason does not seem to be overstepping its bounds. This reveals something about the paradoxical nature of speculation, which is at once necessary and poses difficulties.[4] As such, speculative reason, according to Kant, raises a number of epistemological problems.

Kant never offers a straightforward definition of speculation but points toward a number of speculative activities throughout his critical project, some of which more problematic than others. Speculative reason as such is called into question because it is a form of thought that cannot possibly be verified by experience, and thus what speculative reason posits can ultimately not be known. Since speculation is without foundation, Kant attempts to set limits to its power and its use. Kant explains that speculative reason oversteps the secure bounds of human knowledge by using formal concepts and principles in abstraction from the sensible conditions under which objects can be given.[5] The nature of the soul, the world, and God – the questions that traditionally concern metaphysics – are, according to Kant, outside the bounds of human knowledge. Moreover, 'the proud name of ontology,'[6] which explains the way of being, or the nature of things in general, is put into question by Kant. These speculative claims are criticised in the 'Transcendental Dialectic', where speculation also refers more generally to reason's syllogistic use of pure categories to make illusory claims about appearances.

[4] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), BXXIV-V. I have also consulted the German text throughout: Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1998).
[5] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, BXXX.
[6] Ibid., A247/B304.

However, throughout the three *Critiques*, speculation also gains a positive meaning, as it describes a number of related activities of theoretical reason that work together to make knowledge possible. The following aspects fall under the scientific and necessary use of speculative reason, which will be discussed at a later point of this analysis. Speculative reason, according to Kant, makes possible the systematic order of thought, cognitions, as well as of the empirical laws.[7] The main task of theoretical reason is the systematisation of all possible relations,[8] also referred to by Kant as the problematic unity of nature and, synonymously, of cognition. Although he critiques ontology and metaphysics, previously the Queen of the Sciences, in the end Kant once more assigns an essential role to speculation when he pairs up theoretical reason, systematicity and science in the 'Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic' and 'Doctrine of Method.'[9] This definition of speculation, as synonymous with systematicity and science, is later adopted by Hegel, despite the latter's critique of the Kantian limitations of reason.

Reason, according to Kant, always strives for a continuous and consistent unity of all empirical objects or objects of cognition. Having declared illegitimate the use of reason beyond experience in the first part of the *CPR*, Kant nonetheless identifies a positive, even necessary moment of speculation, as just discussed. This positive employment becomes possible by means of the "ideas" that introduce a principle of purposiveness[10] and in doing so project order onto law-like nature. Thus, by means of the ideas, human reason progresses beyond its own limits of knowledge. This will be further discussed in the following, as will the allusion to sight in 'speculation' that is introduced by defining the ideas of reason as '*focus imaginarius*'[11]. Speculation, Kant seems to suggest, makes it possible to adopt another standpoint, or point of view.

Though already introduced in the *CPR*, the role and meaning of purposiveness changes thereafter, first with the essay 'On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy' and later with the *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, where purposiveness is assigned a new and more specific role. What happens in the third *Critique*?

[7] Ibid., A645/B673, A647/B675, A648/B676, A650/B678.
[8] Ibid., A645/B673.
[9] Ibid., A642/B671ff., 'On the regulative use of the ideas of pure reason.'
[10] Ibid., B128.
[11] Ibid., A644/B672.

Purposiveness is here no longer only a law from above, projected by speculative reason, but is also an objective concept concerned with the production of singular entities, namely of organised or living beings – this separation of purposiveness from speculation will be analysed more closely at a later point of this analysis, as will the relevance of these two concepts for the newly emerging sciences, mainly anthropology and biology, that in turn inspired Kant. But before that, what is the importance of the essay on teleological principles, where the specific meaning of purposiveness is outlined through a discussion of the division of humankind into distinct races? Is speculation, as ordering principle but not yet objective law of purposiveness, already evoking this question?

An analysis of these questions will allow us to understand how philosophy changed with Kant, that is, in what sense there was a reorientation in methodology and thought. It will be argued, by looking at the role of speculation and purposiveness in Kant, that there was common ground between nineteenth and twentieth century anthropology, biology and the project of a scientific philosophy as regards their guiding questions and methodological tools. Anticipating the later chapters, particularly chapters two and three, the occurrence of political questions – the discourse on race to outline the principle of purposiveness in Kant and of the state and the sexual relation in Hegel in order to exemplify the nature of speculative reason – will be addressed. In order to situate the discussion of speculation in Kant, the chapter begins with a discussion of Leibniz who, it will be argued, provides the conditions for the Kantian critical project. In returning to Leibniz and by anticipating Hegel, the problem of speculation will come to the fore.

From the fact of being to the constancy of the law: In search for organizing principles

In his first published book, *Leibniz' System in seinen Wissenschaftlichen Grundlagen* ('Leibniz' system in its scientific foundations'), written in 1902 but not translated into English, Ernst Cassirer suggests that Leibniz initiated a broad philosophical shift, further developed by Kant. This is the shift away from the constancy of being that Leibniz replaces, according to Cassirer, with the constancy of the law.[12] Because

[12] Ernst Cassirer, *Leibniz' System in seinen Wissenschaftlichen Grundlagen* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert,

Leibniz does not recognise the unity of being as a pre-established fact, the law or lawful principle of organization emerges as the central concern of his philosophical analysis. Unity, following Leibniz, is always an activity, something to be achieved rather than a given. The task of the philosopher, accordingly, is to determine those organizing forces that can account for and secure unity, be that the unity of being, of cognition or of thought. In his work, Leibniz identifies two such forces. Connection, he claims, is of either of mechanical or metaphysical kind. As Leibniz outlines in, for instance, the *Monadology*, these two unifying forces are encountered at every level of philosophical inquiry. Following the *Monadology*, there are two principles of reason, two kinds of truths, two types of causality, two forms of necessity, two states of being and two natural kingdoms. Organization is of two kinds; that is, every phenomena or state of being and every principle of reason can be categorised, according to Leibniz, as either mechanical or metaphysical.[13]

Mechanical organization adheres to the principle of contradiction, also referred to by Leibniz as efficient causality. The truths thus produced are contingent facts that are either physically or hypothetically real. They present us with a physical kingdom of nature, which explains the being and motion of bodies. Metaphysical organization by contrast introduces the principle of sufficient reason.[14] While the mechanical laws describe an infinite sequence or series of a multiplicity of contingencies, metaphysical truths are, for Leibniz, outside of such a sequence. Metaphysical truths are final causes, accounting for the being of souls rather than the movement of bodies. However, both mechanical and metaphysical explanations, according to Leibniz, ultimately account for the same phenomena.[15] Both principles attempt to offer a coherent and ordered account of the real.

In his analysis, Cassirer draws on the concept of "function" to further explicate this point. Mechanical and metaphysical principles, and lawfulness more generally, are in Leibniz best defined as a function of unity. While the law of contingency secures a

1902), 343.

[13] Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, "The Principles of Philosophy, or, the Monadology," in *Discourse on Metaphysics and Other Essays*, trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis & Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1991), §31-34 and §87.

[14] Ibid. §32.

[15] Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, "Discourse on Metaphysics," in *Discourse on Metaphysics and Other Essays*, trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1991), 24.

continuous "functional" connection and linkage between phenomena,[16] metaphysics accounts for the persisting coincidence of contingency on a higher level.[17] God, according to Leibniz, signifies the possibility of representing the whole process (*Gesamtprozess*) at once, in one stable term.[18] God, accordingly, is the name for the highest unity. For Kant, as we will see in the following analysis, the name or the idea of God fulfils a similar function. Kant, moreover, adopts the Leibnizian distinction between a function of unity and fact of composition.[19] While composites are, according to Leibniz, immediately given, simple substances require reference to an organizing principle for their explanation. This is because 'although it has no parts, there must be a plurality of properties and relations in the simple substance.'[20] Because everything, including the monad, is always subject to change, and because this change is also continual in each thing, there must, Leibniz concludes, be diversity in that which changes.[21] The simple substance might not have any parts,[22] but this, according to Leibniz, does not mean that it cannot contain multiplicity or distinctness. With the monad, too, unity remains a task rather than a supposition. This is why, Cassirer writes, that in place of the fact of unity we gain the expression of the law.[23]

While Leibniz is not primarily concerned with the idea of a system and does not see systematization as a prerequisite for a scientific philosophy,[24] his concern for unity, however, prepares the way for the Kantian notion of an architectonic. This is because the single unit in Leibniz, regardless of whether it is referred to as monad, substance or soul, is no longer a rigid or static logical being and can only be determined in the context of a logical system.[25] In this way the thought of a system already emerges. An attempt is made to account for the most general principles of unification and relation without which no identity – whether of a concept, a being or a thought – can be

[16] Cassirer, *Leibniz' System*, 239, 282.
[17] Ibid., 300-01.
[18] Ibid., 300.
[19] See, for instance, the introduction to the 'The Transcendental Doctrine of Method', A832/B860.
[20] Leibniz, "The Principles of Philosophy, or, the Monadology," §13.
[21] Ibid., §§10-12.
[22] Ibid., §1.
[23] Cassirer, *Leibniz' System*, 359.
[24] Some Leibniz scholars think he is centrally concerned with this question, even if his own writings were fragmentary. See, for instance, Donald Rutherford, *Leibniz and the Rational Order of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[25] Cassirer, *Leibniz' System*, 220.

understood. For Leibniz, the problem of unity and organization is at the same time a logical and epistemological as well as an ontological and metaphysical concern.

What we encounter in Kant, Cassirer suggests, is an attempt to translate Leibniz's language of metaphysics into a language of method.[26] The question of how to account for unity in diversity is here first and foremost an epistemological and methodological question that defines philosophy as science. Thus, while the concept of purposiveness and of a final purpose is already present in Leibniz, speculation, the possibility and relatedly the danger of constructing a systematic order, is specific to the Kantian critique of metaphysics. Speculation for Kant specifically concerns the systematicity of knowledge. The problem of how to account for and scientifically justify an order within the contingency of cognitions and of empirical laws forms a guiding thread throughout Kant's work. It is a question that Kant attempts to answer not only, as we will see, in the three *Critiques*, but also in his writings on anthropology and race.

Logical unity, synthesis, and systematic order

The Kantian system is concerned with a number of unifying principles. Kant identifies different types of unity, most importantly logical unity, synthesis, and systematic order, that ought to be distinguished in order to explain how cognition becomes possible and to define the limits of human knowledge. According to Kant, formal unity, the logical identity of A = A, can only account for the unity of logical or mathematical objects but not for objects of knowledge or objects of experience. Since Kant distinguishes a formal and merely possible object from an object of experience, he must introduce an additional ground of unity. Synthesis, Kant proposes, is the function of unity that establishes a real, as opposed to merely logical, connection. A synthetic unity, Kant explains, involves not only the concept of a possible object, but goes 'beyond that concept and say[s] more about it than was thought in the concept, namely, that to this concept in the understanding corresponds an object outside of the understanding.'[27]

[26] Ibid, 400n.
[27] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5:139.

The object of experience, also referred to as object of nature, is not, as Kant outlines in the 'Transcendental Analytic,' a mere factual given. While all appearances correspond to something given and received by sensibility, such givenness cannot, according to Kant, be known in any meaningful way. Our objects of experience, accordingly, are not immediate but are, as Kant outlines, the synthesis of a manifold of appearances. What comes to be an object of nature has already been pre-processed, ordered, reproduced and synthesised into the form of an object. The order, regularity and coherence of appearances depends, Kant argues, on our subjective grounds for cognition,[28] which make the general unity of an object possible. Nature, Kant writes, complies with our conditions for the possibility of knowledge.[29] Nature and experience are thus ruled by the same laws, for nature, as Kant explains in the first part of the *CPR*, refers to the field of all possible objects of experience, that is, to the combined and synthesised manifold of appearances.

The ideas of reason as *focus imaginarius*

Defined as 'the act of putting different representations together, and of grasping what is manifold in them in one [act of] knowledge',[30] synthesis is cast by Kant as the fundamental activity of the human mind.[31] However, while the act of synthesis establishes the unity of objects and their relation, this unity of the understanding and of nature is only distributive.[32] The 'Transcendental Analytic' explains how a law-like but orderless nature is possible,[33] but, as Kant outlines in the Appendix to the 'Transcendental Dialectic,' some rational presuppositions that are necessary for and assumed by the natural sciences – such as the hierarchic classification of beings into genera and species – are not only lawful according to the rules of the understanding, but yield an order[34] and thus necessitate a further principle of unification and relation. As becomes apparent in the 'Transcendental Dialectic,' only theoretical, i.e.

[28] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A114.
[29] Ibid., A125.
[30] Ibid., A77/B103.
[31] Howard Caygill, *A Kant Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 382.
[32] Distributive refers to the unity of the understanding in contrast to the unity of reason, which is said to be systematic.
[33] Philippe Huneman, "Reflexive Judgment and Wolffian Embryology: Kant's Shift between the First and the Third Critiques," in *Understanding Purpose: Kant and the Philosophy of Biology*, ed. Philippe Huneman (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 78.
[34] Ibid.

speculative reason can establish an orderly and systematic constitution of nature. This is because the speculative kind of reason allows for an examination of all possible connections according to the principle of systematic unity.[35]

Kant suggests that the human mind can unify the aggregative knowledge of the understanding by means of an idea.[36] Ideas are, as defined in the 'Transcendental Dialectic,' the principles of application that enable the organisation of objects of empirical cognition into the form of a system.[37] They are, in other words, the principles of systematic unity. The ideas create a vantage point that lies outside of the understanding and its rules. One posits an idea, Kant argues, 'only as a unique standpoint from which alone one can extend the unity that is so essential to reason and so salutary to the understanding […].'[38] In so doing, reason, 'extends systematic unity over all practice.'[39] Such a standpoint, though it raises problems, is, according to Kant, necessary for scientific knowledge. Kant, moreover, seems to suggest that our experience already indicates such an order. While systematic relations cannot be established as a fact of nature, systematicity is, according to Kant, a necessary ideal that has very real epistemological effects. As Günther Zoller argues, it is with Kant that the form of the system becomes, for the first time, a necessary methodological presupposition.[40]

According to the first *Critique*, only by means of the ideas are we able to account for the relational order of empirical cognitions. Ideas offer a mode of both recognizing and expressing systematic coherence, and thus of navigating the contradiction of scientific knowledge requiring the thought of the totality of relations that, though it can never be experienced, is necessary for knowledge. Thus, while we are unable to experience the totality of empirical relations, that is, the possibility of a world whole, we yet need to be able to imagine this idea and, as Kant suggests, employ it as an

[35] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A686/B714.
[36] Caygill, *A Kant Dictionary*, 385-86.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A681-82/B709-10.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Günther Zoller, "'Die Seele des Systems': Systembegriff und Begriffssystem in Kants Transzendentalphilosophie," in *Architektonik und System in der Philosophie Kants*, eds. Hans Friedrich Fulda and Jürgen Stolzenberg (Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 2001), 53.

analogue[41] or a guideline.[42] According to Kant, we can give content to systematic unity in terms of the ideas of the soul, the world whole, or God, phenomena that do not exist as such but can function as schemata of approximation for human knowledge. Not unlike the categories of the understanding, these ideas are in themselves static. In order to be meaningful, they have to be applied as regulative principles.

In the Appendix to the 'Transcendental Dialectic,' Kant refers to the ideas as a '*focus imaginarius*.' The ideas, Kant writes, direct the understanding towards a certain goal where all its rules converge in one point.[43] This point lies entirely outside the bounds of possible experience and is thus a point from which the concepts of the understanding cannot really proceed.[44] This focus, Kant emphasises, is nevertheless necessary because it 'serves to obtain for these concepts the greatest unity alongside the greatest extension.'[45] Is speculation a condition of possibility for the understanding? It seems that the unity of the understanding, projected by the ideas of reason, is necessary a priori. Kant concludes that the only way to bring unity into cognitions is by 'approximating the rule to universality.'[46] By means of the ideas, reason constantly and continuously approximates its own coherence and self-identity and in so doing also speculates on the closure of its world, that is, the whole of cognition. If the idea of the whole of cognition really precedes the determinate cognition of all the parts, then the ideas would be a necessary function that sustains the understanding at every moment and not just in retrospect. The fiction of the whole of cognition would accordingly ground the understanding, rather than adding another layer to it. It would be its founding fiction or idea.

Applicability of logical systems to the classification of nature

The question of speculation, that is, the possibility of a systematic ordering of cognitions and of empirical laws and thus of an ordered presentation of the natural world, is not specific to Kant's philosophy, but rather, as Stella Sandford and Ernst

[41] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A674/B702.
[42] Ibid., A675/B703.
[43] Ibid., A644/B672.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid., A647/B675.

Cassirer outline, occupied the natural sciences of his day. Speculation is therefore not a problem internal to critical philosophy. Rather, critical philosophy is an attempt to prove the legitimacy of natural history, that is, of the possibility of a natural, as opposed to an artificial, system of nature and scheme of classification.[47] What justifies us, Kant asks, to see nature as a whole, to assume that nature adopts the form of a logical system and can be treated as such?[48] In other words, what justifies the harmony between natural and logical forms that is assumed in natural history? These questions are addressed first and foremost at Carl Linnaeus[49] who, in his 1735 *Systema naturae*, attempted a comprehensive classification of nature. In this work, the whole of animate nature is constructed according to genus, species, class and order, and every individual is assigned its determinate place in the whole scheme.[50]

Linnaeus identifies sexual difference as potent principle of organization and bases his botanical taxonomy on the sexuality of plants.[51] Though disputed, this classification was widely adopted after 1737 and until the first decades of the nineteenth century was considered to be the most convenient system of classification.[52] However, as Susanne Lettow, among others, has argued, more was needed in order for Linnaeus' system to become possible than only a general structuring principle. Characteristic of Linnaeus' taxonomy and of the classification projects of natural history is 'the systematic disentanglement of living beings from their original locations and contexts.'[53] This disentanglement, as Lettow outlines, has a specific historical context, as it was made possible by the colonial mobilization of humans, animals, and plants, which also led to a new understanding of procreation, generation and to a theory of race in philosophy.[54] Londa Schiebinger refers to this period as 'colonial bioprospecting,' that is, the task of searching the world for useful plants to be brought

[47] Ernst Cassirer, *The Problem of Knowledge: Philosophy, Science, and History since Hegel*, trans. William H. Woglom and Charles W. Hendel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 128.
[48] Ibid., 124.
[49] For better understanding the link between Linnaeus and Kant, see, for instance, Silvio Marcucci, "Système scientifique et système philsophique. Kant et Linné," in *Kant, les années 1796-1803. Opus postumum*, ed. Ingeborg Schüssler (Paris: Vrin, 2001), 107-126.
[50] Cassirer, *The Problem of Knowledge*, 124.
[51] Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 4.
[52] Ibid., 14.
[53] Susanne Lettow, "Population, Race and Gender: On the Genealogy of the Modern Politics of Reproduction," *Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory* 16, no. 4 (2015): 6.
[54] Ibid., 6.

back to Europe for profit.[55] It is in this context that ideas about the number and variety of plant species and thus ideas about the scope of the undertaking of botanical taxonomy emerged. In *Nature, Human Nature, and Human Difference*, Justin Smith remarks that it is not surprising to find that alongside bioprospecting we can identify a parallel activity of 'ethno-prospecting,' an effort to carry out an exhaustive global survey of human diversity.[56]

According to Lettow, only when living beings are mobilised and dislocated from their original surroundings can a general taxonomy of nature and something like a force of reproduction that is autonomous and independent from local circumstances come into view.[57] The introduction of "sexual difference" as structuring principle of nature and the colonial dislocation of living beings from their immediate contexts thus functions as pretext for a general order and classification of nature. The question to what extent historical and political conditions underlie the attempt at a scientific ordering of nature will be resumed in Chapter 3, in the section on *Geschlecht* in eighteenth and nineteenth century German philosophy. But this immediate context is not addressed by either Linnaeus or Kant, who focus instead on the problem of the relationship between the presumption of a natural order immanent to nature, and the recognition of the artificiality of these systems of classification.[58]

Kant draws a distinction between *Naturbeschreibung*, natural history as artificial description, which he accused Linnaeus of doing, and a kind of natural history that would ground its own taxonomy, which he named "a history of nature" or *Naturgeschichte*.[59] When justifying the use of speculative reason, what is at stake is the possibility of advancing beyond Linnaeus' descriptive science. Kant asks what criterion we can employ to judge whether we are on the right path: how can we know that our classifications are not mere verbal cloaks but refer to real objective

[55] Justin E. H. Smith, *Nature, Human Nature, and Human Difference: Race in Early Modern Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 11.
[56] Ibid., 11.
[57] Lettow, "Population, Race and Gender," 6.
[58] Stella Sandford, "Kant, Race and Natural History," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 44, no. 9 (2018), 955.
[59] Philippe Huneman, "Introduction: Kant and Biology? A Quick Survey," in *Understanding Purpose: Kant and the Philosophy of Biology*, ed. Philippe Huneman (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 8.

differences?[60] According to Kant, the natural historian does what the *CPR* describes as reason's attempt to systematise.[61] In both instances, knowledge is ordered via "logical" principles, that is, via the presupposition of the form of a whole of cognition and of nature that precedes the determination of its parts and contains the conditions for determining *a priori* the place of each part and its relation to all others.[62] The question of speculation in the *CPR* is accordingly not an abstract concern. It is not just the coherence of his own system that is at stake. Rather, Kant responds in his first and third *Critiques* to methodological problems confronting the natural historians of his time.[63]

In the end, however, the question of speculation as it is outlined in the first *Critique* is only able to restate the problem. It is the concept of purposiveness, as outlined in the essay 'On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy' that offers a solution that goes beyond an exposition of natural history's methodological dilemma. As will be outlined in the following sections, from this essay onwards Kant locates the specificity of natural history in its presumption of the principle of purposiveness.[64] Kant now suggests that the description of nature stays on the theoretical, that is, speculative path, whereas natural history is obliged to take the teleological path.[65] It is thus not speculation, the positing of an idea of reason, but the definition of the principle of purposiveness that offers a solution to Kant.

From the ideas of reason to the concept of purposiveness

The problem of the systematicity of knowledge, as just outlined, restates a methodological concern first raised in the natural sciences. Rather than understanding the problem of the order of nature that occupies natural history as a metaphysical or ontological concern about kinds of being, it is, according to Kant, an epistemological question.[66] In the first *Critique*, systematic unity is the projection of order onto law-

[60] Cassirer, *The Problem of Knowledge*, 128.
[61] Sandford, "Kant, Race and Natural History," 956.
[62] Ibid.; Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A645/B673.
[63] Sandford, "Kant, Race and Natural History," 957.
[64] Ibid., 968.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Huneman, "Introduction: Kant and Biology?," 4.

like nature by means of an idea of reason.[67] In the third *Critique*, however, Kant reframes the problem by introducing the principle of objective formal purposiveness. While the concept of purposiveness is not absent from the first *Critique*, where it slips into the discussion in the Appendix of the Dialectic, it is never properly defined, and is only introduced as an *a priori* principle of transcendental idealism in the third *Critique*. Its use in the introduction to the Appendix is, however, revealing. It is argued here that '[e]verything grounded in the nature of our powers must be purposive.'[68] Thus, while we must, following Kant, guard ourselves against the misuse of our powers and define their proper direction,[69] which is precisely the task that the three *Critiques* undertake, a purposeful function, even of speculative reason, can nevertheless be assumed. The 'Transcendental Dialectic' and 'Doctrine of Method' identify the striving towards systematic unity as the proper, that is, purposeful direction of reason. Even though the determination of the place of each object and its relation to all others exceeds the laws of the understanding, such determination is in line with our faculties. Because it advances the purposive use of the understanding, and facilitates the scientific ordering of human cognition, speculative reason is just as 'natural'[70] and 'immanent'[71] as the lawfulness of the understanding. In the first *Critique*, speculation is thus justified by reference to its purposive character. Purposiveness, Kant argues, is the language with which we can justifiably extend our knowledge beyond the understanding.

In the third *Critique*, purposiveness is no longer 'just a convenient language, with which to describe the required systematicity of a nature founded on mechanistic grounds.'[72] Kant introduces a distinction absent from the *CPR*, namely a distinction between the purposive ordering of empirical laws, the scientific and hence justified employment of speculative reason, and an objective concept of purposiveness concerned with the production of singular entities. The latter is a specific concept of purposiveness that emerges from reflective judgement, a particular form of judgement first introduced in the third *Critique*, under which a peculiar ontological kind is

[67] Sandford, "Kant, Race, and Natural History," 953.
[68] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A642/B670.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid., A643/B671.
[72] Huneman, "Reflexive Judgement and Wolffian Embryology," 87.

described, namely living beings as organised beings. In the third *Critique*, the subjective purposiveness of the human understanding and of nature must also make room for the concept of an objective and material purposiveness of natural beings.[73] The introduction of a reflective kind of judgement and of a formal concept of purposiveness is Kant's response to the natural historian. It becomes clear in the third *Critique* that the presupposition of purposiveness cannot remain an idea of reason to guide the investigation of nature from above but that it has become a concept arising from the investigation of nature itself.[74] The possibility of such a concept is first elaborated in the essay 'On the Use of Teleological Judgements in Philosophy,' with the example of "race." The essay is of interest because race is here not a topic of interest in and of itself, but it emerges as a solution to the philosophical problem of order and systematicity in natural history.[75] As such, the question of race cannot be set aside as a special topic relevant only to Kant's anthropological work. Rather, it is in his theory of race that Kant first formulates a concept of objective purposiveness and reflective judgement and thus introduces the problematic that concerns the second half of the third *Critique*.

'On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy'

The essay 'On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy' is Kant's third and last on the natural history of the human species. Published in 1788 in the *Teutscher Merkur*, the essay is primarily intended as a response to a publication in the same journal by Georg Forster, an ethnologist, natural historian and travel writer who had accompanied his father Johann Reinhold Forster on several expeditions, including James Cook's second voyage to the Pacific.[76] Forster had raised objections first to Kant's conception of a human race, in particular Kant's exclusive focus on skin colour

[73] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), §63, and Sandford, "Kant, Race and Natural History," 957. Regarding the *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, I have also consulted the German text throughout: Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft und Schriften zur Naturphilosophie* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2009).
[74] Sandford, "Kant, Race and Natural History," 970.
[75] Irene Tucker, *The Moment of Racial Sight: A History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 37-38.
[76] Günter Zöller, "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy: Editor's Introduction," in Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology, History, and Education*, eds. Günter Zöller and Robert B. Louden, trans. Mary Gregor et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 192.

as criterion of racial differentiation, which Kant bases on the predisposition of germs rather than the influence of climate, and second to what he saw as Kant's precedence for theory over observation.[77] Kant responds to these two objections by outlining the peculiar nature of the concept of race, which he argues Forster has misunderstood. It is this type of concept, though not the concept of race as such, that is also at stake in the third *Critique*, particularly in the second half on teleological judgement.

> What is race? The word does not figure in a system of the description of nature, therefore presumably the thing itself is nowhere in nature either. Yet the concept designated by this expression is well grounded in the reason of each observer of nature […][78]

Race, Kant argues, is not a simple fact and by consequence is not part of the description of nature. And yet it is a necessary concept for natural history because the observer of nature finds it indispensable to make recourse to this concept.[79] What, then, does "race" refer to? And what is the peculiar status of this concept? At issue for Kant is outlining the possibility of a concept that refers neither to a "fact" of nature that can be explained in terms of cause and effect, that is, in terms of natural laws, nor an artificial logical category forced onto nature by human reason. The former would be an empirical category and as such refer to a merely aggregative unity of nature. The latter would mean to repeat the mistake of natural history, which is unable to ground its logical categories as empirical concepts of nature. The ideas of reason, introduced in the 'Transcendental Dialectic' of the first *Critique*, could not offer a satisfactory answer to this methodological problem. Kant now, by example of the concept of race, aims to introduce a new concept for natural history that can bridge this divide.

Kant seems to suggest that while the ideas of reason are not objectively valid, the concept of "race" is. Because it belongs to the natural history of the human species, race is not merely a logical category or idea.[80] This type of concept, Kant argues,

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[77] Ibid., 193.
[78] Immanuel Kant, "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy," in Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology, History, and Education*, eds. Günter Zöller and Robert B. Louden, trans. Mary Gregor et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 199.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Sandford, "Kant, Race and Natural History," 969.

renegotiates the relation between the empirical on the one and the systematic order of reason on the other hand. How to explain those phenomena that have an empirical reference but, because they require recourse to the language of purposiveness, cannot be explained in terms of the natural laws of the understanding, which so far had been the prerogative of reason? This question, Kant seems to suggest, is at the heart of natural history. The difference between description of nature and natural history, he argues, is 'grounded in the constitution of things.'[81] While the appellation of "classes" and "orders" expresses a merely logical separation, introduced by human reason for the purpose of comparison, Kant argues that "genera" and "species," by contrast, also refer to a physical separation that nature itself makes among its creatures with respect to their generation (*Erzeugung*).[82] "Genera" and "species," accordingly, are not just logical but empirical categories and as such are grounded differently in the constitution of things. It is in this sense that they differ from Linnaeus' categories. Kant seems to suggest that, in contrast to the logical categories of reason, their employment is justified for the taxonomic project of natural history.[83] While Linnaeus is also using empirical categories and divides things into genera and species, he does not, following Kant, distinguish between merely logical categories and empirically-founded categories of reason. As such his system remains arbitrary.

The peculiar status of the concept of race accordingly raises wider methodological questions about natural science, about its epistemological claims and the ontological status of its object. In natural science, Kant argues, 'everything must be explained *naturally*, because otherwise it would not belong to this science.'[84] Yet this same principle 'also indicates the boundaries of natural science. For one has reached its extreme boundary if one uses the last of all explanatory grounds that can still be confirmed by *experience*.'[85] While the scientist will always remain ignorant of the efficient causes of natural phenomena, which are scientifically unknowable,[86] this does not mean, following Kant, that she can only make use of mechanical causality as scientific description of nature. The use of teleological principles, as will be explained

[81] Kant, "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy," 197-98.
[82] Ibid., 199n.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid., 213.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid., 195.

in more detail with reference to the third *Critique*, is justified with respect to nature, though only, Kant argues, if it is empirically conditioned.[87] Race is one such concept that is empirically conditioned but requiring a teleological explanation, that is, recourse to the language of purposiveness and ends. Kant remarks, already in the first *Critique*, but now in relation to the question of "race" and heredity, that the concept of an organised being, the subject of biological analysis, raises similar methodological questions.

> Since the concept of an organised being already includes that it is some matter in which everything is mutually related to each other as end and means, which can only be thought as a *system of final causes*, and since therefore their possibility only leaves the teleological but not the physical-mechanical mode of explanation, at least as far as *human* reason is concerned, there can be no investigation in physics about the origin of all organization itself.[88]

> Now the concept of an organic being is this: that it is a material being which is possible only through the relation of everything contained in it to each other as end and means (and indeed every anatomist as well as every physiologist actually starts from this concept). Therefore, a basic power that is effectuated through an organization has to be thought as a cause effective according to *ends*, and this in such a manner that these ends have to be presupposed for the possibility of the effect.[89]

Kant indicates that biology, anatomy, and physiology effectively already work with a concept akin to the teleological principle described here: 'Finality is the language with which physiologists and anatomists can extend their knowledge […].'[90] These new disciplines nonetheless remain committed to the definition of natural science that everything must be explained naturally without recourse to God as final divine causality. Kant accordingly aims to contribute towards theorizing the necessary methodological tools for an advanced natural science that does not base its laws on a

[87] Ibid., 216.
[88] Ibid., 214.
[89] Ibid., 216.
[90] Huneman, "Reflexive Judgement and Wolffian Embryology," 81.

divine being as final ground of explanation, as well as towards a specialised discipline of natural history. The discussions on race outlines that such a scientific debate is possible.

Rethinking the problematic: 'The Critique of Teleological Judgement'

So far it has been argued that the *CPR* points to the anticipatory function of reason which orders the contingent by means of regulative ideas. Such an order, however, remains static and ultimately uncertain. The problem of the difficulty of justifying a taxonomy of nature, first encountered within natural history, is not resolved at this point. Kant concludes that only knowledge of the general object but not its place within an overall system of nature can be secured. The essay 'On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy' and the *Critique of the Power of Judgement* (hereafter *CJ*) complicate this account. Here, the distinction between the formal laws of nature on the one hand and nature's overall systematic order on the other is less antithetical. Kant explains that systematicity is not merely an idea of reason but empirically grounded, as it can be experienced in certain natural phenomena. While the essay focuses on the concept of "race," the 'Critique of Teleological Judgement' posits that there are certain empirical phenomena – organised or living beings – that are purposive in themselves and thus of systematic character. Even though the overall order of nature remains unknown, systematicity can nevertheless be experienced and justified. It moreover means that speculation, the problem of the systematic order of nature, is not just a question for reason, of ordering cognitions after the fact, as was argued in the *CPR*. In the first *Critique* regulative principles were assigned to the faculty of reason, which was defined as the source of the ideal of systematicity. Kant explains in the third *Critique* that what reason wants for itself, namely the systematic interconnection of phenomena, it already experiences outside of itself, in an encounter with certain products of nature. In the *CJ*, Kant identifies the faculty of judgement, more precisely a new power of reflecting judgement, as the source of this possibility.[91] It is, Kant suggests, reflecting judgement and not reason that attempts to realise the

[91] Paul Guyer, "Kant's Principles of Reflecting Judgment," in *Kant's Critique of the Power of Judgment: Critical Essays*, ed. Paul Guyer (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 18-19.

architectonic ideal by finding a particular systematization of the empirical laws discovered by the understanding.[92]

The first introduction to the third *Critique* formally introduces the power of judgement into the architectonic of reason. Since judgement, unlike the understanding and reason, provides neither concepts of possible objects nor ideas but simply subsumes the particular under the universal, it had not been regarded as an independent cognitive faculty until now.[93] Applying the schemata of the understanding to every empirical synthesis, judgement was supposed to proceed only mechanically, and in the *CPR* was considered as a function of the understanding and equated with the latter. The *CJ* complicates this account by introducing a distinction between determinate or mechanical and reflective or technical judgement. The latter is also characterised as the "power of judgement." With the addition of reflective judgement, the third *Critique* introduces a concept or rule that originates from the power of judgement itself. If such a rule is possible, Kant argues, then

> it would have to be a concept of things in nature insofar as nature conforms to our power of judgement, and thus a concept of a property of nature such that one cannot form any concept of it except that its arrangement conforms to our faculty for subsuming the particular given laws under more general ones even though these are not given.[94]

The premise of the 'Critique of Teleological Judgement' is that the empirical cognition of certain objects already requires a concept of reason.[95] This is elaborated, for instance, in §65, where Kant describes the difference between final and efficient causes. Lawfulness, Kant writes, insofar as it is conceived by the understanding, is a connection that constitutes a series of causes and effects that is always descending. A causal nexus can also, however, be conceived in accordance with a concept of reason, or of ends, which, if considered as a series, would carry with it descending as well as ascending dependency.[96] Because this type of causality requires reference to a concept

[92] Ibid., 22.
[93] Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, 20:202.
[94] Ibid., 20:202-03.
[95] Ibid., §64, 5:370.
[96] Ibid., §65, 5:372.

or an idea, it is referred to as a connection of ideal causes, while the former is that of real or efficient ones.[97] Since, as Kant admits, dependencies are not just linear in a causal sense, another schema is needed, one that can also explain reciprocal relations in nature. With the power of reflective judgement, which prescribes a law not for the determination but the reflection of nature, Kant justifies a causal principle outside of the understanding but not in contradiction with it. The principle of purposiveness, then, is the ground for reflective judgement. A purposive order of nature can assert a claim to necessity, even if this professed necessity does not rest on concepts of the object *a priori* but instead on the subjective conditions for concepts, which ground these transcendentally.[98] Thus, Kant writes

> We can and should be concerned to investigate nature, so far as lies within our capacity, in experience, in its causal connection in accordance with merely mechanical laws: for in these lie the true physical grounds of explanation, the interconnection of which constitutes scientific cognition of nature through reason. But now we find among the products of nature special and very widely distributed genera, which contain within themselves a combination of efficient causes that we must ground in the concept of an end, even if we wish to employ only experience […].[99]

In the *CPR*, final causality or purposiveness was not considered as an individuating principle, as a means to explain the functioning of particular empirical phenomena. In the *CJ*, it becomes apparent that these two functions cannot be separated. The organizing principle of the particular living being also explains systematic coherence as a whole. Reflective judgement is a tool for the evaluation and research into nature, both for finding the general law of particular experiences as well as for the systematic ordering of experience as a whole.[100] Nature organises itself teleologically but without recourse to a transcendent element, thus fulfilling the requirements of modern science. All causal relations are fully immanent. The *CJ*, by introducing the role of the power

[97] Ibid., §65, 5:372-73.
[98] Ibid., 20:238.
[99] Ibid., 20:235.
[100] Ibid., 20:204.

of reflective judgement, is to finally secure the empirical unity of nature that speculation posits but ultimately cannot justify.

In a teleological judgement, the power of judgement compares the form of the object with the rational form of the system, that is, with an idea. If this comparison is successful, the object is judged to be a living being. It seems that in the third *Critique*, judgement is the higher faculty that realises both reason and the understanding. Yet even once the reflective power of judgement is introduced, the ideas of reason still play a central role. Even though final causes are objectively recognizable, for Kant, the crucial point is that such a causality introduces an external point of reference into the explication of nature and as such is based on a concept or idea. The concept of a thing as a natural end, Kant explains, can only lie in an idea since it is conceivable only by means of a principle of reason, and thus transcends the realm of the sensible.[101] Accordingly, the capacity to judge teleologically, even if such judgement is justified, leads us, as far as its ground is concerned, beyond the sensible world.[102] At the same time, 'the consequence that answers to it [the product] is still given in nature.'[103] The idea of a natural end is empirically conditioned.

Kant argues that while an idea might be immanent to specific phenomena that we judge and reflect upon, it nevertheless constitutes an abstract point of reference. Because it is abstract, such a point of reference is potentially valid not only for this one object but also for others. As Philippe Huneman explains, only by means of this vantage point, that is, only by means of the ideas of reason, can the principle of purposiveness create a gap between nature's lawful regularity, as laid out by the rules of the understanding, and a possible reflection about nature's meaning.[104] Since meaning does not consist of isolated, disconnected facts, it requires a universal system of reference that is law-like but not fixed. This is what makes a non-mechanical causality possible. By contrast, the objects of the understanding or objects in general do not reveal any specific characteristics and are not placed within a broader interconnected system of phenomena. Because they contain no ambiguity, such

[101] Ibid., §74, 5:396.
[102] Ibid., §67, 5:380-81.
[103] Ibid., §77, 5:405.
[104] Huneman, "Introduction: Kant and Biology?," 26.

objects do not require interpretation. Meaning is of no concern at this point. This is why the determining power of judgement does not need a special concept or, in Kant's words, any 'autonomy, for it merely subsumes under given laws or concepts as principles.'[105] Reflection is necessary only once experience provides us with a manifold of particular phenomena and laws. It becomes apparent that speculation, that is, the possibility of a system of relations, is also a question of the possibility of meaning. In this respect, the third *Critique* further outlines and clarifies the positive and necessary use of speculative reason.

Organisms and organicism

It is the projected anticipation and closure of a world that defines the problem of systematicity for Kant in the first *Critique*. Here, the idea of a system is static. The question addressed in the 'Critique of Teleological Judgement,' of the epistemological status of organised life, displaces this systematic moment of the first *Critique*. Once the transcendental character of purposiveness, as the structure of the power of judgement, is established, the thought of interdependent dynamic relations comes into view. It turns out that we already encounter, through reflection, specific empirical phenomena that are themselves of systematic character. For the first time, systematic relations are discovered outside of the strict realm of subjectivity. Systematic or purposive relations are thus no longer understood primarily as a law introduced by reason from the outside, but are regarded as internal to certain specific objects of nature. Kant, already in the first *Critique*, makes use of biological terminology to describe the epistemological field.[106] In the 'Methodology of Pure Reason,' for instance, Kant describes the growth of rational knowledge with the terminology of the theory of germs (*Keime*).[107] In the third *Critique*, though, organisms come to signify a form of fully systematic, internal relations.[108] Even though the purposive character of living beings in the third *Critique* is said to be discursive rather than 'material,' a decisive shift in argument is introduced. In the organism Kant finds what he is looking

[105] Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, §69, 5:385.
[106] Huneman, "Introduction: Kant and Biology?," 13.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Rachel Zuckert, *Kant on Beauty and Biology: An Interpretation of the Critique of Judgment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 15.

for, that is, 'an object with the "form of a system," a self-defining whole.'[109] Systematicity is no longer purely logical, but is in the world.

The term 'organic,' or 'organism,' that comes to signify the idea of a dynamic system in Kant, was not primarily a biological concept, but functioned until the seventeenth century and beyond as a description for anything that has interrelated, working parts. These could be either physical or conceptual.[110] As such, the organic was not opposed to the mechanical. Rather both terms, like those of organism and machine, overlapped and were used synonymously, both referring to an organization that unifies a plurality of parts which interact with one another.[111] This, as Justin Smith argues, changes with Leibniz, who introduces a distinction between the two when he denies the "organicity" of the horse to the watch.[112] For Leibniz, an organic being is distinct from a mechanical body not because the former requires the introduction of an immaterial vital principle, but because it is infinitely more complex.[113] While initiating a new turn in the history of the concept, Leibniz, however, does not refer to the organic as an antonym of the mechanical, but still uses both terms interchangeably, as in a letter to Arnauld that refers to 'an organized body, or rather a machine […].'[114] Organism, for Leibniz, is a variety of mechanism – both are ways to describe the general condition or structure of nature as a whole, and in that function they complement each other.[115] Similarly for Kant what is of interest is not the ontological status of organisms, which remains ultimately uncertain, but rather their epistemological value. Organisms exemplify the structure of internal purposiveness, i.e. of a system of interrelated dynamic relations without an external end. As such, the concept of "organism" functions as a methodological tool to outline the general structure of knowledge as well as to open a new way for the investigation of nature.

[109] Ibid., 125.
[110] Justin E. H. Smith, *Divine Machines: Leibniz and the Sciences of Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 107.
[111] Luca Illetterati, "Teleological Judgement: Between Technique and Nature," in *Kant's Theory of Biology*, eds. Ina Goy and Eric Watkins (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 89.
[112] Smith, *Divine Machines*, 108.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Gottfried Wilhem Leibniz, "From the Letters to Arnauld (April 30, 1687)," in *Philosophical Essays*, trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989), 88-89.
[115] Smith, *Divine Machines*, 106.

The possibility to know the biological and organic constitution of life is in Kant the result of a discursive shift. An immanent concept of life, that is, a concept of life independent of a divine creator, is linked with the conditions of possibility for human knowledge.[116] As Philippe Huneman outlines, 'the central Kantian idea – the *internal productivity* of the organisms, their *epigenetic* character, is *essentially bound* to the *specific epistemological character* of the biological knowledge (i.e. the regulative status of the idea of an organism).'[117] Proving that a teleological discourse of nature is not dependent on the idea of a highest being, Kant contributes to the methodological discourse of the newly found biological science. However, as Jennifer Mensch explains, Kant's biological language and metaphors were not unusual for his time. Mensch argues that 'the latter half of the eighteenth century is a period best defined by its organicism.'[118] Organicism, she argues, is a framework of thought that begins to take shape in a number of fields and that 'can be defined by its view of nature as something that cannot be reduced to a set of mechanical operations.'[119] Though seemingly an argument internal to the natural sciences, this discourse on organicism is not politically neutral. Kant uses the analogy of biological development not only as an explanatory tool for his transcendental system, but, as outlined in the three essays on "race," to address anthropological concerns, most importantly for Kant being the question of the unity in diversity of the human species. The use of biological metaphors in Kant's thought, of germs and epigenesis, cannot be isolated from this discussion, that is, from Kant's philosophical thought on race, as the first definition of teleological judgement being outlined in such a context in 'On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy' shows us. Kant's organicism, accordingly, is neither a disinterested methodological tool, nor a strictly methodological intervention into natural history and biology, but is socially and politically invested.

While it might seem that speculation has disappeared from the discussion in the last paragraphs, this is not without reason. This disappearance illustrates something in Kant, namely that the power of theoretical reason to speculate, if further defined in its

[116] Ralph Haekel and Sabine Blackmore, "Discovering the Human – An Introduction," in *Discovering the Human: Life Science and the Arts in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, eds. Ralf Haekel and Sabine Blackmore (Göttingen, V&R unipress), 8-9.
[117] Huneman, "Reflexive Judgement and Wolffian Embryology," 87.
[118] Jennifer Mensch, *Kant's Organicism: Epigenesis and the Development of Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 1.
[119] Ibid.

necessary and scientific use, is no longer particularly speculative. Once reason has been critiqued and once it is solely employed for the purposes of expanding knowledge in the natural sciences, such as natural history, where its concepts are empirically grounded, it is just that: theoretical. It seems that speculative reason at this point loses its problematic status.

In addressing speculation as a problem, the possibility of a scientific philosophy first comes into view. By distinguishing between a dangerous and misleading employment of speculative reason on the one hand, and its necessary use as the power to order and to systematise on the other hand, scientific philosophy delineates itself from former metaphysics. Moreover, it is with reference to the positive use of speculative reason that the new scientific philosophy engages with the natural sciences, offering a theoretical answer to some of its problems and questions.

Conclusion

Speculation, according to Kant, though it is a source of error and illusion, at the same time allows for the possibility of science. In the *CPR* speculation is defined as the capacity or striving for systematic unity. It is, as Kant explains in the 'Transcendental Doctrine of Method,' the systematic unity of nature, which is also the systematic unity of reason, that first makes a system out of a mere aggregate of knowledge and thus transforms ordinary cognition into science.[120] Anticipating Hegel's opening to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, it thus turns out in the first *Critique* that everything depends on the system.[121] And that it is only as a *system* that knowledge is actual and can be presented as science.[122]

With the introduction of the principle of purposiveness, not only as a convenient language for reason but as the formal structure of reflective judgement, it becomes possible to demonstrate that the idea of a system is not just introduced from above by speculative reason but is also immanent to certain objects of nature and thus can be

[120] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A832/B660; Sandford, "Kant, Race, Natural History," 953.
[121] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Terry Pinkhard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2018), §17.
[122] Ibid., §24.

empirically experienced. This, however, does not mean that speculation is replaced or becomes irrelevant. The explanation of living beings still requires recourse to an idea of reason and thus to speculation, that is, to the capacity or striving for systematic unity as defined in the first *Critique*. Rather than replacing speculation, the language for what speculation is to address, and with it the discourse on science and methodology, becomes more complex, first with the essay 'On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy,' and then with the third *Critique*.

It turns out in the first *Critique* that the speculative discourse, though only discursive, addresses a number of concrete questions, such as the ways in which we group together and name the manifold met in experience and the extent to which we are allowed to divide nature between kinds and species, or group individuals into species and genera.[123] The question after the kind of category that "genera" and "species" present us with is, in the first *Critique*, meant to justify the use of speculative reason. These concepts, though technically only concepts of reason and thus purely logical, seem to lose their speculative "as if" character. This epistemological problem, Kant observes, also affects natural history. The introduction of purposiveness, as formal structure of judgement, addresses the question of the status of the categories of "genera" and "species" raised in the first *Critique*. The third *Critique*, however, not only further elaborates the problem of systematic unity of the first *Critique*, but proposes a broader discourse on the methodology of natural science. Kant suggests that the internally systematic character of certain natural phenomena allows a rethinking not only of the possibility of a biological science but also of the project of natural history.

The concept of "species," by means of which the possibility of a non-descriptive but nevertheless empirical rather than merely logical category of taxonomy is, in Kant's work, intrinsically related to the definition of a human race and thereby to anthropology.[124] This is because the example of "race" functions to justify the use of the logical category of "species". According to Kant, through this example, the categories of natural history can be shown to be empirically grounded. This is also

[123] Huneman, "Introduction: Kant and Biology?," 4.
[124] Ibid., 8.

true of the concept of "life," as it relates to the question of species and generation. The concept of "life" thus entails, in its philosophical definition, reference to debate in anthropology and natural history, even if this is not always explicitly mentioned. The possibility of a natural history that can ground its categories empirically is accordingly explained by Kant as a critical as well as anthropological endeavour. Here lies the contemporaneity of the *Critiques* with Kant's anthropological project. The attempt to ground natural history philosophically and the attempt to define philosophy as science also explains, as will be argued in the following, the use of social and political categories, in particular the concept of "race" in Kant and, later, of "sexual difference" in Hegel.

In what sense, then, do "race" and "sex" emerge as a concern for the newly defined science of philosophy? "Race" and "sex," alongside the concepts of "species" and "life," are employed by Kant and Hegel as examples that justify the use of non-empirical speculative reason. These concepts, they argue, are objective, even though they do not refer to a simple fact in nature. In Kantian terms, they name not an aggregative unity of knowledge but require recourse to an idea of reason. Since these concepts, like that of the living being, can be experienced, they differ from the ideas of reason, defined in the first *Critique* in terms of the world, the soul and God. In contrast to the latter, these concepts demonstrate that speculation, as the striving for systematic unity, is not imposed onto "nature" but is inherent to human experience and to what we consider "material." Using the example of "race," Kant aims to account for a type of concept that is neither a fact of nature nor a logical category imposed by reason solely for its own purposes. The third *Critique* and the essays on race try to outline this middle ground. As such, Kant's critical philosophy and anthropological work marks an attempt to redefine the relation between the logical and the empirical. In particular these texts aim to demonstrate that certain concepts of reasons are not only logical but are also empirically grounded. This observation, according to Kant, opens up new possibilities for the classification and ordering of nature.

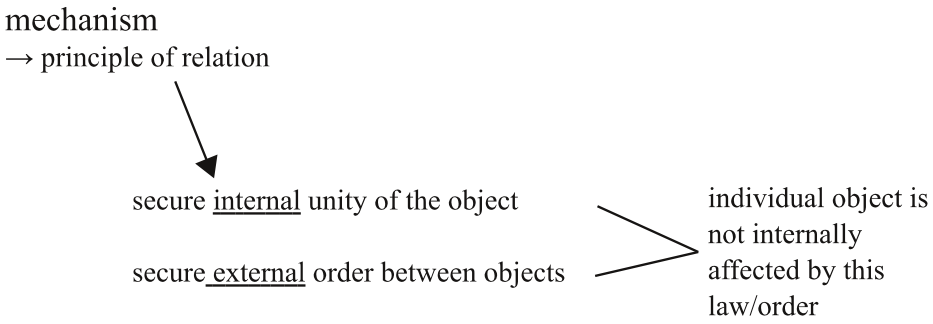
What both Kant and Hegel have in common and what is of interest to this thesis is the use of social and political categories for a definition and explanation of the legitimacy of non-empirical speculative reason. "Race" is proposed by Kant as a scientific concept that justifies the use of teleological principles for a scientific discourse on

nature. In Hegel, "sexual difference," already in the *Logic*, functions as an organizing principle of pure reason. The concepts of "race" and "sex" raise the question of the distinction between the material and the purely speculative. In defining the categories of "race" and "sex" and their legitimate use, the role of speculative reason for scientific knowledge can be analysed. Because "race" (Kant) and "sexual difference" (Hegel) are employed as examples of the legitimate use of non-empirical, speculative reason, these concepts are crucial for the definition of modern philosophy, its attempt to set its own boundaries and to define itself as science. This links philosophy to the newly defined sciences of anthropology, biology, gynaecology and comparative anatomy which develop the modern concepts of "race" and "sexual difference" as scientific markers alongside philosophy. The importance of these concepts for the self-definition of modern European philosophy and the delineation of its discourse on nature will be further outlined in the following chapters. To do so, emphasis will be put on the role of the concepts of sexual difference, *Geschlecht* and gender and of the relation of philosophy and gynaecology in the definition of these terms.[125]

[125] For a close analysis of the central importance of "race" for modern European philosophy see Denise Ferreira Da Silva, *Towards a Global Idea of Race* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2007).

Chapter two

The logical is political: Or, how thought thinking thought itself ends up speculating about the sexual relation



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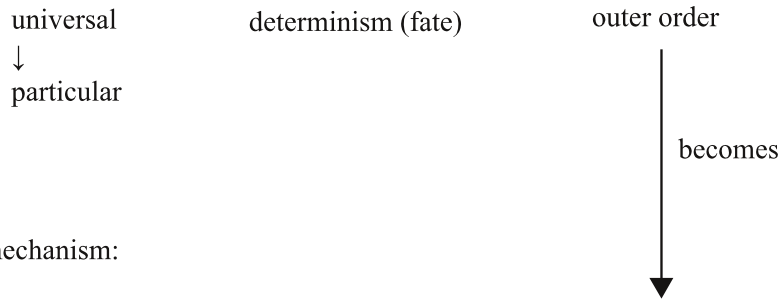
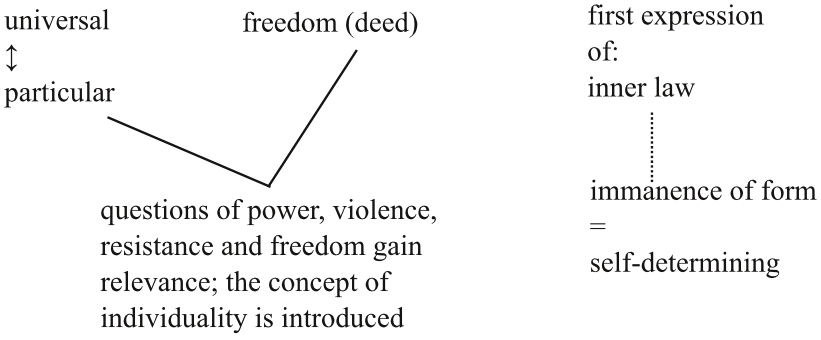
formal mechanism:



absolute mechanism:



power = objective universality

power as violence = fate (universality as negative power against the object)

Opening

To make a point about the *Science of Logic* demands a certain amount of exposition, especially if the passages at stake are the central but less well-known ones. This is inevitable because the meaning of the terms employed by Hegel, and even more so towards the end of the *Logic*, can rarely be said to be intuitive or obvious. Concepts such as "mechanism", "chemism", but even such terms as "subject," "object," and "life" lose their immediate meaning and require exposition. In order to arrive at a point where it is possible to no longer be analytically internal to Hegel's writings, the categories of the *Logic* first need to be explained. Only in this way can an argument be made about their broader functioning, beyond the *Logic*. It is also worth emphasising from the outset that to address the concept of 'speculation' in the *Logic* rarely overlaps with straightforwardly tracking the *term* as it appears or disappears throughout the work. This is because, and as explained above, every category or concept in the *Logic* requires contextualization and needs to be understood in relation to a number of other conceptual movements, for instance that of the meaning of *Allgemeinheit*, as will be explained.[126] Moreover, an exposition is necessary because of the way that Hegel writes or rather does not write about speculation, mentioned mainly in the introductions to his works but never properly defined in the main body of his texts. This is also true of the *Logic*; and yet, as I will show, everything, especially its concluding chapters, is about speculative reason, its nature and meaning.

The reading of speculation which I propose hinges on the meaning of the curiously political concepts which Hegel introduces in the final sections of the *Logic*, in particular the chapters on 'Mechanism' and 'Chemism'. In my examination of each of the chapters, I introduce a literary figure, Sophocles' Antigone and Charlotte, one of the characters of Goethe's *Elective Affinities*, to open up the wider stakes of Hegel's logical project. In the feminist literature on Hegel Antigone is unavoidable. Here, I will locate her in a context where she is not often found and where indeed we might be surprised to find her, that is in the chapter on 'Mechanism' in the *Science of Logic*. Locating Antigone in the *Logic* opens up questions about how to relate political and logical concepts. This chapter therefore begins by introducing Antigone, and the

[126] *Allgemeinheit* translates simultaneously as "universality" and "generality".

feminist literature on Antigone, followed by a discussion about the role of exemplarity in the *Logic*. This then provides a framework for a close reading of the concluding sections of the *Logic*, which will be continued in chapter four.

Introducing Antigone into the *Science of Logic*

More than any other aspect of his work, Hegel's treatment of Antigone has inspired numerous, at times contradictory feminist responses that aim to re-appropriate Antigone as a feminist figure outside and beyond Hegel's telos, and, from the standpoint of Antigone, attempt to read the Hegelian system against itself. These reinterpretations are not necessarily aimed at turning Antigone into a hero, but at letting her stand for something other than (mechanistic) fatality. Throughout this chapter it will be argued that the contested figure of Antigone is embedded in the 'Mechanism' section of the *Logic*. This is because the structure of the universal-particular relation is the same in both Hegel's presentation of Antigone, for example in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and in his outline of the principle of "mechanism" in the *Logic*. The feminist literature on Hegel's Antigone presented here is read against this background.

Both Judith Butler and Luce Irigaray, whose work will be analysed more closely in chapters five and six, comment on Hegel's interpretation of Sophocles' Antigone.[127] Butler's *Antigone's Claim*, as well as Irigaray's essays 'The Eternal Irony of the Community' in *Speculum of the Other Woman* and her lecture 'The Female Gender,' delivered in Rotterdam in 1985, search for another universal and ethical law through a reading of Hegel's Antigone. It is Butler's reinterpretation in particular that I would like to briefly comment on here. Her question of whether it is possible to re-approach Antigone's (mechanistic) fatality and to think 'an alternate legality' directly addresses the theoretical concerns elaborated in the 'Doctrine of the Concept.' This is because what Antigone illustrates for Butler, as for Hegel, is not an individual fate, but the

[127] Sophocles wrote Antigone in 441 BC. The tragedy is set in the aftermath of a civil war in which Eteocles and Polyneices, two brothers and sons of Oedipus, kill each other. The king, Creon, orders that Polyneices should not be buried as a punishment for his deed. Antigone disrespects this decree, as she sees it as her duty to bury her brother. This conflict between family duty and state law is the focus of Hegel's rewriting of the play in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

question of the universal law. It is in this sense that *Antigone's Claim* asks a similar question to the *Logic*.

The *Phenomenology* is not the only place where Hegel makes direct use of Sophocles' *Antigone*. Antigone is a recurring figure in his work, appearing also in the *Philosophy of History* (1824), in *The Early Theological Writings* (1795-1800), *The Aesthetics* (1821), and *The Philosophy of Right* (1821).[128] In all these works, Antigone stands for a specific paradox that is also addressed in the 'Mechanism' chapter, namely the coexistence of two contradictory laws: determinism (fate) and freedom (deed). If she expresses the particular form of the relation between the universal law and the particular object that the 'Mechanism' chapter seeks to define, then it follows that Antigone is present within the *Logic*, even if not mentioned by name. In the *Logic* as elsewhere, Hegel counts on Antigone's exemplarity, that is, her ability to demonstrate that the particular is always already the universal while, at the same time, it 'is *also* always singular, and in this sense is *non*-universalizable.'[129]

The feminist literature on Hegel's Antigone does not agree on her fate and its significance for political theory. According to Irigaray, 'Antigone already serves the state in that she tries to wipe away the blood shed by the state in its bid for power […].'[130] Doing the necessary work of mourning, which like all feminised work is supposedly a labour of love, she serves the interests of the state more than her own. The divine, Irigaray observes, 'has already been taken away from the female and is now the province of the male gender, even in respect to the guardianship of the family, of living being, of the gods.'[131] In other words, in adhering to the rules and norms of the family, Antigone is really, even in her defiance of Kreon, serving the state and its necessary internal contradictions. The division of roles that Hegel establishes thus seems odd, for it masks that the power associated with feminised labour has already been lost. Irigaray accordingly suggests that Hegel sets up a certain power dynamic only to hide another bleaker reality.

[128] Catherine, M. Kellogg, *Law's Trace: From Hegel to Derrida* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 117.
[129] Ibid., 125.
[130] Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 110-11.
[131] Ibid.

Though this is an interesting claim, Irigaray's broader analysis raises problems as she insists on a gender binary that, even if not primarily grounded in biological sex dimorphism, does not question or further specify the social and historical context of the categories of "woman" and "the feminine" on which her presuppositions are based. Given these broader problematic claims, the more revealing insights of her analysis are often overlooked. Butler, for instance, chooses to position her own reading of Hegel's Antigone in opposition to Irigaray's. In her introduction to *Antigone's Claim*, Butler notes that it is striking that Antigone has not been read as a political figure by either Hegel, Lacan or Irigaray, but that she is seen to take, in her representation of the sphere of kinship, a pre-political position.[132] Though she makes possible the social, which 'is inaugurated through a violent supersession of kinship,'[133] kinship itself, or the realm of divine law, has here 'not yet entered into the social.'[134]

While Irigaray indeed regards Antigone as a figure who does not, because of her positioning, act in a politically meaningful way, this is not, as Butler claims, because Antigone is outside of the realm of the political. On the contrary, Antigone is already too embedded in the working of the state. Irigaray observes that Antigone resists but yet also submits, for reasons that cannot easily be named, to fidelity towards the male gods, to the state and war amongst men. Serving the interest of the state, her actions are not pre-political. Rather, according to Irigaray, she serves the wrong political interests and is a problematic and interesting figure for that reason. 'Antigone is no longer a *goddess*.'[135] As anti-goddess, she might illustrate the stakes many women have, due to their positioning along lines of class, race, sexuality, age, or ability, in upholding certain social and political norms, and in promoting the interests of state and tradition instead of developing truly liberatory political positions. Because the possibility of that latter position is not a given but is itself a continuous political struggle, Antigone cannot be the paradigmatic feminist subject. Indeed, we might argue that such a subject does not exist per se. However, one possible way to elaborate such a position, that is, to write the character of a feminist subject, would be to let Antigone talk back to Hegel, for example by means of a speech act, a strategy

[132] Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 3.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, 111.

employed by Butler but also Anne Carson, in her "translation" *Antigonick*. If Hegel is not going to have the last word on these philosophical questions, the questions of the law, the state, the family, of thinking in philosophical terms the relation between universal and particular, then someone else will have to rise to speak.

> Antigone: Hegel says I'm wrong
> Ismene: But right to be wrong
> Antigone: No ethical consciousness
> Ismene: Is that how he puts it
> Antigone: So I wonder, let's say my unconscious while remaining unconscious could also know the laws of consciousness by which I am condemned for disobeying them I mean can a person be so completely conscious of being unconscious that she is guilty of her own repression, is that what I'm guilty of
> Ismene: We all think you're a grand girl
> Antigone: Is this an argument[136]

In Anne Carson's reading of the play, Antigone speaks back and directly addresses Hegel twice, thus challenging his interpretation of her character. Thinking philosophically on her own terms, Antigone is, in Carson's version of the play, no longer primarily a figure of fate. Posing a question about the unconscious and its laws, she opens up a discussion that transcends her immediate situation. As a philosophical counterpart, she is, like Hegel, no longer restricted to the boundaries of her own body, historical time and cultural position. Instead it is Kreon who assumes a fateful role, since he does not, contrary to Antigone and Ismene, step outside the immediate dialogue of the play. Thus, before all the characters are instructed to exit, Kreon proclaims that an unbearable fate has loaded itself onto his head. It is with this statement that Carson's play ends. Antigone speaks back, and Kreon assumes his fate.

Butler, too, puts emphasis on what Antigone has to say. Antigone's speech, more so than her act, is, Butler argues, the site of contention. Butler observes that 'Hegel attends to Antigone's act, but not to her speech, perhaps because that speech would be impossible,' since what Antigone demonstrates 'is precisely what remains

[136] Carson, Anne, *Antigonick (Sophokles)* (New York: New Directions, 2012), unpaginated.

unconscious within public law.'[137] Though the law of family and kinship is, according to Hegel, essential to public life, it is brought into being by the state only in order to be immediately repressed as a hostile principle.[138] The community, according to Hegel, creates for itself 'an internal enemy – womankind in general,' on which it depends and which it suppresses.[139] And yet, despite repression, Antigone speaks in public. What is more, she becomes one for whom the speech act is a fatal crime.[140]

Not so much her deed but its public proclamation is, Butler observes, the moment when Antigone exerts power. This is because in that moment she claims for herself a position that seemed, given what she has to say, previously impossible. Once she speaks in public, her deed can no longer be repressed or attributed to someone else. Moreover, her ability to act has to be publicly acknowledged. Her speech poses a danger for that reason. It demonstrates not only that what was deemed unsayable and unrepresentable can be heard within the public realm but, moreover, that it makes sense according to the rules of public reason. It is this contradiction that interests Butler.

What is the importance of Irigaray's and Butler's analysis of Antigone, the state and the role of kinship for the *Logic*? The following analysis attempts to demonstrate that the philosophical work that seems to be the most far removed from an analysis of social relations already works with and relies on political categories. The *Logic* is a case in point in that social and political concepts, including sexual difference, kinship, and the state, are not at the margins of philosophical thought. Rather than being absent or only empirical, these categories are theorised also at the level of metaphysics. For instance, thought thinking thought itself stumbles across the conceptual law of the sexual relation. "Chemism" is the category, or structure of thought that addresses this form of social relation. Moreover, in the *Logic*, "mechanism" refers to the relation between universal and particular that Antigone stands for in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. It is with reference to the exemplary role of the sexual relation in the *Logic*, alluded to in the 'Mechanism' chapter and directly named in the 'Chemism' chapter,

[137] Butler, *Antigone's Claim*, 39.
[138] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), §475. Both the Pinkhard and Miller translations have been have been used and compared throughout.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Butler, *Antigone's Claim*, 82.

that Hegel will be put in conversation with Butler and Irigaray. Through this, the definition and need for a philosophical concept of speculation will be rethought.

The role of exemplarity: Or, "it is just an example …"

This second chapter does not analyse the concept of speculation in its own right but prepares the ground for an analysis of the political concepts employed in the final chapters of the *Logic*. In these chapters, the examples alluded to or mentioned in passing suggest that the *Logic* is to be read also as a political discourse. It moreover prepares the ground for an analysis of the highly politically charged history of gynaecology and production of schemas of sexual difference elaborated in the following chapter. This chapter then sets up the direct confrontation with speculation, now unavoidably politicised. I argue here that political concepts are not just used in analogy to logical ones. Rather, through exemplarity, they mark out a more integral connection. Indeed, how one reads these categories is crucial for one's understanding of the political stakes of the *Logic* and of Hegel's work more generally. I will argue this by way of the concept of the sexual relation and its place in the *Logic*.

The sexual relation is introduced at the end of the *Science of Logic*, in the 'Chemism' chapter to illustrate a particular form of relation and of the conceptual law. But what exactly is the exemplary role of the sexual relation in the 'Chemism' chapter? If 'examples do not merely illustrate, but produce knowledge and condition its production,'[141] then the mentioning of the sexual relation, although only in passing, is not irrelevant. As Michèle Lowrie and Susanne Lüdemann outline in their introduction to the edited volume *Exemplarity and Singularity: Thinking through Particulars in Philosophy, Literature, and Law*, exemplarity,

> [w]hether it comes as […] paradigm, as […] exemplar, or mere instance, […] as (role) model or precedent […] mediates between the particular and the

[141] Michèle Lowrie and Susanne Lüdemann, "Introduction," in *Exemplarity and Singularity: Thinking Through Particulars in Philosophy, Literature, and Law*, eds. Michèle Lowrie and Susanne Lüdemann (London: Routledge, 2015), 2.

> general, between a singularity and some larger cognitive framework by way of empirical observation and illustration, imagination and narrative.[142]

While examples and instances are employed throughout, they come to matter particularly in those chapters of the *Logic* where the meaning of central terms is not immediately apparent. This is the case in the formulation of the chemical relation, the significance of which is not immediately obvious. The sexual relation here comes to exemplify the conceptual law of an object which, as will be explained in more detail, is in tension with its own lack and which, as such, is neither indifferent to the law that governs it nor autonomous.

Distinguishing between an instance (*Beispiel*), an example (*Exempel*) and a case (*Fall*), Hans Lipps further explains the role of exemplarity. I am, in the following analysis, importing this model into my reading of Hegel. According to Lipps, 'it is precisely insofar as a concept *cannot* be exemplified – insofar, that is, that its meaning must first *itself* be made clear – that instantiation becomes necessary.'[143] The sexual relation, it will be argued, as 'instance of a concept, indicates the manner in which that concept is to be revealed and discovered.'[144] While Antigone serves as an example, an insight is gained from her case that can be put to use; in other words, her fate points to something beyond herself, the mentioning of the sexual relation functions to set a process of thought in motion that is not yet complete. The exemplarity of the sexual relation engages the chemical law in a particular manner. If, as Lipps argues, the goal of instantiation is to bring the particular context of a concept to life,[145] it might be concluded that it is only though the presentation of this particular instance that the social and political dimension of the chemical relation comes to the fore. For this reason, even if only mentioned in passing, the instance has an effect. It 'indicates the manner in which that concept is to be revealed and discovered,'[146] and as such sets

[142] Ibid., 1.
[143] Hans Lipps, "Instance, Example, Case, and the Relationship of the Legal Case to the Law," in *Exemplarity and Singularity: Thinking Through Particulars in Philosophy, Literature, and Law*, eds. Michèle Lowrie and Susanne Lüdemann (London: Routledge, 2015), 18.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid., 17.
[146] Ibid., 17-18.

into motion a process of thought whose direction determines the very formation of the concept in question.[147]

The role of exemplarity in the *Logic* raises questions about the relationship between the *Logic* and the *Philosophy of Nature* and of *Mind*. Are the examples in the *Logic* taken from the later works? In other words, are these examples and instances just signposts for what is to come later, or do they indicate, more in line with the schema Lipps proposes, the manner in which a concept is to be revealed? If examples do indeed operate as signposts, then the empirical would enter the *Logic* and shape, contrary to Hegel's claim, the project of thought thinking thought itself. If not taken from the *Philosophy of Nature* and of *Mind*, then the instance or example would only refer to a particular form of logical lawfulness, and in the case of the sexual relation what is accordingly exemplified is a mode of relation in its generality, as lawful pattern. If this were the case, nothing empirical would enter the *Logic*. The role of examples for illustrating the working of speculative reason was already emphasised in the first chapter with reference to Kant and the example of "race." With these expositions of the contested figure of Antigone, of sexual difference and the role of exemplarity we will now approach the final chapters of the *Logic* and the definition of speculation therein.

Changing the stakes of speculation: From Kant to Hegel and beyond

Kant, as was outlined in the previous chapter, identifies speculation as being inherent to human reason. According to Kant, because human understanding cannot postulate its own systematic coherence, reason, and more precisely speculative reason, introduces a principle of systematic unity into human cognition and thus allows for an examination of all possible relations, of empirical knowledge and of thought. Speculation is epistemologically necessary but cannot, according to the first *Critique*, make any empirical claims. Though this argument is complicated by the introduction of the power of reflecting judgement, the ambiguity of the *a priori* necessity of speculation on the one hand and its problematic nature on the other hand are not entirely resolved in the third *Critique*. This tension is addressed by Hegel. However,

[147] Ibid, 17.

Hegel, purposefully alters the Kantian question as to whether it is possible to derive knowledge from speculative reason. Instead, Hegel asks whether reason, in its speculative capacity, needs to exercise any violence in order to make the object of knowledge conform to its conceptual structures. This change of emphasis allows Hegel to remain close to but ultimately outside of the Kantian transcendental frame. With Hegel, as we will see, the question of speculation is turned into a discussion of power, violence, resistance and freedom. Though, as in Kant, speculation is entirely non-empirical, these political categories are, following Hegel, necessary for an analysis of conceptual form. It is in the final chapters of the *Logic* leading up to 'The Idea,' that is, in the sections from 'Mechanism' to 'Teleology,' that this conversation unfolds.

Initially, the *Logic* adopts the Kantian definition of speculation. Speculation is understood as the systematic but non-empirical positing of relations independent of sensibility and understanding. As such it is, Hegel argues, a question of conceptual form. The *Logic*, accordingly, traces the unfolding of conceptual form independently of its empirical determinations. However, although Hegel retains the Kantian definition, he argues that speculation is not only of epistemological relevance but should equally be thought as ontological *Thätigkeit* (activity). I propose in chapter four that the concept as ontological activity is performative. The concluding chapters of the *Logic* accordingly attempt to think the ideas of reason as mode of cognition and mode of being alike.

Prior to an analysis of performativity in Hegel, this chapter looks at the use of social and political categories as examples, in the *Logic*, for an analysis of conceptual form. As already mentioned, thought thinking thought itself stumbles across the idea of the state (the 'Mechanism' chapter). In this context, the question of freedom and determinism (fate) is analysed, which is explained elsewhere by the example of Antigone. Pure reason also stumbles across the sexual relation (the 'Chemism' chapter). The political dimension of speculation that is opened up in the *Science of Logic* will be explored here, in particular as it relates to questions of sex and gender. How does the unfolding of conceptual form lead to social and political thought? We saw that in Kant, "race," among other concepts, was employed to exemplify the legitimate use of speculative reason. By demonstrating that certain concepts of reason,

such as "race," are not merely logical, Kant aims to demonstrate that it is possible for natural history to ground its categories empirically. But what is Hegel's motivation for including the example of the "sexual relation," an example which is either ignored throughout the vast history of Hegel commentary or deemed to be irrelevant? Since Hegel writes his own philosophy of nature (*Naturphilosophie*), the methodological problems that concern natural history are not foregrounded in the *Logic*. German philosophy of nature, however, not unlike the natural history that precedes it, is concerned with the concepts of reproduction, generation and sex differentiation. Moreover, like Kant, *Naturphilosophie* is in conversation with the newly founded disciplines of anthropology, biology, comparative anatomy and, in the case of Hegel, Schelling and Goethe, also gynaecology. The latter conversation will be further analysed in the following chapter.

From 'Objectivity' to 'The idea': The concluding chapters of the *Science of Logic*

Though subject to multiple interpretations, the concluding chapters of the *Logic*, which formally introduce and develop the concept of the "idea", or, in Hegelian terms, the concept as idea, have not received the same attention as the opening of the book or its middle part, the 'Doctrine of Essence,' which puts forward a thesis on the impossibility of any originary ontological or metaphysical foundation. They also receive less attention than the famous and analogous ending to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* on absolute knowing. As such, these sections share the broader fate of the 'Doctrine of the Concept' and more specifically that of the chapters on 'Objectivity,' that of, on the whole, having not left a lasting impression. The 'Doctrine of Essence' introduced several concepts which have proved useful to a number of critical discourses, and in particular to Marxist analyses, among them the concepts of "ground," "relation," "appearance" and "actuality." The 'Doctrine of the Concept,' by contrast, outlines the positive moment of the Hegelian dialectical movement that is sketched out in the *Logic*, marking for many a return to traditional metaphysics by centring such notions as "truth," the "idea" and the "absolute." The opening of the chapter of 'The Idea' is telling in this regard. Hegel writes that '[t]he idea is the *adequate concept*, the objectively *true*, or the *true as such*. If anything has truth,' Hegel says, 'it has it by virtue of its idea, or *something has truth only in so far as it is*

idea.'[148] Hegel employs repetition and reversal, a chiasmic or quasi-chiasmic sentence structure, that is intended to generate a speculative reading of the text. Repetition is meant to cause an interruption and to force the reader to read anew what came before.[149] The well-known claim from the preface to the *Philosophy of Right*, that 'the real is the rational and the rational is the real,'[150] is another example of this type of expression. The temporality of the text and its flow are deliberately interrupted. However, more often than not, these rhetorical statements, despite their intention, seem to present a dictum to the reader. Instead of exemplifying the movement of the speculative sentence and the processual nature of thought, as described by Hegel in the preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, these statements mark the end of thinking. Repetition seems to create a sense that thought is self-enclosed. Circulating only through its own abstract terms, the Hegelian text seems to create a negative feedback loop. Is this the fate of the end of the *Logic*?

Seemingly less radical than the preceding 'Doctrine of Essence' and its illustration of the moment of negative dialectics, through the concepts of "ground", "relation" and "appearance" among others, how these last chapters on 'Objectivity' and 'The Idea' are to be understood, is yet to be decided. With what must the *Science of Logic* end?[151] Does anything actually happen in the end? In other words, what propositions can be taken from these last chapters? Hegel's *Logic* formally reaches its conclusion with a chapter on the 'Absolute Idea,' paralleling the ending of other of his works, such as the 'Absolute Knowing' chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the 'Absolute Spirit' chapter of the *Encyclopaedia*,[152] each of which interrupts the linear progression of the work that precedes it. Hegel breaks with the sequence in which the forms – of consciousness, of the concept, and of spirit – have been immanently generated up until this point,[153] and thus introduces an order of another kind. It seems that to effectively

[148] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. George Di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 670.
[149] See Frank Ruda, "Hegel, Resistance and Method," in *Hegel and Resistance: History, Politics, and Dialectic*, eds. Rebecca Comay and Bart Zantvoort (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 28.
[150] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 20.
[151] See Angelica Nuzzo, "The End of Hegel's Logic: Absolute Idea as Absolute Method," in *Hegel's Theory of the Subject*, ed. David Gray Carlson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 187-88.
[152] Angelica Nuzzo, "The Idea of Method in Hegel's *Science of Logic* – a Method for Finite Thinking and Absolute Reason," *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain* 20, no. 1-2 (number 39/40) (1999), 1.
[153] Nuzzo, "The End of Hegel's Logic," 207.

bring the work to conclusion, a radical discontinuity with the entire preceding movement has to be created.[154] Generating a moment of gathering and release, the whole process is now presented as one. And yet nothing ground-breaking seems to happen in the end. What is memorable from the last chapters of the *Phenomenology*, the *Logic*, and the *Encyclopaedia* is mainly their name – the reference to the "absolute" as point of conclusion. In the case of the *Logic* the paradox is, as Gillian Rose points out, that the end seems to be as abstract as the beginning.[155] It is in the main body of the *Logic*, in between the beginning and the end, that the actual work, the labour of exposing and working through contradictions, takes place. To understand what is specific about the ending to the *Logic*, its concluding chapters from 'Objectivity' to the 'Idea' must be analysed. Generally speaking, what is being discussed in these chapters is the question of the law and the problem of universality/generality (*Allgemeinheit*) that the law opens up.[156] The concluding chapter attempts to transform this question. Once the concept becomes 'Idea,' a notion of the "performative" is introduced, replacing the general law as central term.

New logical categories?

With the chapters on 'Objectivity' an extreme point is reached in the *Logic*, where the familiar distinctions of subject, object and relation almost lose all their purchase.[157] The aim of these chapters, their place within the *Logic*, and their subject matter is not immediately apparent. Historically too, these chapters have a peculiar status. The categories of "mechanism," "chemism" and "teleology" were the very last concepts to be included in the *Logic*.[158] While there were changes in order and arrangement, the basic architectonic of Hegel's philosophical system remained almost identical throughout his entire academic career, from his earliest lecture drafts in Jena (1801/02) up to his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1817), which served as blueprint for his teaching up until his death.[159] One of the few visible changes to the

[154] Ibid., 211.
[155] Gillian Rose, *Hegel Contra Sociology*, 186.
[156] Ibid., 221.
[157] Howard Caygill, "The Spirit of Resistance and Its Fate," in *Hegel and Resistance: History, Politics, and Dialectic*, eds. Rebecca Comay and Bart Zantvoort (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 86.
[158] Nathan Ross, *On Mechanism in Hegel's Social and Political Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 62.
[159] Ibid., 62.

system is the introduction of the 'Objectivity' chapters into the *Logic*. The adoption of "mechanism," "chemism" and "teleology" as logical categories is first elaborated in a fragment dated by scholars to the year 1808,[160] during Hegel's time in Bamberg. The introduction of these categories corresponds to another major modification, the condensation of logic and metaphysics into one discipline.[161] In his early writings, Hegel had distinguished between logic and metaphysics. This separation was based on a distinction between the dissolving aspect of dialectics (logic) and the constructive aspect of speculation (metaphysics), a distinction that disappears in Hegel's later works.[162] It seems, as Nathan Ross argues, that the formulation of these new categories is related 'to an overall revolution in Hegel's thought, namely the recognition of speculative logic as the true form of metaphysics.'[163] 'Objectivity' accordingly marks a moment of change within the system, a point at which the entire project is rethought. Departing from Kant's *Critiques*, the questions of soul, world and God are no longer the primary concerns for a modern, scientific philosophy.[164] In their stead, new logical categories are being thought to form the basis of metaphysics.

The logical necessity of 'Objectivity' is frequently put into question in the secondary literature. Can objectivity be taken up as pure thought determination, without presupposing a move outside of thought? And what would be the goal of such an analysis? These questions, though important, can only be meaningfully addressed within the framework of the *Logic*. In order to make sense of its categories, 'Objectivity' has to be read as a response to what comes before, namely 'Syllogism', and in view of what comes after, that is, the chapters on 'Life' and finally the 'Absolute Idea'. What these chapters have in common is an analysis of the relation of particularity to universality. Hegel outlines the various ways in which the particular is always already mediated by the universal. The chapters under the heading of 'Objectivity' are no exception in this regard, but they elaborate this relation within the

[160] 'The most important document in assessing the development of the concept of mechanism in Hegel's logic is a fragment that was published for the first time by Otto Pögeler in 1963. The text is a fragment dated by scholars to the year 1808, hence to Hegel's Bamberg period, during which he wrote a famous letter to Niethammer proclaiming his ambitious project to completely refigure the position of logic within his system' (Ibid., 68).
[161] Ibid., 62.
[162] Ibid., 64.
[163] Ibid., 63.
[164] Otto Pöggeler, *Schicksal und Geschichte: Antigone im Spiegel der Deutungen und Gestaltungen seit Hegel und Hölderlin* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2004).

structure of a single object. While the broader philosophical problem is the same, the introduction of the terms of power, violence, resistance and freedom into the realm of logic makes these chapters stand out. Once introduced, these terms remain part of the discourse on logic. Hegel seems to suggest that the question of conceptual *Allgemeinheit* (universality/generality) can only be explained in these terms. Thus, in the 'Mechanism' chapter, it is argued that the universal, if it is a concept or a category that is fully other and external to the particular instance that it refers to, is a source of violence.[165] The task of the concluding chapters of the *Logic* is to rethink conceptual universality, to propose a new definition, and to transform what was a question of violence into one of power.

Contrary to the opening chapters of the *Logic*, the main concern of the chapters on 'Objectivity' is not whether the object is determined or not. At this point in the *Logic* all objects are determined in multiple aspects. What is still unclear, however, is whether their determination is external or whether, in Hegel's words, 'the merely external determinateness of the objects, has passed over into immanent and objective determination.'[166] While judgement and syllogism, as the previous chapters of the *Logic* explain, are logical shapes in which the singularity, particularity and universality of an object are increasingly mediated, 'Mechanism' for the first time presents 'a mediating term of singularity that is utterly mixed with universality in such a way that there is no determinate difference between these two moments of the concept.'[167] From now on the form of a single term, the internal structure of the speculative concept, will be analysed.

The chapters on 'Mechanism,' 'Chemism,' 'Teleology' and 'Life' have a similar structure. These chapters operate under the assumption that the object in question can only be thought as a product or result. Each chapter is therefore divided in three sections – object, process and result. The argument initially seems straightforward. The mechanical object cannot be thought outside of a mechanical process which it shares with other mechanical objects. In other words, it cannot be thought on its own

[165] Rocío Zambrana, "Logics of Power, Logics of Violence (According to Hegel)," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 14, no.2 (2014): 15.
[166] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 643.
[167] Ross, *On Mechanism in Hegel's Social and Political Philosophy*, 77.

terms. These reciprocal relations are then explained in more depth by looking at the chemical and the purposive object. What complicates this account is that all these terms are highly mediated. It is unclear what exactly concepts such as "mechanism", "chemism" and the strange reference to "life" refer to. Even the term "object" seems to have lost its immediate meaning. According to Hegel, the mechanical object is not an immediate "thing" or point of reference but refers already to a universal. However, as universal, the mechanical object is, Hegel argues, not to be understood as a thing with properties or as substance with accidents, since these would be separable from it. It should also not be divided into matter and form. Rather, Hegel writes, the object is universal in the sense that it constitutes a totality. Totality is a better term for the kind of object described here because it includes, as was explained in the first chapter with reference to Leibniz, Kant and Cassirer, the law. This is the concept that will be gained at the end of the 'Mechanism' chapter.

Mechanism as a discourse of violence, power, resistance and freedom

The following section looks closely at Hegel's argument in the 'Mechanism' chapter in order to demonstrate that the same structure of the relation of universal to particular that is described in the Antigone section of the *Phenomenology* also applies here. We can then, eventually, reintroduce Antigone – this time as a "logical" figure.

Hegel draws on the philosophical thought of both Leibniz and Kant to further illustrate the nature of objectivity described in the 'Mechanism' chapter. Like the Kantian object of the understanding, the mechanical object 'has in it the determinateness of a *manifold* which, although complete, is otherwise *indeterminate*, that is *relationless* […].'[168] The mechanical object, accordingly, constitutes a totality which is not further determined at first.[169] It is, Hegel writes, the form of a singularity in general.[170] Mechanical explanations determine the unity of the object – the problem is not a general indeterminateness – but the object does not seem to determine itself. The form that constitutes its unity is an external one.[171] This, Hegel concludes, 'is what constitutes

[168] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 633.
[169] Ibid., 632.
[170] Ibid., 633.
[171] Ibid.

the character of mechanism, namely, that whatever the connection that obtains between the things combined, the connection remains one that is alien to them, that does not affect their nature.'[172] Mechanism accounts for the combinations within and between objects, but the objects themselves remain in a state of general indifference.

It is in this context that Hegel defines how order, the imposition of an external unity, passes over into law, that is, the immanent form of the concept. Violence, which 'is suffered when a thing, person, or process is subjected to an unfolding that is not its own,'[173] that is, a formation from the outside, is, according to Hegel, to be rethought as the power of the law. The law, however, as well as the notion of the performativity of conceptual form, which is introduced in the last chapter of the *Logic*, does not bring the question of violence, resistance and freedom to a close, but merely transforms it.

Mechanical explanations, according to Hegel, inflict violence on the object – a blind fate that the object cannot recognise as its own.[174] Hegel seems to indicate that this is the fate of the Kantian objects of the understanding. Because the laws of the understanding express what all cognitions have in common, they cannot, as Kant himself also recognises, say anything about the particular. The result is a formalism of the object,[175] which makes it known in its generality but renders it indistinct from others of its kind. Yet it is not primarily the Kantian object of the understanding that Hegel refers to in his description of the mechanical object, but the Leibnizian monad.

'Leibniz's *monad* would be more of an object'[176] because it truly describes a self-enclosed totality. Mechanical objects, according to Hegel, 'cannot act on one another', and thus have 'no influence on each other.'[177] Like the monad, each object is a world brought to closure as a singularity.[178] While there is development internal to each and every monad, and while the monad is determinate in this sense, Hegel argues that, as a self-enclosed totality, the monad remains indifferent to its environment and thus, to

[172] Ibid., 631.
[173] Zambrana, "Logics of Power, Logics of Violence (According to Hegel)," 13.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik: Zweiter Band* (Hamburg: Meiner, Verlag, 2015), p.142.; Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 640.
[176] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 632.
[177] Ibid., 634.
[178] Ibid., 633.

some extent, also to its own determinateness, which therefore is not entirely its own.[179] The 'Mechanism' chapter investigates the contradiction of the determinate but isolated object, which stands in relation to others but not in a way that would affect its nature. Hegel accordingly identifies two forms of indifference. First, an indifference of the object that relates to its own nature – the object is generic – a problem that Hegel finds exemplified by the Kantian object of the understanding; and, second, an indifference towards other objects as is exhibited by the Leibnizian monad. This leads to the contradictory conclusion that the object, on the one hand, lacks all determination – as object in general, it is indistinguishable from others and thus has no self-subsistence – but, on the other hand, a self-subsistence impenetrable to other objects, a *Monadology*, manifests itself.[180] It is this contradiction that interests Hegel in the 'Mechanism' chapter.

As purely logical principle of relation and connection, for Hegel "mechanism" is, despite its name, not primarily a physical phenomenon. The 'Mechanism' chapter touches on a wide range of topics, including questions of desire, subjectivity and sociality among others. What all of the examples have in common is that the object under consideration remains internally unaffected by its own principle of relation and unification. 'A mechanical mode of representation, a mechanical memory, a habit, a mechanical mode of acting, mean that the pervasive presence that is proper to spirit is lacking in what spirit grasps or does.'[181] With the expression 'pervasive presence,' Hegel seems to be referring to the possibility of a self-determining principle and to the immanence of form. But how does form become internal? And how is the question of violence, resistance and freedom related to the problem of logical form?

The law, Hegel proposes, is a principle of relation and connection that regulates the object not only from the outside. Law, Hegel writes, is 'the determination proper to pure individuality or to *the concept existing for itself*.'[182] This process, whereby the merely external definition of the object passes into an immanent determination, is described in the last section of the 'Mechanism' chapter.[183] Here, the mechanistic

[179] Ibid., 634.
[180] Ibid., 638.
[181] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 631.
[182] Ibid., 644.
[183] Ibid., 643.

process becomes 'absolute,' meaning that it is no longer dependent on a moment external to the object.[184] Instead, the objects themselves become the explanation for how they relate to one another.[185] Even though this law is not yet one of proper self-determination, Hegel argues that a certain degree of objective freedom has been gained.

Self-determination, as becomes evident in the chapter on 'Mechanism,' does not refer to the absolute independence of the object. On the contrary, self-determination in the *Logic* means recognizing the relations between objects as they mutually shape each other. Hegel does not have a logic of individualism, absolute autonomy or independence in mind when he writes that the law is the principle of self-determination and the 'determination proper to pure individuality.'[186] On the contrary, individuality, according to Hegel, cannot be attributed to entirely autonomous, monad-like substances. This is because an individual is itself a totality that embodies a specific difference while at the same time holding on to its universality that it shares with others.[187] Only once a content receives the form of universality is it, according to Hegel, communicable.[188] Individuality is a question of communication, as will be further elaborated in the 'Chemism' chapter. In the case of the mechanical object, communication happens through interaction with others of its kind. [189] Communication addresses the fact that the universal law particularises the individual object which receives, through this process, a form shared with others. At the same time, communication addresses the way in which objects relate. However, Hegel argues, communication only becomes possible among objects that do not remain indifferent to their own determination: 'the *active object* only becomes a *universal*.'[190] It is at this point, when discussing the active object, that resistance and freedom become relevant for the *Logic*. Reflecting the universal law within itself, the individual or singular object, Hegel explains, 'can oppose itself to its objective universality and alienate itself from it.'[191] In the negotiation of the universal law lies the possibility of

[184] Ross, *On Mechanism in Hegel's Social and Political Philosophy*, 90-91.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 644.
[187] Ibid., 643.
[188] Ibid., 636.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid.
[191] Ibid., 639.

resistance and freedom, but also of a violent reaction as a response on the part of the universal.

In the *Logic* self-determination designates the specific relation of particularity to universality that Hegel also describes as immanence of form. In the course of the 'Mechanism' chapter, it is argued that this relation is best understood through the concept of "power" ("*Macht*").[192] Power, according to the *Logic*, is another name for objective universality; however, only in certain contexts does it makes sense to speak of universality in this way. The reference to power, Hegel argues, becomes relevant only when the object undergoes a process through which it is defined by other objects and when the relation of particularity to universality is also negotiated from within. This is the case with 'the real mechanical process'[193] which necessitates the introduction of the vocabulary of violence, resistance and freedom into logical discourse. In the 'real mechanical process,' the object exists for the first time in and for itself. Freedom, Hegel argues, becomes possible in this context, with Hegel here distinguishing freedom from external contingency, both of which can be explained by the mechanical principle. Only when the object is no longer entirely indifferent to its environment and to the universal law that governs it is freedom possible and objective universality to be thought under the aspect of power. By means of this distinction, of freedom from external contingency, a purely formal logic can be distinguished from an "actual" logic, or logic of the real. However, given that both external contingency and freedom appear in the same chapter and under the principle of mechanism, which governs them both, their distinction seems gradual and not entirely opposed.

Hegel's position is thus that, under conditions of external contingency, the particular, which does not reflect the universal in itself, gives in to its rule. By contrast, in a situation that is free, the particular will reflect the universal and, by way of negotiating this relation, individualise itself. In this case several scenarios are possible, since the effect of the universal law and reaction to it are not predetermined. The universal might not be identical with the particular object, in which case the former has no effect. However, if identical, the universal exerts power (*Macht*). If the determinateness of

[192] Ibid., Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik: Zweiter Band*, 141
[193] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 638-640

the universal is not the immanent reflection by means of which the object is singular, then universal power turns into violence: Hegel writes that power, 'as *violence against the object* is what is called *fate*.'[194] In this case, the universal law that governs the object is not reflected back into itself. The universal thus remains a negative power directed against the object.[195] It is not the universal law as such but a lack of internal recognition that is, for Hegel, the source of such violence.

Power, however, also becomes violence when the object has given itself some determinateness over against the universality that is supposed to govern it. In this case, Hegel writes, the object must have committed a deed. According to Hegel, the inability to internally reflect the universal law and the self-reflected decision to violate it by means of a wilfully resistant act lead to the same result. Hegel offers no further reflections on this point. However, the 'Mechanism' chapter is not the only place in Hegel's work where this contradiction is analysed. The same problematic is also discussed in the 'Antigone' chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. If fate and deed are mechanical relations, then does the logic of Antigone belong within the 'Mechanism' chapter? In the following, the possible implications of such a reading for the *Logic* will be further investigated. It will be argued that if the paradox that Antigone stands for in Hegel's work is also addressed in the *Logic*, then the feminist engagement with Hegel on this point is also relevant for the *Logic*.

Antigone takes the stage – but is it relevant? And who cares?

Since 'Mechanism' is the first chapter in the *Logic* that addresses the relation between particularity and universality in terms of power, the use of political examples at this point is not surprising. By addressing the problematic of power, resistance and freedom as internal to logic, "mechanism" is also, though not exclusively, a political category. In fact, the most extensive reference to social and political bodies in the *Logic* is found in this chapter,[196] with Hegel explaining here, for example, that the

[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Ross, *On Mechanism in Hegel's Social and Political Philosophy*, 94.

unity of the state and society can be understood in terms of the structure of 'absolute mechanism.'[197]

'Mechanism' is a turning point because it is the first chapter that argues that logic and metaphysics are one, and that the relation between universality and particularity has to be understood in terms of power. Antigone, moreover, might be the most paradigmatic example of Hegel's new speculative logic. The feminist engagement with Hegel's Antigone, in particular Butler's and Irigaray's, could be read anew in this light. Such a reading would prove wrong those who think that the feminist investment in Hegel's Antigone is trivial and not relevant to the broader metaphysical, epistemological and ontological stakes of Hegel's work, particularly to the *Logic*. Equally, it would provide a response to Antigone scholars such as Otto Pöggeler who believe that the feminist responses to the Sophoclean drama uniformly misinterpret and mis-construct the "facts." In his recent 2004 study of the history of interpretations of Antigone since Hegel and Hölderlin, Pöggeler decides not to touch on the multiple and diverging feminist interpretations of Antigone, which he refers to as 'misinterpretations.'[198] The reason for this decision is, according to Pöggeler, that the feminist discourse on this topic no longer talks of what Antigone actually did.[199] This is an interesting remark, especially since Antigone is a literary figure. Interpreting in its own right instead of just repeating the Sophoclean drama, feminist philosophy, according to Pöggeler, goes astray. Pöggeler fails to see that Hegel, too, productively "misreads" Sophocles, as well as every other thinker he chooses to engage with. Believing that philosophy is nothing other than the history of thought and its "correct" representation, critics like Pöggeler seem to be intimidated by feminists who dare to do philosophy, that is, to engage in the risk of thinking instead of merely repeating already existing thought. Moreover, they fail to realise the stakes of the *Logic*, that is, the Hegelian insight that the commitment to thinking thought itself involves also political categories, such as the state and the sexual relation, and figures like Antigone, as becomes evident in the concluding chapters. The *Logic*, too, demands a commitment to political thought.

[197] Ibid., 90.
[198] Pöggeler, *Schicksal und Geschichte*, 192.
[199] Ibid.

It was argued earlier that the logic of Antigone, though not directly addressed, seems to belong within the 'Mechanism' chapter. As a logical category that introduces a distinction between two simultaneous but distinct laws – determinism and freedom – and that addresses the relation between particularity and universality in terms of power, violence and resistance, 'Mechanism' further elaborates the discourse of the *Phenomenology* and the paradox that Antigone presents in the *Phenomenology* and elsewhere. This reading has broader implications for the *Logic*. If Antigone expresses the particular form of the relation between universal and particular that the principle of 'mechanism' stands for, then this would mean not only that the problematic of universality is immediately political, but also that it implies questions of gender, labour and kinship from the start, even if these are not directly addressed. The question of conceptual *Allgemeinheit* (universality/generality), in other words, even in its strictly logical elaboration, would have a social and political dimension. While the figure of Antigone remains ambiguous, also within feminist philosophy, what is more important than a decision regarding her fate is the problematic that enters philosophy under her name. It is no secret that the Sophoclean drama introduces the logic of sexual difference into the *Phenomenology*, as it allows Hegel to introduce a gendered division of labour and of political roles. If Antigone is the exemplar of the mechanical opposition, does the logic of sexual difference also find its way into the *Logic*? The reference to the "sexual relation" in the 'Chemism' chapter, following 'Mechanism,' would suggest so.

Chemism as a category of social relation: The logical foundation of the sexual relation

As we did for Antigone in the 'Mechanism' chapter, we find embedded in the 'Chemism' chapter another contested feminine literary figure, Charlotte from Goethe's *Wahlverwandthschaften*. Goethe's novella questions the institution of marriage and explores themes of sexual difference and heterosexual attraction through the use of a chemical metaphor. Even though Goethe's influence on Hegel is well known, the link between Goethe's concept of elective affinities as conceptual tool to address questions of sexual difference and attraction and Hegel's use of the latter in the "Chemism" chapter of the *Logic* has not been widely analysed. Moreover, Hegel's reference to the sexual relation (*Geschlechts-Verhälniß*) in the 'Chemism' chapter of

the *Logic*[200] has been left unexamined in the Hegel literature. Though the "sexual relation" is here only mentioned in passing, as one example among others, I will argue that this exemplary use is not accidental (given that this concept is explored by Goethe under the same heading) and that it shifts the place that sexual difference holds within the *Encyclopaedia* project. Rather than being only or first and foremost a biological fact, a discourse that has its proper place in the *Philosophy of Nature*, it becomes evident that the categories of "sex" and the "sexual relation" have a logical foundation in Hegel's work. This claim, of the logical foundation of the sexual relation, will be elaborated throughout the remaining sections of this chapter and will be further contextualised in the following chapter, where the meaning of *Geschlecht* in eighteenth and nineteenth century Germany will be further analysed.

Given that sexual difference is a recurring topic throughout Hegel's work, the occurrence of the "sexual relation" in the *Logic* is not by itself surprising. What might be surprising is its place within the 'Chemism' chapter in the 'Doctrine of the Concept.' The chapter title does not seem to indicate an analysis of social relations, and the reader will associate it with physics, chemistry, and the natural sciences more broadly. It might thus be argued that sexual difference, prior to the establishment of biology as a single distinct field, finds its proper place precisely in this chapter, and that it being mentioned at this point is nothing other than a signpost indicating what is to follow, namely the *Philosophy of Nature* and the unfolding of sexual difference therein. However, the definition of the terms of "mechanism" and "chemism," which are defined by Hegel as principles of relation and connection, challenges such a reading. These principles, according to Hegel, do not primarily explain physical and natural phenomena, but describe relations encountered in a number of fields, belonging to both the natural and social sciences.[201] Rather than a special type of object, mechanical and chemical principles, as well as the concepts of "teleology" and "life" that will supersede them, indicate the particular mode in which something exists in its relation to itself and others.

[200] Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik: Zweiter Band*, 148; Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 646.
[201] For a more detailed analysis of this point with reference to the 'Mechanism' chapter see Ross, *On Mechanism in Hegel's Social and Political Philosophy*, 6, and John W. Burbidge, *Hegel's Systematic Contingency* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 109, where this point is made with reference to the 'Chemism' chapter.

The terminology of violence, resistance and freedom, implicit in their discussion, makes evident that the object in question is not only relational but that its determination has to be understood in terms of power (*Macht*).[202] The reference to the sexual relation in the *Logic* has to be understood from within this context, which can shed light on Hegel's employment of this term at other points throughout his work. While feminists have rightfully critiqued Hegel's employment and explanation of the sexual relation in the *Philosophy of Nature*, *Philosophy of Mind*, and *Phenomenology*, which either naturalise sexual difference or enforce a cultural and gendered division of labour, an understanding of its logical foundation can provide clarification, at least on the former point. For it becomes evident in the *Logic* that sexual difference is not first and foremost an identity or essence, nor a natural or biological category, though it will also be used and presented by Hegel as such.

The aim of this reading is not to uncover a "good" or unproblematic position in Hegel that would neatly fit our current understanding of the terms of sex, gender, and sexual difference. We are not going to find a radical conception of sexual difference in Hegel – at least not if we take him by his word – nor is his philosophy the place to search for such a politics. As Kimberly Hutchings remarks in the opening to *Hegel and Feminist Philosophy*:

> It is patently obvious from his own remarks on sexual difference that, even in the context of his own time, Hegel's attitude to women was patriarchal and at times misogynist. If Hegel's work is useful to feminist philosophers, it is in spite of his own ideological position […].[203]

If anything, the use of the sexual relation as logical example places Hegel alongside Kant and Linnaeus, who employ social and political categories, such as "race" and "sex," to justify an order of nature that is rational but not arbitrary. As we have seen with Kant in particular, social and political categories demonstrate that rational and logical categories are not just imposed on nature but are empirically grounded.

[202] See Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik: Zweiter Band*, p.141; Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 639.
[203] Kimberly Hutchings, *Hegel and Feminist Philosophy* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003), 1.

Accordingly, by including the sexual relation in the realm of logic, as an example to rethink logic and its purposes, Hegel follows a precedent.

Only six pages long, 'Chemism,' the second moment of 'Objectivity,' is an often-overlooked logical category. While the previous chapter posits the necessity for a law of self-determination, no such law is introduced in the 'Chemism' chapter. It might therefore seem that nothing new is said here and that 'Teleology,' not 'Chemism,' marks the next important moment. But what happens in these six pages? Through the elaboration of the category of "chemism" the indifferent objectivity of the mechanical object is put into question. This prepares the ground for the discussion of teleology and purposiveness. Following Hegel, the distinction between "mechanism" and "chemism" is fairly straightforward:

> The chemical object is distinguished from the mechanical in that the latter is a totality indifferent to determinateness, whereas in the chemical object the determinateness, and hence the *reference to other*, and the mode and manner of this reference, belong to its nature.[204]

The chemical object, according to Hegel, is defined through its relationship with other objects; 'the being of one object is the being of another.'[205] These relations define the object without, however, imposing on it a definition from the outside: Hegel argues that otherness is internal to the concept. Its own lack, moreover, is part of the nature of the concept.[206]

Although Hegel's concept of "chemism" is inspired by the emergence of the science of chemistry in the early nineteenth century and the first chemical revolution,[207] Hegel immediately clarifies 'that the expression is not to be understood here as though the relation were only to be found in that form of elemental nature that strictly goes by that name.'[208] The chemical relation is not reducible to natural phenomena. Like the

[204] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 645.
[205] Ibid., 646,
[206] Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik: Zweiter Band*, 148; Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 646.
[207] For a more detailed account of the influence of the chemical revolution on Hegel's work see Ulrich Ruschig, "Logic and chemistry in Hegel's philosophy," *HYLE – International Journal for Philosophy of Chemistry* 7, no.1 (2001): 5-33.
[208] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 645.

'Mechanism' chapter, 'Chemism,' too, is concerned only with the way we think about objects, in this case about those objects that we perceive as both independent and yet intrinsically related to each other.[209] Even within the natural sciences, Hegel argues, examples of this relation are not limited to those belonging to chemistry. The meteorological relation, for instance, also comes under this principle.[210] 'In animate things, the sex relation [*Geschlechts-Verhältniß*] falls under this schema, and the schema also constitutes the *formal* basis for the spiritual relations of love, friendship, and the like.'[211] Though it remains unclear what else could be included in this list and, moreover, what exactly it would mean to determine a logical foundation to love, friendship and the sexual relation, the emergence of social and cultural phenomena as such is, given the preceding chapter on "mechanism", not surprising. The aim of these chapters for Hegel is not to ground certain empirical phenomena logically, but to question how we come to think them in the first place, that is, to identify the general structures of certain relations rather than the empirical ways in which they manifest.

While the 'Mechanism' chapter first introduces the concepts of *Gewalt* (violence), *Macht* (power), *Freiheit* (freedom), and *Widerstand* (resistance), which are also central to the discussion of teleology and especially 'outer purposiveness,' the explanation of "chemism" seems to do without these terms. Even though chemical objects are not self-subsistent, the vocabulary of violence seems to be less fitting in this case. Neither, however, is it a question of freedom. This is because of the mode of relation addressed here, which is that of affinity (*Verwandtschaft*).[212] In a state of affinity, Hegel explains, objects are 'tensed against themselves' and by that very fact are 'tensed against each other.'[213] The reason for this tension, however, is not an incompatibility between the objects, but their proximity, the fact that one cannot be thought without the other. Tension arises because the concrete existence of each individual object, if taken on its own, contradicts its own concept, which includes reference to another of its kind.[214]

[209] Burbidge, *Hegel's Systematic Contingency*, 109.
[210] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 645-46.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Ibid., 646.
[213] Ibid.
[214] Ibid.

While the object is not self-determining, not following its own law and consequently not free, it is also not entirely determined by another (law) that would be alien to it. The affinity between distinct but interdependent objects calls, according to Hegel, for a medium, or an 'element of communication'[215] that is external to them both. Hegel suggest that language is such a possible medium. While '[i]n the realm of bodies water fulfils the function of this medium; in that of spirit, inasmuch as there is in it an analog of such a relation, the *sign* in general, and *language* more specifically, can be regarded as fulfilling it.'[216] Following Hegel, the outcome of such communication, between objects that stand in a relation of affinity, 'is *something neutral*',[217] a state into which the object is not forced but in which it is not free either. Belonging to the realm of spirit, the sexual relation, neither free nor unfree, is, according to Hegel, only possible by way of a medium, that is, by way of language.

The 'Chemism' chapter, though short, is not without context. It taps into a broader intellectual debate. In 1792, in his 426th *Athenäumsfragment*, Friedrich Schlegel characterises his own epoch as a 'chemical age.'[218] Schlegel is referring not just to the state of science: the chemical revolution introduced by the theories of Lavoisier is taken by Schlegel as a symbol of the *Zeitgeist* more broadly, alluding also to political events, in particular the French Revolution.[219] Schelling and Goethe similarly integrate the findings of the new science of chemistry into their works. The term 'chemism' (*Chemismus*), as employed in Hegel's *Logic*, was first introduced by Schelling to describe relations of affinity and to determine a category of relatedness distinct from mechanism.[220] According to Schelling, the purpose of chemistry is to investigate the qualitative variation of matter against mechanics, which, he argues, is altogether formal.[221] While the philosophy of chemistry more or less disappears from his later work and in his philosophy of nature is replaced by a philosophy of life, it

[215] Ibid., 647.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik: Zweiter Band*, 150; Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 647.
[218] See Friedrich Schlegel, *Athenäums-Fragmente*, accessed August 22 2019, http://www.zeno.org/Literatur/M/Schlegel,+Friedrich/Fragmentensammlungen/Fragmente.
[219] Jeremy Adler, *Eine fast magische Anziehungskraft: Goethes „Wahlverwandtschaften" und die Chemie seiner Zeit* (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1987), 84.
[220] Jaap Van Brakel, "Prehistory of the Philosophy of Chemistry," in *Handbook of the Philosophy of Science: Volume 6 – Philosophy of Chemistry*, eds. Andrea I. Woody, Robin Findlay Hendry and Paul Needham (Oxford: Elsevier, 2012), 26.
[221] Ibid., 24.

plays a central role in his early writings.[222] Goethe, another a philosopher of nature, contributes to a cultural understanding of chemical thought with his novel *Elective Affinities* (*Die Wahlverwandtschaften*). The term *Wahlverwandtschaft* was a technical term of eighteenth century chemistry, the German translation of a term introduced by Swedish chemist Torbern Olof Bergman with his book *De attractionibus electivis* (1775) and first put into German by Heinrich Tabor in 1785.[223] At the time of the publication of Goethe's novel, *Wahlverwandtschaft* was a term used solely in chemistry – the emotional and romantic connotations which the term subsequently acquired derived from the novel to which it was attached.[224]

Assuming that whatever is said there has most likely been rendered obsolete by scientific progress, a close reading of Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* and of the 'Chemism' chapter in the *Science of Logic* is often not prioritised. It is nonetheless important to consider that Hegel's working life coincided with the emergence of modern chemistry.[225] If, taking Hegel by his word, philosophy is its own time apprehended in thought, then the writings on chemistry and "chemism" are key. Rather than further advancing the specialised sciences, by integrating concepts of the natural sciences into his philosophical system, Hegel, like Schlegel, Schelling and Goethe, aims to situate or contextualise the new sciences, most importantly chemistry. This means understanding the cultural relevance and the effects that this new science has on society and thinking more broadly. Historicizing scientific thought and its changes in this way, it becomes possible, these thinkers suggest, to see how a change in scientific explanations is reflected elsewhere.[226]

[222] Ibid.
[223] R. J. Hollingdale, "Introduction," in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Elective Affinities*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1971), 13.
[224] Ibid.
[225] Van Brakel, "Prehistory of the Philosophy of Chemistry," 25.
[226] Hegel demonstrates that he is well informed about the sciences of his time. He displays familiarity with the work of Lavoisier and Berthollet, he writes at length on Bergman's affinity notion, and he engages in an extensive debate with Berzelius (Ibid.).

Affinity is the pre-condition of these characters/objects

Thinking alongside the chemical sciences, Goethe writes that '[j]ust as each thing has an adherence to itself, so it must also have a relationship to other things.'[227] This is the working premise of Goethe's novel but also of Hegel's 'Chemism' chapter, which, as will be outlined in more detail, further elaborates the project Goethe began, that is, to think the findings of the natural sciences in cultural, sociological or political terms. The 'Chemism' chapter thus attempts to do in theory what Goethe does in literature. Both Goethe and Hegel experiment to render scientific changes in thinking about causality, relationality and universal lawfulness back to the social. Affinity is considered not just as the precondition of chemical objects but equally of logical objects and literary characters. While the mechanical law provides the definition of an object in general, 'Chemism,' according to Hegel, develops the principle for a differential relation.

Goethe describes his own book as a social novel, or *Zeitroman*. The characters 'are not so much individuals as representatives of social groups.'[228] As such their motivations, desires, emotions and impulses are not generated internally but instead are determined by the social situation of their time and their roles in it.[229] The characters in Goethe's novel might, on this point, be compared to Sophocles' Antigone and Hegel's interpretation of Antigone's fate, since here too the literary characters stand in for a more general social law and norm. Their function is to reveal underlying social tensions and paradoxes, rather than an individual fate. In the *Elective Affinities* this is expressed by the character of Charlotte, who remarks that

> While life is carrying us along with it […] we imagine that we act from our own motives and choose what we do and what we enjoy but if we look more closely we will find that we are actually compelled to carry out the ideas and tendencies of our time.[230]

[227] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Elective Affinities*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1971), 52.
[228] John Winkelman, *Goethe's Elective Affinities: An Interpretation* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1987), 35-36.
[229] Ibid., 36.
[230] Ibid., 36-37.

Also addressed is the antithesis of freedom and necessity discussed by Hegel in the 'Mechanism' chapter of the *Logic* and in the *Phenomenology* with reference to Antigone. If Hegel's Antigone represents 'the irony of the community,' something similar might be said about Goethe's characters. The sarcasm of the narrator of *Elective Affinities* and her ironic tone distances the reader from the characters and their individual fate, highlighting instead their representative function of social customs and laws more broadly.

In chapter four, the title of the book, *Wahlverwandtschaft*, is officially introduced and discussed by the characters themselves. This discussion is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, because it addresses the ambiguous relation between the natural sciences and political thought and the appropriation of scientific concepts by the latter; and, secondly, because of the gender relations that are displayed in this discussion. To begin with, Goethe's dialogue seems to merely reproduce gender stereotypes. It is Charlotte, the only woman present, who naïvely remarks that those abstract chemical terms appear to her to possess a human character. The character of Charlotte thus establishes the necessary link between the natural sciences and society that the novel depends on but that remains tenuous throughout. And yet, while Charlotte anthropomorphises chemical terms and the language of the scientist, it is also her who, once her male counterparts are going along with her, complicates this analogy:

> These figures of speech are pretty and amusing, and who does not like to play with analogies? But man is so very much elevated above those elements, and if he has in this instance been somewhat liberal with the fine words "choice" and "elective affinity," it is well for him to turn and look within himself, and then consider truly what validity such expressions possess.[231]

Goethe discusses gender relations at two different levels. The term "elective affinities" is introduced as a model for analysing the "sexual relation." At the same time, the gender dynamics of the novel, particularly when discussing the concept of "affinity," prove to be important. Charlotte presents herself as naïve or uninformed on scientific and political matters but at the same time deconstructs her own position. In the end, it

[231] Goethe, *Elective Affinities*, 55.

is her character that has the last word on these matters. Whether Hegel agrees with Goethe's understanding of sexual difference, and the role of women in society, will not be discussed here. What is of interest is their common intent to use concepts from the natural sciences for social and political thought, on the one hand to bring the sciences back into the sphere of the social and, on the other hand, to utilise these terms for their own means and thus to invest them with different meanings. Goethe effectively transforms a scientific typology into a sociological model.[232] Hegel, in similar way and inspired by Goethe, wants to think "chemism" not just as a concept for the natural sciences but as pure, that is, non-empirical, social form. The *Logic* is to provide the means to think social and political phenomena without starting from empirical examples. The "social novel" or *Zeitroman* is a useful example in this regard since it depicts general social positions rather than an individual fate or character. Even if not directly mentioned in the *Logic*, the exemplarity of the social novel, and of literary characters more broadly, allows Hegel to draw on the exemplarity of social and political laws without relying on empirical examples. Social and political categories can now be logically grounded.

Conclusion

The *Logic* is, among other things, a political discourse, even though Hegel, as Rebecca Comay and Frank Ruda remark in their co-written book *The Dash: The Other Side of Absolute Knowing*, 'divests the first person in all its situatedness and dilation […] of its last shred of positive substantiality.'[233] Political laws and categories are examined as part of the broader project of thinking conceptual form. Thus, even though the *Logic* aims to empty out the notion of subjectivity, social and political questions do not lose their relevance.

The examples of Sophocles' *Antigone* and Goethe's characters in the *Elective Affinities* also point to the vanishing of individual subjectivity. Such vanishing happens in the presence of the 'subject,' and even through its acts, mainly because of her non-voluntarist decisions. Even if conscious of their acts, such consciousness

[232] Adler, *Eine fast magische Anziehungskraft*, 145-46.
[233] Rebecca Comay and Frank Ruda, *The Dash – The Other Side of Absolute Knowing* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2018), 18.

proves to be almost irrelevant for these characters. Hegel demonstrates that in the conflict of freedom and necessity, at the limits of experience, the coordinates of subjectivity are taken apart.[234] Subjectivity is here undone, or at least it becomes otherwise than thought. While Hegel leaves behind the notion of consciousness that grounds the Kantian subject, the *Logic*, however, does not, in its attempt to divest the first person of any positive substantiality, do away with the political nature of the Kantian project, but reconfigures it. Akin to a transcendental structure but without subject,[235] the *Logic* rethinks social and political relations in proto-structuralist terms.

When Hegel lists the sexual relation, love and friendship as spiritual instances of the chemical law, he suggests that the *Logic* 'constitutes the formal basis' of these social and political phenomena. Though only mentioned in passing, Hegel's 'chemical' instances seem to point beyond themselves. Drawing on a broader intellectual debate, in particular the works of Goethe, Schlegel and Schelling, their exemplarity deliberately exceeds the discourse of the *Logic*. This makes the indirect incorporation of literary examples possible, which in turn allows Hegel to contextualise his logical categories without requiring an "empirical" phenomenon as example.

To conclude, even though the goal of the *Logic* is 'not to add stuff but rather to *subtract* – to bring formalization to a pitch […],'[236] such formalization spans across a whole array of knowledge, including fields of knowledge generally associated with 'the subject' or questions of subjectivity. It is in this sense that exemplarity matters in the *Logic*. Social and political laws can now be logically grounded. Under the heading of 'Objectivity' Hegel sketches the determination of the object, which is initially indifferent to its own law ('Mechanism') but is transformed through the development of 'Chemism', 'Teleology' and 'Life' into a self-determining concept ('Absolute Idea'). Though "mechanism" is still a principle of outer determination, this chapter, by way of introducing the terms of power, violence, resistance and freedom in its description of the relation between the universal and particular, calls such indifference into question. At the end of the 'Chemism' chapter, indifference is finally overcome.

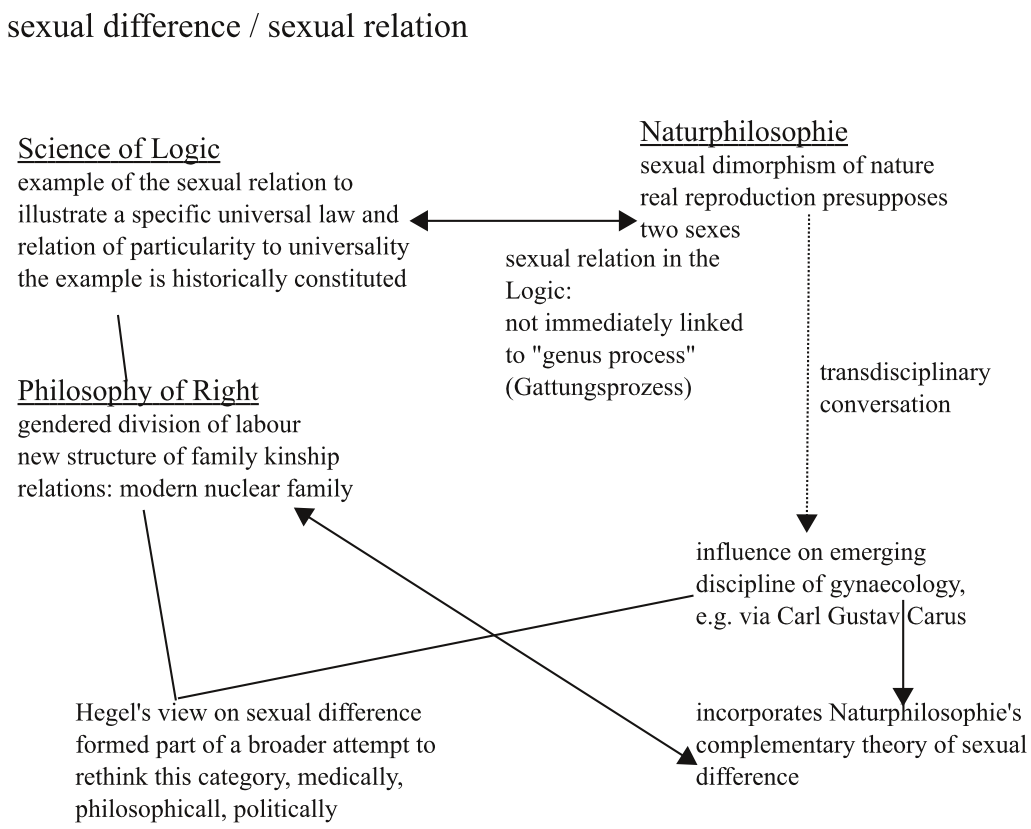
[234] Ibid., 4.
[235] This is akin to how Paul Ricoeur defines structuralism in *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics* (London, New York: Continuum, 2004), 49.
[236] Ibid., 18.

Hegel, in the last paragraph of the 'Chemism' chapter, introduces a term that is only fully elaborated at the very end of the *Logic*.[237] This is the concept of 'absolute activity,' (*absolute Thätigkeit*). As absolute activity, everything that so far was considered abstract and external becomes, Hegel argues, the concept's own self-mediating moment.[238] For the first time in the *Logic*, and as will be explained in chapter four, an idea of performativity is introduced. The objective concept is now free, and as such, Hegel argues, it is purpose.[239] In the absence of the transcendental subject, a notion of 'absolute activity,' that is, of the self-movement or "performative" nature of form takes centre stage.

[237] See Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 737.
[238] Ibid., 650.
[239] Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik: Zweiter Band*, 153; Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 650.

Chapter three

Geschlecht in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German philosophy – One-sex model or two?



Introduction

As shown in the previous chapter, Hegel adopts Kant's definition of speculation as non-empirical power of reason, that is, as thought thinking thought itself. As we saw, however, in the *Science of Logic* he also seems to propose that speculation cannot be isolated from political concepts and questions. The terms of violence, resistance and freedom are central here. Moreover, in the 'Mechanism' chapter the idea of the state is presented as an example of reason in its speculative mode,[240] and in the 'Chemism' chapter the sexual relation is also considered in this way.[241] Elaborating on chapter two, this chapter will further develop how the examples of the state and the sexual relation determine the discussion of the *Logic*. In so doing, emphasis will be on the latter example. The relation between the concepts of the state and the sexual relation will be brought to the fore more explicitly in chapter four, through a discussion of the *Philosophy of Right*.

It will be argued here that the example of the sexual relation is historically conditioned and that to understand Hegel's reference to the sexual relation in the *Logic*, an analysis of Hegel's work on *Naturphilosophie*, as well as a broader view of the nuances of *Naturphilosophie* beyond Hegel is required. This is because Hegel's view on sexual difference formed part of a broader attempt to rethink this category, medically, philosophically and politically. This attempt has been framed by the historian and sexologist Thomas Laqueur as a shift from a one-sex model of sexual difference to a two-sex model.

In the following analysis I will critically engage with Laqueur's model, which is widely cited and marks a point of reference in the humanities, in particular for feminist philosophers and historians of science. I will moreover outline the extent to which Hegel and the *Naturphilosophen* can be said to conceptually implement this shift in their works. While it will be argued that the *Naturphilosophen* construct and stabilise a specifically modern conception of sexual difference and nature, Laqueur's periodisation and rigid distinction between a one-sex and two-sex model, will be put

[240] See Ross, *On Mechanism in Hegel's Social and Political Philosophy*, 94.
[241] Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik: Zweiter Band*, 148; Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 646.

into question. This is because though a shift in thinking sexual difference is under way, it is not from a one-sex to a two-sex model, two paradigms that contrary to Laqueur historically co-exist, but rather concerns the elaboration of men and women as complementary opposites, a conception that will be shown to fall between a one- or two-sex paradigm. This elaboration of a complementary theory of sexual difference matters politically as well as medically as it comes to justify on the one hand the modern sexual division of labour and the exclusion of women from suffrage after the French Revolution, and on the other hand constitutes the theoretical basis for a unified study of woman in the name of gynaecology. However, not just sexual difference but the conceptualisation of a number of concepts, including those of sex, gender, race, genus and species took place at the same time and across disciplines. It will be suggested here, that what is actually happening is not the move from a one-sex to a two-sex model of sexual difference, but, more broadly, the emergence of biopolitics and a biopolitical vocabulary. While Hegel's *Naturphilosophie* will be analysed, I would also like to point to a discussion of Hegel as distinct from *Naturphilosophie,* as will be outlined further in the following chapter.

Conceptual and historical motivation of Hegel's political examples

According to Hegel, the dynamic nature of the concept is to be understood as the activity (*Thätigkeit*)[242] of form. Hegel temporalises the nature of the concept, introducing the possibility of a history of the concept, or conceptual history. It is argued here that it is the emphasis on temporalisation and on the dynamic nature of the concept that allows for the introduction of political terms into a text that presents itself as a non-empirical treatise. Concepts like the state and the sexual relation are well suited to exemplify the temporal nature of the concept as well as its performative nature because they are contested and thus more visibly open to change than others. It is the exemplary function of social and political categories that explains their relevance to the *Logic* and, in particular, to its concluding chapters. Although Hegel alludes to the empirical, according to his definition these are pure, conceptual examples that lend

[242] As will be addressed in the following chapter, the concept of *Thätigkeit* is first introduced in the very last paragraph of the 'Chemism' chapter (Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 737), where 'absolute activity' (*absolute Thätigkeit*) is opposed to 'formal activity' (*formale Thätigkeit*). It comes to play a defining role in the last chapter of the *Logic* (Ibid., 738), where Hegel writes that absolute method is to be understood as universal/general 'activity' (*Thätigkeit*).

themselves on logical grounds because they best express the general nature of conceptual thought.

However, it is not just by chance that certain political categories like the state and the sexual relation, among others, come to matter. These concepts or problems do not lend themselves only on purely logical or conceptual grounds, as scholars working on the history of modern medicine and on the theorization of race and gender in philosophy have pointed out. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, a conceptual transformation took place in Europe. According to Thomas Laqueur, Londa Schiebinger, Alison Stone, Susanne Lettow and Stella Sandford, this period marks the co-emergence of the concepts of race, heredity, species, and sex. While these terms are not entirely new, the meaning of these concepts had previously been less stable, and the definition of certain terms shifted. In the German-speaking world, for instance, the concept of *Geschlecht* underwent significant change. While before the end of the eighteenth century the dominant meaning had been "line of ancestry," after the late eighteenth century the sense of "sex" or "gender" gained prominence.[243] At the same time, and arguably relatedly, political order – the questions of state, nation and civil society – were rethought on political and philosophical grounds. It will be argued in the following that what links these two discourses, that of "sex" and "gender" on the one and of the nation state on the other hand, is the emergence of a biopolitical discourse that focuses on reproductive politics in particular. It is in this context that the role and meaning of the concepts of "sex" and "gender" but also that of "nation" and "civil society" come to be reconsidered, politically and philosophically. *Naturphilosophie* in particular contributes to this discourse, as it further elaborates the notions of sexual difference, genus, species, nature and reproduction and thus offers a philosophical foundation to a broader political, cultural as well as medical discourse.

Naturphilosophie and the temporalisation of "nature"

The examples of the state and the sexual relation are not only conceptually but also historically motivated. Hegel's choice of examples is not entirely "functional" but in

[243] Stella Sandford, "From *Geschlechtstrieb* to *Sexualtrieb*: the Originality of Freud's Conception of Sexuality," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Psychoanalysis*, eds. Richard G. T. Gipps and Michael Lacewing (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 7-8.

turn illustrates how the project of the *Logic* is itself a historical event – its own time in thought. Since these examples go beyond the *Logic* and its immediate discourse, it would follow that the *Logic* complicates the meaning of the "purely theoretical." Its examples primarily illustrate the meaning of logic as Hegel conceives of it. While Hegel illustrates the historicity of the concept, which shows that logical categories are not entirely self-contained but to some extent indeterminate, the book nonetheless attempts to offer a general theory of conceptual form. According to Hegel, the distinction between the theoretical and empirical still matters, even if it demands further thought. Instead of giving up on this distinction, it becomes – after the *Logic* – a question of how to articulate and to account for this relation in non-determinate ways.

Stone and Lettow draw attention to the temporalisation of nature in nineteenth century philosophies of nature (*Naturphilosophie*).[244] This, they argue, marks an attempt at the level of philosophy to reconfigure genealogy and the belonging to social and natural orders, and initiate a rethinking of the concepts of sex, sexual difference, race, ancestry and generation. I would like to argue that the project of the *Logic*, in rethinking conceptual form as dynamic or performative, is another site of temporalisation where similar political categories appear. In this case too, a re-examination of general theoretical stakes involves the consideration of categories such as sexual difference, life, and species, as well as the need to place these within an overarching philosophical frame. Stone and Lettow rightly emphasise that sexual difference becomes the leitmotif of the philosophies of nature.[245] However, I would argue that these concepts matter theoretically not only in the domain of *Naturphilosophie*, but that they are intrinsic to eighteenth and nineteenth century European philosophy more broadly. Hegel's philosophy is a case in point, not only for *Philosophy of Nature* but equally for *Logic*, *Phenomenology* and *Philosophy of Right*, where he initiates a reconfiguration of the concepts of sexual difference and generation. If *Naturphilosophie* is understood to be singular in its emphasis on sexual difference, it

[244] Susanne Lettow, "Introduction, Reproduction, Race and Gender," in *Reproduction, Race, and Gender in Philosophy and the Early Life Sciences*, ed. Susanne Lettow (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 1-2; Alison Stone, *Petrified Intelligence: Nature in Hegel's Philosophy* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005); Alison Stone, *Nature, Ethics and Gender in German Romanticism and Idealism* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018).
[245] Stone, *Nature, Ethics and Gender in German Romanticism and Idealism*, 185.

becomes harder to explain in what sense definitions of sex, generation and life unfold not only from a conception of nature but equally from a reconfiguration of metaphysics and the state. When thinking sexual difference, conceptions of nature – on which sexual difference is allegedly based – and of the state arguably correlate. The elaboration of the state in Hegel alongside that of sexual difference will be examined in more detail in the following chapter through an analysis of the marriage ceremony in the *Philosophy of Right*.

Hegel's *Naturphilosophie* is often neglected or, as Alison Stone highlights, judged to be of no political significance. However, the construction of a dichotomised conception of sexual difference, based on and structuring nature, at a time when such a concept was relatively new and still in the making, is necessarily of political relevance. Moreover, while the *Science of Logic* is recognised as an important text in its own right, it is not necessarily regarded as a text that also thinks social and political categories. However, the appearance of the state ('Mechanism' chapter) and the sexual relation ('Chemism' chapter), alongside the categories of violence, resistance and freedom, demonstrates that speculative or non-empirical reason already encounters political categories and that these might be exemplary of its nature. While Hegel's influence on political theory, especially Marxist thought, has been acknowledged, the historical underpinnings of his thought on sexual difference are undertheorised. Hegel's work is rarely placed within the context of the history of gynaecology, comparative anatomy and anthropology, as a work that both receives and constructs the new philosophical categories of *Geschlecht*, sexual difference, species, generation, alongside those of race and nation. The reason for this can already be found in Hegelian philosophy itself, which, as I will argue, resists its own historical situatedness in its efforts precisely to render dynamic and to historicise all philosophical categories.

Hegel's text, given its critique of the predicative philosophical proposition and of any predetermined method, demands to be read closely and on its own terms. The *Phenomenology* and *Logic* lay out a theory of reading, proposing a transformation of the text through its re-reading.[246] While its historical context seems to determine the

[246] See Catherine Malabou, *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*, trans. Lisabeth

text from the outside, the speculative strategy as proposed by Hegel opens up the text to a future yet unknown. Close reading then comes to stand for the text's transformative potential, whereas its historical context seems to predetermine its stakes from the outside. What new could be discovered when stating the facts? However, a speculative reading does not exclude the contextualisation of a work, and contextualisation offers a transformative potential of another kind. Reading a text twice might imply a broader social historical analysis. What becomes visible as a result are those details, examples that are mentioned in passing, such as the sexual relation, that might no longer appear as random as they seem at first sight (or read). As such, Hegel's methodological points are of value for feminist philosophy, as they outline an immanent but critical engagement with a text. While a close textual analysis or speculative reading of Hegel will continue in the following chapter, a broader discussion of the conceptual transformation of sexual difference in *Naturphilosophie* will be outlined here.

On Thomas Laqueur's account, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries science begins to flesh out the categories of "male" and "female" as opposite and incommensurable biological sexes.[247] While up to this moment it was accepted as common knowledge that both sexed anatomies are organised by the same cosmological principle and purpose, now two distinct bodies are mapped out – anatomically and culturally. Until this shift, female organs were conceptualised as the inner version of the male. Now, ovaries and testicles became linguistically distinguished. The uterus is no longer understood in terms of the male anatomy, as an inverted penis, and organs that were not distinguished by a name of their own, for instance the vagina, are given one. Even structures thought common to both, such as the skeleton and nervous system, are differentiated to correspond to the cultural male and female: it was not until 1759 that a detailed female skeleton was published in an anatomy book to illustrate its difference from the male.[248]

During (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005).
[247] Thomas Lacqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990) 5.
[248] Ibid., 10.

It is no accident that the eighteenth century sees the birth of comparative anatomy.[249] What is more, observable bodily distinctions are taken to refer to a qualitative difference in the nature of the sexes that affects every sphere of life. It is in this sense that the scientific revolution is alongside political transformation in leading to a change of frame and a novel conception of sex difference. Every detail of the two-sexed human anatomy comes to reflect a fundamental difference in their purposive nature.[250] This culminates in the idea that the two sexes refer to two compatible but distinct organising principles.[251] Due to the qualitative difference that they signify, gender polarities, Laqueur argues, come to be regarded as fixed in a way not known to the Galenic model that preceded the modern construction of sexed difference.

Stone and Lettow propose that nineteenth-century *Naturphilosophie* manifests this transition, which Laqueur frames as a shift from a one-sex to a two-sex model of sexual difference. The *Naturphilosophen* are of interest because they construct and stabilise a specifically modern conception of sexual difference and nature, while at the same time returning to a cosmological understanding of natural order, characteristic of the classical age. Critiquing eighteenth century mechanistic understandings of nature,[252] these thinkers propose to reconsider a cosmological perspective on nature, one that comprehends nature in organicist terms. At the same time, however, they contribute to the new epistemological status of nature as the bedrock of social distinctions, that is, the distinguishing characteristic of Laqueur's two-sex model.[253] Serving as the basis for a gendered organisation of society and division of labour, nature within *Naturphilosophie* is, however, not an uncomplicated or straightforward concept. Not simply referring to matter, nature rather signifies a dynamic process. As product and habitual pattern, nature is not a stable and originary bedrock for social

[249] Londa L. Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex?: Women in the Origins of Modern Science* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 163.
[250] Stone, *Nature, Ethics and Gender in German Romanticism and Idealism* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2018), 187.
[251] Ibid.
[252] See Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie. Zum Behuf seiner Vorlesungen* (Jena; Leipzig: Christian Ernst Gabler, 1799), 6.
[253] See Alison Stone, "Sexual Polarity in Schelling and Hegel," in *Reproduction, Race, and Gender in Philosophy and the Early Life Sciences*, ed. Susanne Lettow (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 260, and Susanne Lettow, "Generation, Genealogy, and Time: The Concept of Reproduction from *Histoire naturelle* to *Naturphilosophie*," in *Reproduction, Race, and Gender in Philosophy and the Early Life Sciences*, ed. Susanne Lettow (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 33.

distinctions and is also not outside of social relations. Nature is, according to Schelling, product, and, following Hegel, always second nature. And yet, despite their non-deterministic conceptions of nature, Schelling and Hegel, in interpreting sexual difference as a polar opposition that structures all of nature, re-conceive it in a way peculiarly appropriate to their time.[254]

The shift in paradigm becomes apparent in Schelling's uptake of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach's formative drive. Blumenbach was a physician, physiologist, comparative anatomist and anthropologist; and one of the first to explore the nature of man as an aspect of natural history, as well as to propose classifications of the races of mankind. While Blumenbach's *Bildungstrieb* is a homogeneous drive active in all living beings in the processes of structuring nutrition, generation, and regeneration, Schelling assumes that it unfolds in two directions: female and male.[255] Schelling then adopts Blumenbach's concept but adds that the drive separates into opposing tendencies.[256] As Alison Stone notes:

> In the *Outline*, Schelling situates sexual difference as the culminating manifestation of the polarity of two basic forces (*Kräfte*) structuring all of nature – the productive force and inhibiting force. Moreover, he tacitly understands these two basic forces in sexualised terms, aligning the productive force with the male sex and the inhibiting force with the female sex.[257]

Sexual difference, according to Schelling, is the principle of change and of dynamic force that is supposed to structure not only organic nature but every aspect of the world.[258] Hegel, like Schelling, regards the opposition between the sexes as inherent to the idea of generation, more precisely as a prerequisite for the generation of a "third," and thus, in line with Schelling, as part of a dynamics that structures the whole of nature and, as outlined in the *Philosophy of Right*, also structures the distribution of

[254] Stone, *Nature, Ethics and Gender in German Romanticism and Idealism*, 186.
[255] Lettow, "Introduction, Reproduction, Race and Gender in Philosophy and the Early Life Sciences," 4-5, and "Generation, Genealogy, and Time: The Concept of Reproduction from *Histoire naturelle* to *Naturphilosophie*," 33.
[256] Lettow, "Introduction, Reproduction, Race and Gender in Philosophy and the Early Life Sciences," 4-5.
[257] Stone, *Nature, Ethics and Gender in German Romanticism and Idealism*, 174.
[258] Schelling, *Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie*, iii and 42.

labour within state and civil society.[259] I will be showing how this works in more detail throughout this chapter and the following.

The inclusion of sexual difference as organizing principle of nature by nineteenth century philosophers is not entirely novel, but rather goes back to Carl Linnaeus. In his *Systema Naturae*, first published in 1735, Linnaeus 'based his botanical taxonomy on the sexuality of plants.'[260] As Schiebinger notes, '[d]espite the number and variety of systems, Linnaeus's sexual system was widely adopted after 1737 and until the first decades of the nineteenth century was generally considered the most convenient system of classification.'[261] Natural history, one of the premier and most popular sciences of the eighteenth century, and Linnaeus's work in particular, acted as a precursor to the philosophies of nature. However, though sexual difference was already a defining marker and organizing principle prior to its employment by *Naturphilosophie*, it had not yet developed into a biopolitical instrument *par excellence*. The philosophers of nature are significant because their works illustrate that a conceptual shift is underway, but not yet fully realised. Hegel and Schelling alternate between a cosmological frame of hierarchical gender organisation and a two-sex model of sexual difference rooted in a nature that structures all of human life. Hegel, in his *Encyclopaedia*, states that female organs are inner versions of the male and vice versa, though the male organs are more highly developed,[262] thus seemingly adopting a one-sex model. Both sexed anatomies are said to be organised by a shared

[259] Lettow, "Introduction, Reproduction, Race and Gender in Philosophy and the Early Life Sciences," 13.
[260] Londa L. Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (London: Pandora, 1994), 4. 'The greatest taxonomist of his age […] imagined that plants have vaginas and penises and reproduce on marriage beds' (Ibid., 1).
[261] Ibid., 14.
[262] '(…) on account of the original identity of formation, the same type underlies both the *male and female genitals*, only that in one or the other, one or the other part predominates: in the female, it is necessarily the passive moment (*das Indifferente*), in the male, the moment of duality (*das Entzweite*), of opposition. (…) In this way, a complete understanding is obtained of the conversion of one sex into the other. Just as in the male, the uterus is reduced to a mere gland, so, on the other hand, the male testicle remains enclosed in the ovary in the female, does not emerge into opposition, does not develop on its own account into active brain; and we instead active feeling, the swelling heart, the effusion of blood in to the *corpora cavernosa* and the meshes of the spongy tissue of the urethra; to this male effusion of blood correspond the female menses. (…) Through this difference, therefore, the male is the active principle, and the female is the receptive, because she remains in her undeveloped unity.' Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature: Part Two of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), §268, 412f.

purpose, namely that of realising the genus in material shape.[263] These 'one-sex conclusions' are, however, as Alison Stone observes, drawn from a view much closer to the two-sex model of radical difference: 'Hegel thinks – as on the two-sex model – that a radical difference in organising principles manifests itself in every facet of sexed anatomy and embodiment.'[264]

A first biopolitical vocabulary? The constitution of a species-oriented perspective

The introduction of sexual difference as structuring principle by Schelling and Hegel goes hand in hand with the constitution of what Lettow calls a species-oriented perspective. Lettow explains that the concept of reproduction, by which the species is perpetuated, was, from the early nineteenth century on, enmeshed with ideas of sexual difference and complementarity.[265] *Naturphilosophie*, since it formulates these ideas, functions as theoretical basis for the political regulation and intervention in processes of reproduction, that is the complex arrangement of social relations that impact on the generation of children.[266] If sexual difference, defined as complementary dualism, is a fundamental principle of the universe, then no individual existence could possibly escape it; the individual is always already overpowered by the exigencies of nature, that is, by the exigencies of the species.[267] Building on Laqueur's conceptual paradigm, Lettow explains how concepts of *Geschlecht*, race, and species intersect in eighteenth and nineteenth century German thought. Individuals, Lettow argues, are increasingly perceived as belonging to a species, a sex or a race in a biological way. Subjugation to these larger categories or entities leads to a new understanding of kinship relations and ultimately to the constitution of a biopolitical gaze.[268] Sexual difference in the two-sex model is not just "natural;" or rather, nature is seen to function as a structuring principle in every other domain of life. Thus, in his 1821 *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel appeals to his *Philosophy of Nature* in order to support his claims about the proper social roles of men and women.[269] According to Hegel,

[263] Stone, *Nature, Ethics and Gender in German Romanticism and Idealism*, 187.
[264] Ibid.
[265] Susanne Lettow, "Population, Race and Gender: On the Genealogy of the Modern Politics of Reproduction," *Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory* 16, no. 3 (2015), 2.
[266] Ibid., 267.
[267] Lettow, "Generation, Genealogy, and Time," 37.
[268] Ibid., 24, 37.
[269] Stone, *Nature, Ethics and Gender in German Romanticism and Idealism*, 179.

difference in the physical characteristics of the two sexes has political consequences.[270] It is through the division between roles in the family and civil society that '[t]he *natural* determinacy of the two sexes acquires an *intellectual* and *ethical* significance.'[271] This expression, 'natural determinacy,' refers to the conception of life as genus/species, elaborated in the *Logic* and *Philosophy of Nature*. In the latter, modes of reproduction that lack sexual difference are at the lowest stage of the development of nature. As Lettow states, '[r]eal reproduction for Hegel, as for Schelling, presupposes two sexes.'[272]

While the *Logic* and the *Philosophy of Nature* introduce the concepts of the sexual relation, genus and species, the *Philosophy of Right* explains that these logical and *naturphilosophische* concepts also entail broader social transformations. The *Philosophy of Right*, as will be further explained in the following chapter, is a text that justifies at a theoretical level the transformation of reproduction and kinship. Instead of the vast bonds of the family as clan, the reproductive couple and its offspring, that is the modern nuclear family, takes centre stage – a model that still shapes the political contemporary reproductive technologies and global bio-economics.[273] The focus on state, family and species manifests that reproduction is seen as a contingent, and thus manageable, process, one that can be regulated through political strategies.[274]

Although the arrangement of the two sexes is hierarchical in Hegel and Schelling, there is at the same time a sense of complementarity and mutual desire.[275] Both Hegel and Schelling advocate the idea of sexual complementarity, the theory that men and women are not physical and moral equals but complementary opposites, which triumphed in the revolution in European life and manners between the 1760s and the 1820s.[276] Women were thought to have their own part to play in the new democracies as mothers and nurturers, a role that was championed by many middle-class women.[277] According to Hegel, family ethic, or divine law, is the law of woman, while public

[270] Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2018), 176.
[271] Georg Wilhem Friedrich Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2015), §165, 206.
[272] Lettow, "Generation, Genealogy, and Time," 36.
[273] Lettow, "Population, Race and Gender: On the Genealogy of the Modern Politics of Reproduction," 2.
[274] Ibid., 5.
[275] Ibid.
[276] Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex*, 216.
[277] Ibid., 217, 244.

ethic is distinctively male. The former, following Hegel, is based in subjectivity and feeling, which is opposed to the universal character of the public law of state and civil society.[278] In this way, '[t]he private, caring woman emerged as a foil to the public, rational man.'[279] A continued sexual division of labour is based on the idea that inequalities are "natural." Nature assigns women a specific biological role, and, correspondingly, a specific place in society. Disenfranchisement seems to be the product neither of prejudice nor malice but of nature.[280] According to Londa Schiebinger, because the theory of sexual complementarity succeeded in justifying the continued exclusion of women from the political sphere and from science by making inequalities seem natural, complementarians had a special relation to the medical community.[281]

What kind of conceptual transformation?

The question remains, however, of whether the conceptual transformation of the terms of sex and gender in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries really led, as Thomas Laqueur claims, to an epistemological break? If we are dealing with an epistemological break, a term coined by Gaston Bachelard, for whom the history of science is constituted of a series of epistemological obstacles and breaks,[282] then this period would constitute a rupture with previous political and scientific ideological conceptions of sex and gender. Laqueur's distinction between a one-sex and a two-sex model of sexual difference is widely cited and marks a point of reference for feminist philosophers and historians of science. But was there really a ruptural moment? Following Laqueur, the shift away from a metaphysical or cosmological configuration of sexual difference towards a biological, medical and "natural" grounding points to the redefinition of the category of sex from a sociological category ("gender") to ontological category ("sex"). Taking issue with Laqueur's paradigm, Elsa Dorlin, in *La matrice de la race: Généalogie sexuelle et colonial de la Nation française*, attempts

[278] As mentioned before, see Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature: Part Two of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, §268, 412f.
[279] Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex*, 217 and *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, §166, 207.
[280] Ibid., 244.
[281] Ibid.
[282] See "Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962)," *Concept and Form:* The Cahiers pour l'Analyse *and Contemporary French Thought*, accessed August 24 2019, http://cahiers.kingston.ac.uk/names/bachelard.html.

to demonstrate that the discourse of sexual difference was always already medical, complicating Laqueur's claim for the invention of sex as we know it taking place in the late eighteenth century.

According to Dorlin, the concept of temperament is the blind spot of Laqueur's research.[283] Dorlin shows that the notion of temperament, which refers to the internal conformation of the body, remains a central concept of medicine and philosophy since antiquity.[284] The body, according to the theory of temperaments, is composed of several moods that each have different qualities (cold, hot, wet and dry) and that are of varying perfection.[285] By way of the notion of temperament a medical factor is already at play in the construction of the notion of sex difference, since this concept allows for the hierarchical ordering of bodies and the definition of certain bodies as healthier than others.[286] While the ideal health is the balance and perfect mix of all moods, certain bodies, those read to be in excess or defect of one of the moods, are deemed unhealthy. In this way, Dorlin argues, the notion of temperament functions as an operator of sexuation. Since women are afflicted with a cold and wet temperament, they are tendentially excluded from health, meaning that their temperament predisposes them to disease, while men are predisposed to health.[287] The female body, according to this paradigm, comes to signify a sick body. Moreover, every sick body comes to be, by definition, an effeminate body.[288] If the conceptualization of sexual difference in the classical age goes through the categories of healthy and unhealthy, which are just as much medical as political categories,[289] then Laqueur's claim that definitions of gender historically precede differentiations of sex does not seem to hold. Medical discourse would have already provided the dominant and normative definition of sex difference before the eighteenth century.

Dorlin convincingly questions Laqueur's periodisation and neat distinction between a one sex and a two-sex model of sexual difference. A medical discourse of nature as

[283] Elsa Dorlin, *La matrice da la race: Généalogie sexuelle et coloniale da la Nation française* (Paris: Découverte, 2006), 21-22.
[284] Ibid., 22.
[285] Ibid.
[286] Ibid., 26.
[287] Joan Scott, "Preface," in Elsa Dorlin, *La matrice da la race: Généalogie sexuelle et coloniale da la Nation française* (Paris: Découverte, 2006), 6.
[288] Dorlin, *La matrice de la race*, 24-25.
[289] Ibid.

ontological ground for social differences is, through the conceptualization of the healthy and the unhealthy by means of the notion of temperament, already a structuring principle before the eighteenth century. But even though the discourse of sexual difference was medical, political and philosophical all along, it nonetheless seems that the category of sex underwent substantial change in the period identified by Laqueur. It is, however, not the absence of an ontological criterion of difference – the absence of a claim to nature or biology – that distinguishes the one-sex model from the two-sex model. If there was not a transition from gender, or a sociologically determined hierarchy, to a hierarchy based on natural, biological or medical sex difference – three terms that Laqueur seems to employ analogously – then what exactly constitutes this shift?

Londa Schiebinger, Susanne Lettow and Carole Pateman's work also accounts for a conceptual shift, thus seemingly endorsing Laqueur's paradigm. However, since Laqueur's claim in fact consists of a number of connected arguments – with several factors of change that on his account correlate, each in their own right exemplifying the transition from a one sex to a two-sex model – it is not surprising that there would be an overlap. All four authors observe a tendency towards a more dichotomised conception of sexual difference and the emerging discourse of sexual complementarity in the medical, political and philosophical writings of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The idea that men and women are complementary opposites, justifying the modern sexual division of labour, constitutes a new and differently organised social order. This new political order is grounded not in the divine right of kings but in nature and natural law as defined by taxonomists, anatomists, and natural philosophers.[290] This conception of nature moreover is, strictly speaking, no longer cosmological.

The problem with Laqueur's analysis, as we will see, is not his assertion of a significant change in meaning of the concept of sex, but that he seems unable to recognise any medical concept of sexual difference prior to this period.[291] This leads him to overemphasise the sociological dimension of sexual difference – sex as gender

[290] Schiebinger, *Nature's Body*, xi.
[291] Dorlin, *La matrice da la race*, 21-22.

– in the classical age. Dorlin's analysis, by contrast, demonstrates how accommodating "nature" has been, throughout the ages, to confirming social differences.[292] At the same time, '[t]he current idea of nature and that of former times are not exactly the same.'[293] In this sense, Laqueur's analysis, which points to several interlocking conceptual changes, seems accurate. Not only was there a shift in understanding sex difference, the concepts of nature and medicine also changed significantly at the same time. As French sociologist Colette Guillaumin, among others, points out, the modern idea of nature took form in approximately the eighteenth century, developing concurrently with the natural sciences;[294] that is, following Laqueur, at the same time as the invention of the modern conception of sex.

What has been modified in the modern configuration of the "natural" is, Guillaumin points out, the idea of a determinism internal to the thing itself[295] – the idea of a dynamic nature as addressed by Schelling and Hegel. The "old" or Aristotelian idea of nature, by contrast, is more or less identical with the idea of a "function," meaning that the nature of a thing is the place in actual fact that a thing has in the world.[296] But as Guillaumin says, '[t]he finalistic aim of the first naturalism became in our naturalism a proclamation of a scientific aspect.'[297] Human beings are now considered to be physiologically organised for a certain place in social relationships that they belong to as part of a group. This relates back to Lettow's claim that individuals are increasingly subjugated to larger categories, that they are perceived as belonging to a species, a sex or a race in a biological way.[298] According to Lettow, in this new conceptualisation of nature, 'the individual is always already overpowered by the exigencies of the species and of *Nature*.'[299]

Individuals, accordingly, are no longer in a certain social place as the result of divine decision or cosmological mechanisms that are in some sense exterior to them, but as the result of an internal organization that expresses in each individual the essence of

[292] Colette Guillaumin, *Racism, Sexism, Power and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1994), 224.
[293] Ibid., 215.
[294] Ibid., 215-16.
[295] Ibid., 216.
[296] Ibid., 215-16.
[297] Ibid., 216.
[298] Lettow, "Generation, Genealogy, and Time," 24, 37.
[299] Ibid., 37.

the group in its totality.[300] Central to the modern conception of nature is, as Guillaumin, Lettow and also Stone point out, the capacity to reproduce, self-generate and organise, as well as the emphasis on species. The temporalization of nature (*Naturphilosophie*) is based on these categories. Processes of procreation and generation that take into account temporal change and the emergence of something new are foregrounded in an attempt to move away from preformationism.[301] A new conception of nature takes shape. With the critique of a mechanistic conception of nature in the course of the eighteenth century, the idea of "a new" (Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis) or "living" nature, a realm where mechanic laws do not sufficiently apply, comes into view.[302]

While Dorlin is right to emphasise that the discourse of sexual difference was always also medical, and that medical distinctions had political consequences, medicine is constituted as a science only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is this scientised nature that speaks loudly as philosophers attempt to set social conventions on a natural basis.[303] As Schiebinger says, 'Enlightenment enthusiasm for nature and its laws privileged the voice of medical doctors as those best able to understand human nature.'[304] Science and medicine acted as mediators of ideas of nature,[305] and it is in this sense that both nature and medicine figured differently in the new European democracies. Modern industrial society with its gendered division of labour, with plantation slavery, and the proletarianization of peasants developed a natural scientific framework that would uncover the differences imagined as natural on the body, providing the necessary proof that human nature is not uniform but differs according to age, race and sex.[306] Thus, while '[f]rom Aristotle through Darwin to Freud and beyond, nature has been infused with sexuality and gender,'[307] nature arguably functions differently within a cosmological as compared to a biocentric frame.

[300] Guillaumin, *Racism, Sexism, Power and Ideology*, 216.
[301] Lettow, "Introduction, Reproduction, Race and Gender," 2.
[302] Ibid.
[303] Schiebinger, *Nature's Body*, 9.
[304] Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex*, 222.
[305] Ludmilla Jordanova, *Nature Displayed: Gender, Science and Medicine 1760–1820* (London: Longman, 1999), 42.
[306] Schiebinger, *Nature's Body*, 9; Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex*, 216.
[307] Schiebinger, *Nature's Body*, 1.

However, even though conceptions of nature, biology and medicine have changed, there is a continuity, as Dorlin points out, in understanding women's bodies as unhealthy and pathological. The task is thus to think both the transformation in meaning of the concepts of sex and gender based on and alongside those of species, ancestry, generation and race, while also highlighting what remains contingent in their conceptualisation throughout. In other words, even if a break in thought happens, it must still be possible to acknowledge certain continuities in how sex difference has played out and come to matter historically. While the break, following Bachelard, marks a real rupture, that which is continuous or stable in the construction of sex difference will be the most difficult to deconstruct.

The one-sex body on trial

In the following, I will further investigate the claims set out in the section above. This will require a return to Laqueur. While Laqueur's paradigm has been critiqued in a number of disciplines, most importantly Classics Studies, it remains of appeal especially to scholars in disciplines, among them philosophy, that do not primarily focus on conducting their own historical research and thus rely on other scholars for this work. As Helen King observes,

> [t]hose coming to *Making Sex* from the many disciplines of the arts and humanities are unaware not only of the work on the history of medicine and of the body that has happened subsequent to its publication, but also of the sources Laqueur omits, and the lack of care with which he uses those sources which he does bring into play.[308]

According to King, Laqueur's model reduces complexity to simplicity:[309] the one-sex model downplays 'the historical and geographical variety of pre-modern Europe into a single image, imposing on it a misleading uniformity.'[310] There is, she writes, no period in which the one-sex model dominated.

[308] Helen King, *The One-Sex Body on Trial: The Classical and Early Modern Evidence* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2013), x-xi.
[309] Ibid., xi.
[310] Ibid., 31.

Helen King's work is of interest because she discusses conceptualisations of sexual difference in the classical world in the context of the history of midwifery and gynaecology. This is important because these are the sites of pre-eighteenth century medical concepts of sexual difference. While Laqueur dismisses debates about midwifery as unimportant,[311] for King, just as for Dorlin, these medical discourses are crucial to understanding the extent of the difference between men and women as conceived throughout history. While Laqueur focuses on the work of Galen, as prime example of the one-sex model of sexual difference, King suggests a close reading of the Hippocratic corpus, specifically the treatises on *Diseases of Women*, the Greek title being *Gynaikeia*, from the fourth century BC. Here it is suggested that the bodies of men and women ought to be treated in different ways when ill. According to Hippocrates, 'the healing of women differs greatly from that of men.'[312] King shows that 'in the *Gyneikeia* treatises, the Hippocratic woman cannot be understood by reference to the organs of the male body,'[313] and thus puts into question the validity of Laqueur's one-sex model.

Though not yet institutionalised, gynaecology already plays a central role for conceptualizations of sexual difference in Ancient Greece. As will also be shown in the following chapters, it is helpful to trace changes in understandings of sexual difference alongside changes in the meaning and practice of gynaecology. This is because the necessity of gynaecology, as King also emphasises, is built on the belief that the difference between men and women is so great that women require their own medical field.[314] King proposes that the origin of gynaecology should not be understood only in a narrowly institutional sense, [315] arguing against scholars such as Ornella Moscucci, whose book *Science of Woman: Gynaecology and Gender in England, 1800-1929* has shown that the institutionalisation of gynaecology through specialist hospital departments did not occur until the second half of the nineteenth century alongside the development of the scientific study of humankind, that is, of anthropology.[316] In King's alternative timeline, beginning with the Hippocratic

[311] Ibid., 23.
[312] Ibid., 48.
[313] Ibid.
[314] See Helen King, *Midwifery, Obstetrics and the Rise of Gynaecology: The Uses of a Sixteenth-Century Compendium* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007).
[315] Ibid., 9.
[316] Ornella Moscucci, *Science of Woman: Gynaecology and Gender in England, 1800–1929*

corpus, there is an important resurgence of Hippocrates' work in the sixteenth century.[317] Even though there were no gynaecologists, there was already a medical approach focused on female difference.[318]

If not understood as a given historic fact, Laqueur's distinction between two different models of understanding sexual difference can still, as was also indicated above, be helpful as an analytic tool. As King remarks, '[i]f we were to take them as ideal types, the two stages of Laqueur's model would have some value; but this is not how they have been read.'[319] The problem is that by attaching each stage to a specific period, other real changes in those periods are omitted.[320] While the idea of a one-sex model was explored throughout history, and while, in the mid-nineteenth century, the sexes were in general seen as having a greater difference from each other than a century earlier, the Hippocratic corpus and its resurgence in the sixteenth century show that a two-sex model existed at least since the classical period and often alongside one-sex ideas.[321]

There is value in Laqueur's work, which has opened up transdisciplinary conversations and, moreover, has normalised across disciplines two positions central to feminist theory, namely that science constructs rather than discovers and that claims about sex will inevitably contain claims about gender.[322] However, while Laqueur's work offers important critical conceptual tools, as a historical analysis it has been proven incorrect. His paradigm should therefore not be employed uncritically as a historical frame for other disciplines, for instance as a historical proof and source of authority for philosophical claims and conceptual history. Thus, while Alison Stone's work on Schelling, Hegel and *Naturphilosophie* demonstrates the importance of these thinkers for modern and contemporary understandings of sexual difference, illustrating that their claims on gender outlived these authors, she relies uncritically on Laqueur to validate her claims. According to Stone, as was outlined above, by

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 2.
[317] A diagram showing King's alternative timeline is attached in the appendix.
[318] According to Hippocrates, 'women were particularly difficult to treat, and therefore needed a separate branch of medicine.' Ibid., 11.
[319] King, *The One-Sex Body on Trial*, xi.
[320] Ibid.
[321] King, *Midwifery, Obstetrics and the Rise of Gynaecology*, 193.
[322] King, *The One-Sex Body on Trial*, 7.

interpreting sexual difference as a polar opposition, Schelling and Hegel re-conceived it in a way peculiarly appropriate to their time, that is, to quote Stone,

> a time when, as Thomas Laqueur has shown, the "one-sex" model of sexual difference that had prevailed in the West ever since the classical period was becoming supplanted by a new "two-sex" model, a biological model on which the sexes were radically and completely different.[323]

It was already shown, with reference to Elsa Dorlin, that though biology as a distinct academic discipline did not emerge until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, medical discourse and theories of nature were nonetheless central in understanding sexual difference prior to this. Laqueur's claim that there was a shift from a sociological to an ontological conceptualisation of sex difference thus does not hold. Sexual difference before the eighteenth century was not, as Laqueur claims, entirely sociological and cultural, that is, based on social rank and cultural roles only rather than being an organic bodily expression. While certain biological terms, such as that of organism, were not in use, the body was nonetheless understood in natural and medical terms. A medical discourse of nature as ontological ground for social difference was already a structuring principle for Hippocrates and a broader Hippocratic tradition, and thus existed before the eighteenth century. If Laqueur's model cannot be proven historically, then it is not helpful to frame the *Naturphilosophen* as representing the paradigm change from a one-sex to a two-sex model. Rather, it seems, their work illustrates King's point, namely that both models circulated and were at play at the same time throughout history. Yet, as King and scholars throughout the history of medicine highlight, a change or conceptual shift, which requires conceptualisation, did indeed take place in the eighteenth century. If not Laqueur's one-sex/two-sex model, then what kind of paradigm change manifested in the eighteenth century? And how is this expressed by the *Naturphilosophen*?

What can be witnessed in the work of the *Naturphilosophen* is, as Lettow argues, a first introduction and development of a biopolitical vocabulary from within philosophy. This takes place alongside the institutionalisation of anthropology,

[323] Stone, *Nature, Ethics and Gender in German Romanticism and Idealism*, 186.

comparative anatomy and gynaecology as distinct academic disciplines. These new academic endeavours, as they are in part inspired by or come out of philosophical discourses, lead to the invention of a new vocabulary and to a rethinking of old terms. One of these is the concept of nature, which is now conceived as the capacity to reproduce, self-generate and organise. At the same time, this period marks, as was argued above, the co-emergence of the concepts of race, heredity, species, sex and generation. The subordination of the individual to a group or species and the stabilization of sexual difference, as well as race, as a general and universal organizing principle manifests in the work of the *Naturphilosophen*.

Furthermore, even though a two-sex model of sexual difference can be documented throughout history, the emerging discourse of sexual complementarity in the medical, political, and philosophical writings of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is nonetheless distinct in many regards. Both Hegel and Schelling, as was argued earlier, advocate the idea that men and women are not physical and moral equals but complementary opposites, a theory that is to justify the modern sexual division of labour and, more broadly, the new, post-revolutionary social order of European industrial societies. We can therefore still conclude, without reference to *Making Sex* as a historical source, that the *Naturphilosophen* constructed and stabilised a specifically modern conception of sexual difference and nature. This is because in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century sexual difference cannot be understood firstly without reference to the political context of the French Revolution, as well as the ongoing industrialisation of Europe and Europe's imperial expansions, and, secondly, without reference to a broader complex of terms that were developed at the same time and in an interdisciplinary context that encompassed philosophy, medicine, anthropology, gynaecology and comparative anatomy among others.

Gynaecology: Between philosophy and modern medicine – Hegel, Carus and the first German textbook on gynaecology

Since a complementary conception of sexual difference was still relatively new and unstable in the period between 1750 and 1830, I would like to argue, in line with Susanne Lettow, that philosophical discourse had an important influence in shaping

the emerging field of the life sciences.[324] This becomes apparent, for example, in the work of the physician-philosopher Carl Gustav Carus (1789-1869), whose work offers insights into how concepts travel and cross disciplinary boundaries. Carus, influenced by Goethe, Schelling, and Hegel, translates the philosophical ideas of *Naturphilosophie* into a medical and anthropological discourse. This is how the definition of sexual difference as organising principle, forged among others by Schelling and Hegel, came to be inscribed in the new biology of the nineteenth century. Even though the project of *Naturphilosophie* was ultimately abandoned by philosophers of science and medical practitioners, something of *Naturphilosophie* remained.[325]

Carus, a romanticist and *Naturphilosoph*, was the author of the first systematic presentation of gynaecology in Germany.[326] Gynaecology, Carus writes, is the doctrine of the peculiarity of the female body, its structure, its life, its diseases, and its proper dietary and medical treatment.[327] Since for Carus scientific research and the search for philosophical meaning merge into an immediate unity,[328] the terms operative in *Naturphilosophie*, such as the idea of an organic whole, sexual difference and complementarity, purposiveness, and a systematic understanding of life, find their way into Carus' medical writings.

Carus opens his textbook on gynaecology with a rhetorical question: 'and how finally can all these strange processes of female life be understood without obtaining a clear idea of the nature and character of femininity in general?'[329] Preceding Freud's theory of femininity, Carus already attempts to construct a general science of woman,

[324] Lettow, "Introduction, Reproduction, Race and Gender," 2, 7.
[325] Peter Hanns Reill, 'The Scientific Construction of Gender and Generation in the German Late Enlightenment and in German Romantic *Naturphilosophie*," in *Reproduction, Race, and Gender in Philosophy and the Early Life Sciences*, ed. Susanne Lettow (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 81.
[326] Claudia Honegger, *Die Ordnung der Geschlechter: Die Wissenschaften vom Menschen und das Weib, 1750-1850* (Franfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1991), 203.
[327] Carl Gustav Carus, *Lehrbuch der Gynäkologie oder Systematische Darstellung der Lehre von Erkenntniß und Behandlung eigenthümlicher gesunder und krankhafter Zustände, wohl der nicht schwangern, schwangern und gebärenden Frauen, als der Wöchnerinnen und neugeborenen Kinder zur Grundlage akademischer Vorlesungen und zum Gebrache für praktische Aerzte, Wundärzte und Geburtshelfer* (Leipzig: Ernst Fleischer, Wien: Carl Gerold, 1838), 3.
[328] Käte Nadler, "G.W.F. Hegel und C.G. Carus: Zum Verhälntnis Idealistischer und Romantischer Naturphilosophie," *Sudhoffs Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften* 31, no. 3 (August 1938): 173.
[329] Carus, *Lehrbuch der Gynäkologie*, 4 (own translxation).

emphasizing throughout his work that only an integrated science, one that takes all aspects of a woman's life into account, can further scientific – by which Carus always means medical and philosophical – research. The purpose of his book, Carus argues, is to compile an overview of all the objects related to the female body as far as they touch the medical sphere and to unify such a study in the name of gynaecology.[330] Not unlike Schelling and Hegel, Carus' concern is with a total philosophy, one that opens up and grasps reality and life as such.[331] As a study of the whole of woman, gynaecology was to fuse the physical, the psychological and the moral aspects of femininity.[332] The differentiation of an independent science of women began in Germany with the handbooks on women's diseases written by the obstetricians Adam Elias von Siebold and J.C.G. Jörg, who was Carus' teacher, and in 1820 Carus gave this science the name of gynaecology.[333] It was by coining a new "subject area" of scientific research that Carus made a long-lasting impact.

If one was to observe the general idea of sexual difference in all its particular moments, then, according to Carus, one will consistently recognise that there is a qualitatively different organization in men compared to women.[334] Carus comments both on the physical features of the female body, remarking that women are in general smaller than men due to their limited individual development,[335] and their mental capacities, which he thinks correlate. Because of their smaller body size, the head, trunk, and limbs differ from the male, who, according to Caurs, grows to greater maturity.[336] Even women's organs are, Carus claims, qualitatively different.[337] Their limited bodily development means that women have a childish bodily form,[338] which seems to explain their different motor functions and nervous life. Because sensory perception in women is subtler than in the male body, Carus argues that female life is characterised by 'higher' nervous activity.[339] This iterability, however, does not translate into a greater sharpness or accuracy of perception, which has not developed

[330] Ibid., 3.
[331] Nadler, "G.W.F. Hegel und C.G. Carus," 175.
[332] Moscucci, *Science of Woman*, 103.
[333] Honegger, *Die Ordnung der Geschlechter*, 207-08.
[334] Carus, *Lehrbuch der Gynäkologie*, 14.
[335] Ibid.
[336] Ibid.
[337] Ibid.
[338] Ibid.
[339] Ibid., 43.

to the same extent as in the male.[340] Both these observations – comparative anatomy of the male and female and anthropological observations of their social roles and capacities – are crucial, according to Carus, for understanding and treating women's diseases.

Though he primarily compiles and records sex difference, and in this way provides an empirical foundation to Hegel's and Schelling's systems, Carus yet argues that no one sex can be deemed higher than the other. Emphasising throughout his book the inferiority of the female body and mind – Carus states early on that the real field of science and speculation, namely the sharpness of judgement and the depth of male reason, are inaccessible to the female soul[341] – he argues at the same time that each has developed purpose in its own realm.[342] Following Schelling and Hegel, Carus adopts the theory of sexual complementarity according to which men and women are not physical and moral equals but complementary opposites. This exemplifies how the one-sex and two-sex models co-exist. Each sex, following Carus, achieves a high degree of perfection in a specific sphere of life, meaning that only both sexes together constitute the true human being.[343] This contradiction also underlines Hegel's and Schelling's work. Although the genus character is common to them both, women are, in their purposive lives, inferior. Like Hegel, Carus aligns women with plant life[344] – woman is the plant principle, whereas in man a higher principle, the spiritual or animal, prevails.[345] Carus aligns woman with matter, arguing that in reproduction women are merely receptive, shaping the physical, whereas men contribute the spiritual dimension of life.[346] The same claim can also be found in Hegel.[347] This

[340] Ibid.
[341] Carus, in Honegger, *Die Ordnung der Geschlechter*, 208-09.
[342] Carus, *Lehrbuch der Gynäkologie*, 14.
[343] Ibid.
[344] 'The difference between man and woman is the difference between animal and plant; the animal is closer in character to man, the plan to woman, for the latter is a more peaceful [process of] unfolding whose principle is the more indeterminate unity of feeling [*Empfindung*]. When women are in charge of government, the state is in danger, for their actions are based not on the demand of universality but on the contingent inclination and opinion.' Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Allen W. Wood, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), §166, 207.
[345] Carus, *Lehrbuch der Gynäkologie*, 41.
[346] Ibid., 41.
[347] '*Procreation* must not be reduced to the ovary and the male semen, as if the new product were merely a composition of the forms or parts of both sides; the truth is that the female contains the material element, but the male contains the subjectivity.' Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, §368, 413.

relation, Carus and Hegel argue, translates into all spheres of life. Species life is purposive, but purposiveness is at all levels gendered.

There are many subtle and important differences between Carus, Schelling and Hegel, which cannot be taken into account at this point. Rather than a complete exegesis of German *Naturphilosophie,* this project aims to point to a specific site where the works of Hegel and Schelling made an influence outside of the immediate realm of philosophy, namely on the founding of the field of gynaecology in early nineteenth century Germany. Philosophy, as was already argued with reference to Kant, played a role in establishing a conceptual foundation for modern anthropology and for the medical discourses of gynaecology and comparative anatomy. However, these new university disciplines influenced philosophy in turn. The nature of these trans-disciplinary conversations was not always straightforward or explicit. Emphasis on the history of gynaecology for the development of the philosophical concepts of sex and gender will remain a guiding thread throughout the following chapters. This is because the emergence of scientific medicine – with obstetrics and gynaecology at the forefront of the professionalisation of modern medicine – arguably coincides with the redefinition of the categories of sex and gender. What becomes evident is that the discourse of sexual difference was at the same time medical, determined by conceptualisations of nature, philosophical and political.

Thus, by the late eighteenth century, for the first time in Europe "woman" comes to be understood as a universal category in a double sense. With emphasis on concepts of species and generation, many natural historians and practicing physicians postulate a universal reproductive woman. This conception is also politically motivated. In modern medicine, childbirth and women's medicine come to be proving grounds for a general shift in cosmology in eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe. Reproductive politics animate both government legislation and medical inquiry. With the need to produce greater populations in both Europe and the colonies, reproductive policies become a central government concern.[348] "Woman," moreover, is not only a medical universal, but also comes to be a universal category in the eyes of European law, which defines all women, regardless of age, class, or race, as disenfranchised. For

[348] Jordanova, *Nature Displayed*, 6-7.

men, by contrast, representation in government is determined by distinctions in physical characteristics, such as physical strength, skin colour, or intelligence.[349]

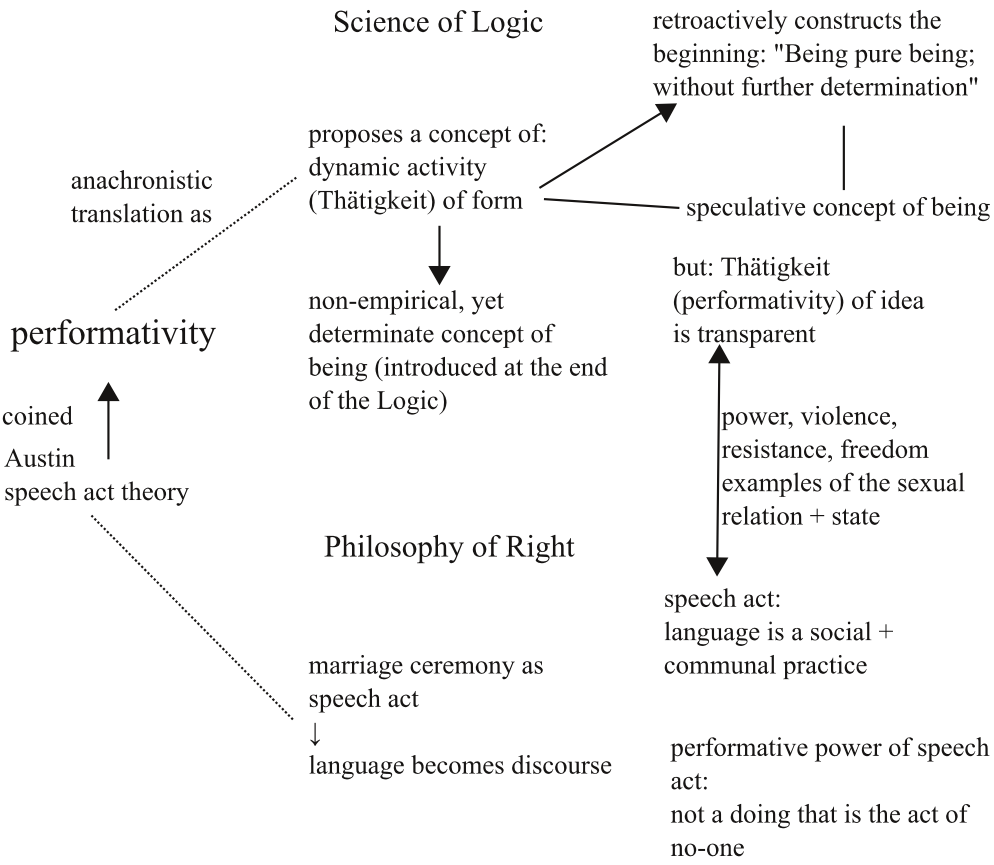
It was argued in the previous chapter that speculative reason in its non-empirical mode already encounters political categories and that these are essential to an explanation of its nature. This chapter further elaborates this claim. By looking at Hegel's contribution to *Naturphilosophie*, the example of the sexual relation, as it appears in the 'Chemism' chapter of the *Logic* to illustrate conceptual universality and speculative reason, is further contextualised. This chapter also looks at the influence of *Naturphilosophie's* discourse more broadly on the emerging discipline of gynaecology, which, as was argued, incorporates *Naturphilosophie's* complementary theory of sexual difference. It thus becomes evident that sexual difference is in the process of being constructed as a scientific concept at the time Hegel is writing. The discourse of the sexual relation, as elaborated in *Naturphilosophie* and elsewhere, comes to matter not just philosophically but also culturally and medically.

As the example of Carus illustrates, there is a close connection between scientific, political and philosophical discourse in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, the nature of these conversations is not always straightforward or explicit. Moreover, even the discourse internal to philosophy is contradictory. The *Logic*, for instance, slightly displaces the legacy of *Naturphilosophie*. This is because the sexual relation as introduced in the 'Chemism' chapter of the *Logic* is not immediately linked to the "genus-process" (*Gattungsprozess*) and the temporalization of nature, even though this process will be addressed in the *Logic*, in the chapter on "Life" that will follow. For this reason, the *Logic*'s contribution to social and political thought, including to an understanding of the sexual relation, should still be analysed separately. An attempt to do so, will continue in the following chapter.

[349] Ibid.

Chapter four

A performative concept? Speculation in Hegel's *Science of Logic*



Opening

This chapter continues the close reading of the final chapters in Hegel's *Science of Logic* with an analysis of speculative reason in the sections on 'Objectivity' and 'The Idea'. While chapter two looked at the appearance of social and political categories and examples in these sections and argued that they are central to defining speculative reason, an attempt was made in chapter three to ground one of Hegel's examples, that of the sexual relation, historically. The work of the previous chapters; to demonstrate the political dimension of Hegel's logical categories will be continued here. However, in this chapter, the emphasis will slightly shift in order to uncover a concept of performativity in Hegel's *Logic*. It will be argued that Hegel ends his *Logic* by proposing an ontological concept of speculation. While the *Logic* opens with an empty and undetermined concept of being, '(b)eing pure being – without further determination'[350], Hegel introduces a new, speculative concept of being in the final chapter. This is an attempt to determine being conceptually – as dynamic activity (*Thätigkeit*) of form – without determining it empirically.

The concept of 'performativity' understood today as a theory of speech act (J. L. Austin, John Searle, Jacques Derrida), of gender- (Judith Butler) and queer (Eve Kosofsky Sedgewick) performativity and of visual and performance art (Peggy Phelan), was not available to Hegel. However, even today 'the German language has no one term to cover all the possibilities and connotations of the English word ["performativity"]'.[351] Thus, while the concept of performativity has, over the past fifteen years, been increasingly used as a key concept of critical theory,[352] its translation into other languages is not straightforward. Despite these difficulties, I argue here that this concept best describes the definition of being as activity of form proposed at the end of the *Science of Logic*. While performativity does not appear in Hegel as such, I argue that one can read the *Logic* well with this term as it opens up new ways of reading and using this text (in translation). I therefore introduce this anachronistic term to the reading of Hegel because, first of all the definition of

[350] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. di Giovanni, 59
[351] Carolin Duttlinger, Lucia Ruprecht, 'Introduction' in Carolin Duttlinger, Lucia Ruprecht, Andrew Webber (eds.), *Performance and Performativity in German Cultural Studies* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2013), 10.
[352] Ibid., 9.

conceptual form in the *Logic* happens performatively, and second because, even if not named as such, Hegel defines a concept of the performative at the end of the *Science of Logic*.

While there are difficulties in introducing a new concept into Hegel, it will be shown that this term is not superimposed and that it is already internal to the text. What performativity names today is already addressed by Hegel, who can be read alongside Austin, Derrida and Butler. Hegel is in conversation with these thinkers as he talks about speech acts (*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*), language (*Phenomenology*, *Science of Logic*) and a dynamic and temporal concept of being (*Science of Logic*). A reading of Hegel and Butler is particularly compelling since both propose an ontological notion of performativity which will be further explored in chapter six. In order to enable this new reading of Hegel and the encounter of Hegel with Butler on the question of (social) ontology, I purposefully "mistranslate" Hegel's *Thätigkeit* (activity), which appears in the concluding chapters of the *Logic*, and introduce the concept of performativity instead.

In order to approach the question of performativity in Hegel, this chapter begins not with the *Logic* but with an analysis of the marriage ceremony and its description as speech act in the *Philosophy of Right*. This will allow us to introduce the origin of the concept of performativity in speech act theory. It will also allow us to link chapters two, three and four together by looking once more at Hegel's thought in context, in particular through the elaboration of the sexual relation, as a key moment in the definition of civil society. The analysis of the role and function of the marriage ceremony in the *Philosophy of Right*, which will bring the political stakes of performativity to the fore, will be followed by a close reading of the final sections of the *Logic* where a philosophical definition of this same concept is developed.

The marriage ceremony – pronouncing *Sittlichkeit* in the *Philosophy of Right*

The exemplary function of the state and the sexual relation first introduced in the *Science of Logic* plays a central role in the *Philosophy of Right*. Here, these two examples that are only mentioned in passing in the *Logic* are discussed in detail in the

chapters on the 'The Family' and the 'The State'.[353] These two chapters outline the transformation of kinship relations happening at the time. The *Philosophy of Right* theorises the formation of the modern nuclear family, which dissolves the vast bonds of the family as clan. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the binary and complementary understanding of sexual difference and of the couple unit, on which the modern understanding of the family relies, are formulated by Hegel with reference to "reproduction."[354] According to Hegel, civil society depends on the nuclear family as a private sphere, separated from both the economic sphere and the state.[355] But how is the formation of the family, understood in terms of the couple and its offspring, legitimised by state and civil society? It is here that the speech act becomes central.

The *Philosophy of Right* resumes a discussion first introduced in the 'Mechanism' chapter of the *Logic*, where Hegel intends first to introduce a notion of the law and thereafter critiques it by developing a performative universal concept, that is a lawfulness that is not superimposed on the particular from above but is internal to it. A similar way of thinking can be observed in the *Logic*, suggesting that these two works have a parallel structure; first there is a formal law (*Logic*) or contract (*Philosophy of Right*), which is then suspended by a notion of the performative, either through the performativity of conceptual form (*Logic*) or through a performative utterance or speech act (*Philosophy of Right*).

The *Philosophy of Right* inaugurates this distinction between two different forms of lawfulness within the realm of the political, as the opposition of contract and law on the one and an idea of *Sittlichkeit* (ethical life) on the other hand. According to Hegel, marriage, as the adequate social expression of the sexual relation, and the state mark a departure from law understood as contract. Both cannot be adequately accounted for by social contract theory. While the critique of law and contract in the *Philosophy of Right* requires, as will be shown, a notion of the performative, Hegel does not straightforwardly oppose the two. The form of the contract is ambiguous in that it is

[353] See Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Allen W. Wood, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Section three 'The State', 275, section one 'The Family', 199, especially the sub-section on the 'Marriage', 200.
[354] Lettow, "Population, Race and Gender: On the Genealogy of the Modern Politics of Reproduction," 8.
[355] Ibid., 9-10.

already a performative force, though it is still lacking a certain performative dimension, as Hegel seems to suggest. The state and the marriage ceremony exemplify this point as they both rely on the standpoint of contract in order to transcend it.

Following Hegel, the state is of a different and higher dimension than that regulated by contract, which is the sphere of private property. This sphere, however, is key to its functioning. Contract, according to Hegel, takes place once an agreement is uttered.[356] The contract is a legal promise, namely the promise of the future fulfilment of its conditions. While the fulfilment of an agreement is, in Hegel's words, its performance,[357] the crucial moment in the exchange of property has already taken place beforehand. The real moment of exchange is the agreement and not its performance, which follows merely mechanically. Thus, while both performance and contract have a temporal dimension, contract presupposes the individual and her property. 'From the standpoint of contract, two individuals who contract together recognise each other as property owners and mutually will that they should use each other's property.'[358] This assumption and the anticipated outcome of the contractual activity is, following Hegel, ultimately limiting: 'The owner is related externally to his property and so, as it were, stands outside the contract and is unchanged by it.'[359] The performance of the contract has no performative force. No party to the contract is transformed in its execution, which is, as predetermined consequence of the stipulation, a performance only in technical terms. This is what distinguishes the process (*Prozess*) of contract[360] from speculative or performative activity (*Thätigkeit*), two terms that according to Hegel correlate. Change is not to be thought as exchange but in terms of a doing that has an effect on the world and that is embodied: performance properly so called has an ontological effect. The marriage ceremony exemplifies this point.

Marriage is not the end of contract, but brings the performative power of contract, its own going beyond itself, into view. As Carole Pateman writes, the marriage contract

[356] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Grundlagen der Philosophie des Rechts* (Hamburg: Meiner, Verlag, 2015), §79; *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, §79.
[357] Ibid., §78.
[358] Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, 174.
[359] Ibid.
[360] Hegel, *Grundlagen der Philosophie des Rechts*/*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, §12.

'is precisely a contract to transcend the standpoint of contract.'[361] Marriage, according to Hegel, transforms the consciousness and standing of the man and woman in question.[362] The property-owning individual is no longer the primary point of reference. As husband and wife, they cease to be self-sufficient individuals and instead become members of a little association which is so closely unified that they are 'one person.'[363] Marriage is an 'ethical bond which unites them internally in their association and not externally as property owners.'[364] This transformation, however, is possible only if marriage is a public event. For Hegel in the *Philosophy of Right*, a duly authorised wedding ceremony is essential to marriage.[365] Public speech in particular is the medium of substantial change.[366] The ceremony enacts the formal pronouncement of the marriage as well as its "actuality" (*Wirklichkeit*).[367] Hegel then is the first philosopher to describe the marriage ceremony as speech act, and to link both to the idea of performativity.

The concept of performativity was formulated by the English philosopher J. L. Austin in a lecture series delivered at Harvard University in 1955. While the series of twelve lectures was not too popular, Austin's lecture notes, which were published in book form after his death under the title *How To Do Things With Words* (1962), proved influential.[368] The statement 'I do take you as my lawfully wedded husband/wife' is the first example used by Austin to distinguish the performative utterance from the constative (descriptive/statement of facts) utterance.[369] These sentences, according to Austin, do not 'describe' or 'report' an action and can also not be categorised as either

[361] Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, 174.
[362] Ibid.
[363] Ibid.
[364] Ibid.
[365] Hegel, *Grundlagen der Philosophie des Rechts*, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, §163, Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, 174.
[366] 'It is accordingly only after this ceremony has *first taken place*, as the completion of the *substantial* [aspect of marriage] by means of the *sign* – i.e. by means of language as the most spiritual existence [*Dasein*] of the spiritual (see §73) – that this bond has been ethically constituted. The sensuous moment which pertains to natural life [*Lebendigkeit*] is thereby put in its ethical context [*Verhältnis*] as an accidental consequence belonging to the external existence of the ethical bond […].' Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 204, §164.
[367] Hegel, *Grundlagen der Philosophie des Rechts*/*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, §164.
[368] James Loxley, *Performativity* (London, New York: Routledge: 2007), 6.
[369] J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 5.

'true' or 'false' statements.[370] In a performative statement "to say" is "to do." The utterance, in other words, is the doing.[371]

While Austin's use of the marriage ceremony as example for how speech act functions was criticised, his more general proposition, namely that speaking is a matter of operating within a normative framework, was taken up[372] and further developed by Derrida, Sedgewick, Felman and Butler among others. Austin explains that the success of a performative utterance is dependent on a number of circumstances. At the outset of his lectures, Austin provides a list of criteria for the smooth or "happy" functioning of a performative, the first one being that '[t]here must exist an accepted conventional procedure (…)'[373] to support the speech act. Only in this way can a speech act be effective. By elaborating the concept of the performative, Austin introduces the question of social norms and conventions into ordinary language philosophy. Yet, while convention is a key word for Austin, missing from his account is a more substantial and critical analysis of what is meant by that term.[374]

While both Butler and Sedgewick borrow from Austin to formulate their accounts of gender and queer performativity, they also trouble his account of the role of social and political norms and institutions by questioning whose speech and actions are recognised and supported by the state and society and can, therefore, be described as "happy".[375] This brings us back to the role of exemplarity on which the critique of Austin turns. Shoshana Felman points to a repeated tropism within speech act theory, a fascination with a particular class of examples, most importantly the marriage ceremony.[376] The repetition of the exemplarity of the marriage promise by Austin and his commentators suggests that marriage is exemplary for this type of speech act. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick writes, '[t]he marriage ceremony is, indeed, so central to the origins of "performativity" (given the strange, disavowed but unattenuated persistence of *the exemplary* in this work) that a more accurate name for *How to Do Things with*

[370] Ibid.
[371] Ibid., 6-7.
[372] Loxley, 37.
[373] Austin, 14-15
[374] Loxley, 51.
[375] On this question also see, Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).
[376] See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Queer Performativity: Henry James's *The Art of the Novel*," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 1, no.1 (1993), 2-3.

Words might have been *How to say (or write) "I do" about twenty million times without winding up any more married than you started out*.'[377]

In Hegel, too, the use of the marriage ceremony and of the functioning of the state as examples is not incidental to an elaboration of performative force. But what "takes place" in the usage of examples?[378] As was discussed in chapter two and as Alexander Gelley asks, '[i]s the example merely *one* – a singular, a fruit of circumstance – or *the One* – a paradigm, a paragon?'[379] Judith Butler suggests that '[t]he centrality of the marriage ceremony in J.L. Austin's examples of performativity suggests that the heterosexualization of the social bond is the paradigmatic form for those speech acts which bring about what they name.'[380] In the *Philosophy of Right*, the institution of marriage also fulfils a particular function. According to Hegel, the sexual division of labour, institutionalised in the marriage ceremony, constitutes a historically mediated appropriation of natural sexuality.[381] A difference, already inherent in the nature and biology of the sexes, is now realised in ethical or cultural form. This conscious realization, according to Hegel, allows for a reinterpretation of the 'natural.' While humans, according to Hegel, are at first subordinate to the natural species process (*Gattungsprozess*), that is, to biological generation and reproduction, and in this sense are unfree, a cultural and political reinterpretation of these relations introduces a dimension of freedom previously impossible.[382] The sexual relation, as it is embedded in the institution of marriage and the family, accordingly allows for the appropriation of what was thought to be merely "natural," and thus a deterministic relation, and instead implements a second nature as realm of freedom.

As Butler and Sedgwick point out, the self-identity of persons who identify as queer or are read by others as queer stands in contrast or rejection to the logic of a heterosexual second nature. Their attachment and association with state authority is not straightforward and they stand in a more ambiguous and complicated relation to

[377] Sedgwick, "Queer Performativity," 3.
[378] Irene E. Harvey, *Labyrinths of Exemplarity: At the Limits of Deconstruction* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), viii.
[379] Alexander Gelley, "Introduction," in *Unruly Examples: On the Rhetoric of Exemplarity*, ed. Alexander Gelley (Stanford, CA: Stanford California Press, 1995), 2.
[380] Judith Butler, "Critically Queer," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 1, no.1 (1993): 17.
[381] Eva Bockenheimer, *Hegels Familien- und Geschlechtertheorie* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2013), 63.
[382] Ibid.

the witness of others. The marriage example thus raises questions about the apparently natural way the first-person speaking, acting, and pointing subject gets constituted in marriage through a confident appeal to state authority, and through the calm interpellation of others present as witnesses.[383] Following Hegel, the speech act is possible only from within a particular institutional framework. The family – the heterosexualization of the social bond – is embedded in civil society and the state, which are to form an organic whole. As Butler points out, most performatives are forms of authoritative speech. They are statements which, in uttering, exercise a binding power in the form of legal sentences, baptisms, inaugurations, or declarations of ownership.[384] Performatives, such as the marriage ceremony, succeed not because an intention successfully governs the action of speech, but because that action echoes a prior action and because it accumulates the forces of authority through the repetition or citation of a prior, authoritative set of practices.[385] The marriage ceremony as speech act has a history and, in this instance, saying something is doing something because the right preconditions are in place. However, in Sedgwick's words, the presuppositions for a successful speech act – '[t]he emergence of the first person, of the singular, of the present, of the active, and of the indicative' – are 'all questions, rather than presumptions, for queer performativity.'[386]

Sedgwick further contemplates what it would mean to put the exemplarity of the marriage ceremony into question. If, as outlined in chapter two, the adoption of a particular case as example sets a process of thought in motion that determines the very formation of the concept or theory in question,[387] then, by placing different kinds of utterances in the position of the exemplary, are other versions of performativity possible?[388] Can the first person, singular, active, that is, the self-sufficient property-owning individual recognised by the state and presupposed at the outset of the marriage ceremony, be suspended? If the marriage ceremony operates as the sanction that performs the heterosexualization of the social bond, then it inaugurates not

[383] Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Introduction: Performativity and Performance," in *Performativity and Performance: Meeting: Papers*, eds. Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (New York: Routledge, 1993), 3-4.
[384] Butler, "Critically Queer," 17.
[385] Ibid., 19.
[386] Sedgwick, "Queer Performativity," 4.
[387] Lipps, "Instance, Example, Case, and the Relationship of the Legal Case to the Law," 17.
[388] See Sedgwick, "Queer Performativity," 3.

primarily a realm of freedom but rather is to be understood as one domain in which power acts as discourse.[389] The freedom from natural determinacy within the realm of civil society gained through marriage is in this sense limited. Can we really celebrate that the determinism of the sexual relation, previously presumed to be biological, is "only" cultural, and that the cultural is to offer a realm of freedom?[390]

Before further elaborating the political stakes of performativity, brought to light by speech act theory through the exemplary function of the marriage ceremony – which also constitutes a central moment in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* – this chapter will return to the *Science of Logic* and a close reading of its final chapters with the aim of uncovering a philosophical definition of performativity therein. This analysis will centre on the chapters 'Teleology', 'Life' and 'The Idea'. While the chapters on 'Objectivity' (this includes the section on 'Teleology') introduce the concept of the law, the final chapter ('The idea') proposes to understand the law as "performative." Emphasis is no longer on the ability of the concept as law to subsume the particular from above, but on its own activity or doing. Hegel proposes that the law itself is *Thätigkeit* (activity). As such, the concept has become idea: it is speculative. It will be proposed in the following that Hegel concludes the *Science of Logic* with the introduction of a concept of performativity as speculative law and ontological concept, that is, as definition of determinate being. While the concepts of teleology and life already complicate the notion of an external law and negotiate the relation between internal and external, they are yet, as Hegel demonstrate, insufficient.

Teleology: Thinking form as activity

The *Logic* defines purposiveness as that principle that transforms, though not without violence, all outer objective relations and their unity into an inner principle of object determination. As such, it is the concept of a self-reflexive totality. And yet, even

[389] Butler, "Critically Queer," 17.
[390] 'I remember the buoyant enthusiasm with which feminist scholars used to greet the finding that one or another brutal form of oppression was not biological but "only" cultural! I have often wondered what the basis was for our optimism about the malleability of culture by any one group or program.' Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 41.

though the principle of purposiveness 'may be regarded as the cunning of reason,'[391] it remains insufficient and is, in the *Logic*, superseded by the language of "life." This is because even though purposiveness is the inner determination of form itself, the question of externality remains. Purpose, according to Hegel, 'is the subjective concept as an essential striving and impulse to posit itself externally.'[392] Purposiveness accordingly demands that something be turned into a means, even if this means will eventually also become purpose. Only in this way can the distance between the internal and exterior, the subjective intentionality of the purpose and the objective exteriority of the world, be negotiated. Having, at the end of the 'Chemism' chapter, formulated a principle of inner determination, or form as the activity of form itself, 'Teleology' still has to negotiate the exteriority of the world. This is why the cunning of reason is immediately identified as an insufficient mode of determination. Everything becomes a question of how best to negotiate exteriority, that is, how to translate between conceptual interiority and its external existence. In-forming its world, conceptual form is still a constant moving back and forth between the two.

The concept as purpose, Hegel argues, 'is neither a force expressing itself, nor a substance or a cause manifesting itself in its accidents or effects.'[393] Rather, Hegel suggests, the teleological process is to be understood as translation.[394] What gets translated is the subjective concept, the internal law ascribed to the object, into objectivity as such, also referred to in this chapter as exteriority. Hegel plays with the double meaning of *Übersetzung/übersetzen* which signifies both to translate and to cross over or transition into. This translation or transition does not yet illustrate the identity of the subjective laws of knowledge with their object, a coincidence referred to as 'Idea,' but the possibility of translation demonstrates that such a passage is intelligible. Concepts describing a state of transition, like *Übersetzung/übersetzen*, *Übergang*, and so on, play an important role in the *Logic* where they are used, often instead of sublation, as mediating terms. In *The Post Card*, comparing Freud and Hegel on the question of speculation, Derrida suggests that it is here, in the trans- or the *Über*, that speculation finds its possibility and its interest.[395] Mediation is not

[391] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 663.
[392] Ibid., 657.
[393] Ibid.
[394] Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik: Zweiter Band*, 167; Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 664.
[395] Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago:

restricted to sublation, as the universal mechanism of the dialectic, but is dependent on its context. According to the authors of the 'To Translate' entry in the *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, the movement of translation can also be considered as a 'transplantation.' To translate, accordingly, is to transplant (*verpflanzen*) to a foreign soil the products of a language from one domain into another.[396] What is transplanted in the teleological process is the inner purpose, which becomes through translation outer. Since what is at stake in translation is a change of context, and thus an alteration, if ever so slightly, translation requires interpretation; more concretely, Hegel writes, 'a speculative interpretation'.[397]

Because it still determines its object from the outside, purposiveness necessitates translation. Any form of external determination, according to Hegel, requires, though to varying degrees, the use of violence and force against the object. If, however – and this is the speculative premise of the 'Teleology' chapter – the independence of the world is revealed as the concept's own negative projection, that is, as nothing but a 'reflective shine of externality,'[398] then a concept of activity (*Thätigkeit*) that does not require any unnecessary recourse to violence could be conceived. It would become possible, Hegel writes, to conceive of a 'truthful' or a 'transparent' transition.[399] A different economy of the 'trans-,' that of transparency, would, Hegel argues, manifest itself. In this scenario, there would only be one activity – form as transformed. Once the relationship under discussion is no longer between form and matter, but between form and form, the question of violence, power, resistance and freedom, though it does not lose its relevance or purchase, is reformulated. Hegel's definition of violence, according to which violence is exercised when the determination of a subject or an object is imposed on it from the outside, would no longer hold. How does an inner principle shape, first, the exterior world and, secondly, the inner form of form itself? At first, it seems as if the 'Teleology' chapter fails to answer this question. As a means-end relation, the purposive process is at first 'none other than the mechanical or

University of Chicago Press, 1987), 382.

[396] Clara Auvray-Assayas et al., "To Translate," in *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*, eds. Barbara Cassin et al., trans. Steven Rendall (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 1150.

[397] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), §204, 280.

[398] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 663-64.

[399] Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik: Zweiter Band*, 252-53; Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 752.

chemical one.'[400] Moreover, its content, the externally given manifoldness of the objective world, is the same as that of "mechanism" or "chemism."[401] Purposiveness, Hegel writes, is only the form of teleology, but not its content.[402]

What needs to be thought, according to Hegel, is a concept of inner purposiveness. While Hegel credits Kant with introducing this concept into philosophy, it is in Kant only considered as a form of reflective judgement but not as a characteristic of the object itself. Purposiveness thus resides outside of the object, yet the object somehow conforms to the purposive structure of cognition. What Kant cannot offer, then, is an explanation of how the harmonious relation between the structure of reflective judgement and its object comes about. This harmonious relation, as Hegel observes, can only be considered a happy coincidence, 'as though an intelligence had given them to us for the convenience of our faculty of cognition.'[403]

Hegel claims towards the end of the 'Teleology' chapter that externality, though a moment of purposiveness, is nothing that stands independently over and against it.[404] There is no need 'for the subjective purpose to exercise any violence to make the object into a means' because the externality of the object is only posited. Hegel's resolution of the question of violence is that externality as posited is 'immediately *subjected* (*unterworfen*) to purpose.'[405] There is no need of violence because teleology is no longer just form (law) but is equally content, which is thought not in terms of a specific, pre-given matter, but as activity (*Thätigkeit*) of form. Non-violent teleology, as Rocío Zambrana writes, follows the *power* of the concept.[406]

In the *Logic*, *Thätigkeit*, as activity of form, is at first thought as purely formal, as the external determination of the object by a general law. As purposiveness, form becomes conceptualised as absolute activity, that is, as self-determination of form. The prefix 'trans-' in transplantation, translation and transition, which refers to a state of motion, signifies the moment of mediation in formation. The question of violence, since

[400] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 662.
[401] Ibid., 653.
[402] Ibid., 667.
[403] Ibid., 656.
[404] Ibid., 667.
[405] Ibid. (own emphasis).
[406] Zambrana, "Logics of Power, Logics of Violence (According to Hegel)," 21 (own emphasis).

violence is equated with externality and defined as imposition of form from the outside, seems to lose its immediate relevance once form is no longer discussed as universal law and as subsumption under law, but rather as 'activity' of form or 'self-formation'. And yet, subjugation and power remain in effect, even though violence is suspended. The tension between self-determination or dynamic form on the one hand, which is supposedly transparent, and power and subjugation on the other hand, is an unresolved tension in the *Logic*.

Life-form as new speculative law

Logical life, that is, life in its purely conceptual form, is defined as inner purposiveness. Introducing the final sub-section of the *Logic*, 'Life' is the moment of the most mediated immediacy. Hegel uses this moment to reflect on the concept of "logic." In what sense can "life" be called a logical category? The paradoxical nature of the *Logic*, in its attempt to describe by purely conceptual means that which is the most concrete, becomes at once apparent.

Lawlike in its absolute generality/universality and as such 'objective,' Hegel argues that "life" is at the same time a subjective principle. As such, it is, according to Hegel, the only law or law-like principle that is not superimposed on its object. The distinction between subjective and objective, between the law and the subject of law, is however, still maintained throughout this chapter. The vocabulary of *Macht* (power), *Widerstand* (resistance) and *Freiheit* (freedom) therefore still applies. The living individual, although it embodies the principle of "life," is still opposed to an objective world 'that stands indifferent over against it.'[407] Only once inner purposiveness is considered at the level of the life process, by which Hegel means species reproduction and generation, is the individual no longer distinct from a world opposed to it. Only now, Hegel argues, does inner purposiveness become a concrete law.[408]

[407] Ibid., 678.
[408] Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik: Zweiter Band*, 186; Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 683.

In the chapter on 'Life,' as in the chapters on 'Objectivity,' the term 'transition' or 'transition into an other'[409] is employed to describe the movement from one conceptual form to a new, more clearly defined one. However, in the last section of the chapter on 'Life' the term 'sublation,' which occurs much less frequently in the *Logic* than that of 'transition,' is introduced as the key mediating term. The introduction of this term, as will be argued, announces a change in narrative. In the last pages of the chapter on 'Life,' the move from concept to idea occurs. By way of reflecting on the concepts of genus and species, it becomes possible, Hegel argues, to think 'the individuality of life itself, no longer *generated* out of its concept but out of the *actual idea*.'[410] Whereas in the case of the living individual the concept was only posited, here the individuality of life is generated (*erzeugt*), not only reflectively but determinately, as idea. For Hegel the idea is, contrary to Kant, no longer an unjustifiable term and speculative for that reason. Rather, a positive definition of speculation is introduced. By way of redefining the Kantian ideas of reason, and thus the concept of speculation, '[t]he subjective logic seeks to present a different law which is not posited but which has determinate existence.'[411] A new definition of *Allgemeinheit* as the universality/generality of the idea, and a new conceptual form, that of performativity, is being gained.

Inner purposiveness, when reflected upon by thinking life as genus/species, expresses the concept of universality as dynamic principle, not simply as law. The distinction between the law and the subject of law is blurred, for subsumption under law is for the first time understood to be the subjects own doing. According to Hegel, this universal 'is free power [*Macht*]; it is itself and takes its other within its embrace, but without *doing violence to it*.'[412] Like 'Objectivity,' which precedes it, 'The Idea' is a relational form. But whereas 'Objectivity' explains the concept as relational totality, 'The Idea' describes the relational form of the system, maintaining the Kantian definition of the idea as system of relations, as was explained in chapter one. The definition of the idea here does not change dramatically from Kant's: as Béatrice Longuenesse argues, 'Hegel recognizes Kant's merit for having shown that Ideas have no other content than

[409] Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik: Zweiter Band*, 182, 188; Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 686.
[410] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 687.
[411] Rose, *Hegel Contra Sociology*, 186.
[412] Ibid., 221.

the systematic unity [that] reason brings […],'[413] independent of experience. Moreover, Hegel agrees with Kant that the idea of reason is the concept of the nonconditional. However, Hegel argues that the nonconditional has to be thought in positive terms. Reason necessarily has to go beyond experience because experience in its conditioning is, according to Hegel, unfree, and as such should not be made the standard by means of which the truth is judged. According to Hegel, 'only that has conditions which essentially refers to an objectivity that it does not determine itself but which still stands over against it in the form of indifference and externality […].'[414] Moreover, something actually existing might not be "true," in the sense that it might not live up to or be in accordance with its concept. Hegel writes, for instance, that 'the state and the church cease to exist *in concreto* when the unity of their concept and their reality is dissolved.'[415] In these instances, the empirical objects under consideration do not 'have their concept concretely existing in them *in its own free form.*'[416] Objective validity therefore needs to be determined differently, not only by reference to empirical experience.

By referring to the unity of the concept and its reality, conceptual freedom is being gained. Yet, at the same time, precisely 'because of the freedom which the concept has attained in it, [the idea] also has the *most stubborn opposition* within it.'[417] Hegel argues that 'its repose consists in the assurance and the certainty with which it eternally generates that opposition and eternally overcomes it, and in it rejoins itself.'[418] While Hegel does not explain the source of this assurance and certainty, it can arguably only lie in its pure, logical nature. Since the conceptual law only is what it does (*Thätigkeit*), all opposition at the level of logic comes only from within itself. As idea, the concept is 'active principle'[419] and thus plays a determining role. The universal exists here not as law, but is, what I would like to call, performative. Performative because the law itself is defined as activity (of form). This will be further defined in the following.

[413] Longuenesse, *Hegel's Critique of Metaphysics*, 14.
[414] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 671.
[415] Ibid., 672.
[416] Ibid.
[417] Ibid., 674.
[418] Ibid.
[419] Ibid., 696.

The universal does not pre-exist its own doing and is nothing other than its "act" (*Thätigkeit*). This law, Hegel argues, is not imposed on the particular from above, but is internal to it. For this reason, the idea is the concept in its free shape. It still determines its object, but without thereby enforcing a universal form from the outside. Rather than being subsumed under it, the object performs the universal law and in so doing can't be distinguished from it. And yet, despite the freedom that is apparently gained, in the last chapter of the *Logic* Hegel still draws on the vocabulary of resistance, subjection and force in his definition of the idea as absolute method.

Thinking the concept as method: performativity as conceptual form

According to Hegel, to truly think the idea, '[w]hat is left to be considered here, therefore, is thus not a content as such, but the universal character of its form – that is, *method*.'[420] While what came before was already a consideration of form, since logic, according to Hegel, addresses the concept only in its "pure essence" without considering its empirical determinations, meaning that it considers it in its form, the *Logic* until now had not explicitly addressed itself as such, that is, as a discourse on conceptual form, which Hegel also names "method". In his discourse on absolute method, Hegel conceptualises a relation between concept and reality, which can only be called performative.

Method, Hegel writes, 'may appear at first to be just the *manner* in which cognition proceeds, and this is in fact its nature.'[421] Hegel ends his *Science of Logic* as did Kant his *Critique of Pure Reason*: with a *Methodenlehre*, a doctrine of method. Kant defines the transcendental doctrine of method as 'the determination of the formal conditions of a complete system of pure reason,'[422] a definition that the *Science of Logic* reinterprets in its own right. Despite this reference to Kant and the acknowledgement that it is Kant who recognises dialectics as necessary and internal to reason itself,[423] Hegel does not further orient this chapter by the first *Critique*. Only the demand to think pure reason as system, that is, to think the concept as idea, is taken on. The

[420] Ibid., 736.
[421] Ibid., 736.
[422] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A707/B735-36.
[423] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 242.

Kantian demarcation of the 'Doctrine of Method' into discipline, canon, architectonic and history,[424] however, becomes obsolete in the *Logic*. While it might be argued that the entire Hegelian project is a reflection on the historicity of reason and thus a re-elaboration of the final Kantian subdivision of the *Methodenlehre*, the function of the concluding chapter of the *Logic* is not primarily to develop an account of the history of conceptual thought. Rather than elaborating a concept of history as internal to reason, what is produced is a concept of the performative as a new definition of being.

Method, according to Hegel, is not just a question of cognition, but equally designates a concept of being. While as a mode of knowing the concept as idea allows, following Kant, for the systematic determination of relations, an equivalent definition of method as mode of being is developed in the *Logic*. For this reason, the introduction of a new term becomes necessary. It will be argued here that the concept as idea, as it relates to being, is performative. While Hegel himself does not employ the notion of the performative or of performativity in this last chapter, there are concepts with an analogous purpose and meaning. The concept of "activity" (*Thätigkeit*), for instance, fulfils a similar function, as well as the notion of "actuality" (*Wirklichkeit*) that is employed by Hegel throughout the *Logic* as well as the *Phenomenology*. In the *Phenomenology*, moreover, the concept of expression (*Ausdruck*/*ausdrücken*), a key term in the chapter on 'Force and the Understanding,' seems to designate a "performative" term.

While the verb 'to perform' is employed several times in the English translation of the *Logic*, no conception of performativity is developed at these points. As Martin Donougho argues, if we are to speak of a "performative" element in Hegel's text, 'it must be reconstructed, found between or behind the lines.'[425] It is thus not the exact word but the thought of performativity that is – tentatively – introduced at the end of the *Logic*. By announcing this new concept that seems to aptly summarise a whole range of Hegelian claims and terms into one, is the text being reduced, distorted, undone? There is arguably a danger in inserting a new term into the Hegelian system – of suggesting that a term is present but is not being named as such. Does the

[424] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A708/B736.
[425] Martin Donougho, "Hegelian Comedy," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 49, no.2 (2016): 199.

introduction of a new term mean that we move out of the Hegelian system? If so, how and in what way are we moving out? To answer this question, Hegel's concept of method demands further reflection.

Method, according to the *Logic*, is primarily a question of form, and more precisely of the form of the concept: 'If the content is again assumed as given to the method and of a nature of its own, then method, so understood, is just like the logical realm in general a merely *external* form.'[426] What is left to be considered in the last chapter 'is thus not a content as such, but the universal character of its [the concept's] form – that is, *method*.'[427] Conceptual universality has no content so to speak. What is defined as method 'here is only the movement of the *concept* itself,'[428] that is, nothing but the manner of its own proceeding. Method, Hegel writes, is to be thought as universal/general "activity" (*Thätigkeit*).[429] Thinking the concept as method, *Thätigkeit* (activity) is introduced as conceptual form. It is 'the universal, internal and external mode,' the manner of things and of cognition alike.[430] Defined as "*Thätigkeit*," conceptual form, Hegel argues, truly is 'the soul of all objectivity.'[431]

Instead of a table of categories (pure concepts) and of judgement which would, from the outside, establish the rules of generality/universality, and outline the form of an object in general and the forms of thought as they relate to all general objects, the emphasis is here instead on a general activity. This is the Hegelian rewriting of the universal law. According to Hegel, only when the concept is defined as the activity of form is the true meaning of conceptual universality being thought, for we can finally – and only at this point – draw the conclusion that 'the *concept is all*.'[432] Despite the discovery of a new universal law in the realm of logic, a tension manifests itself. This is because the language of resistance and force reappears in the final chapter of the *Logic*.

The language of 'Objectivity' seems to be in tension with the general/universal (*allgemein*) and absolute (*absolut*) nature of the method here defined. Nothing can

[426] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 736.
[427] Ibid.
[428] Ibid., 737.
[429] Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik: Zweiter Band*, 238; Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 737.
[430] Hegel, *Sscience of Logic*, 737.
[431] Ibid., 736.
[432] Ibid., 737.

'offer resistance.'[433] Everything is to be '*completely subjugated to the method*' for otherwise it cannot be 'conceived and known in its truth.'[434] Even though it is the concept that is now thought as the forceful power which cannot be resisted,[435] these formulations call into question the transparent nature of the concept and its alleged generality/universality. It becomes evident that the universal law is a question of power, even in its final definition as absolute method. The end is both a moment of force but equally of non-foundation, which then allows, as will become evident throughout the text, for the moment of force to arise.

What has been demonstrated so far, according to Hegel, is 'that no given object is capable of being the foundation to which the absolute form would relate as only an external and accidental determination.'[436] All objects or shapes of a given content which have come up for consideration have shown their transitoriness and untruth.[437] The object of knowledge, Hegel concludes, has no ultimate independence and thus no foundation that would be entirely distinct from the structures of cognition. Equally, however, there has been, in the course of the *Logic*, no *a priori* independence of the forms of cognition that could be sustained distinct from their object. No foundation of the object of knowledge and no ground of cognition is gained. Transition and untruth – *Übergang und Unwahrheit*[438] – mark every fixed object and form of thought. In the end, only performativity is ground. It is only the idea as method, in other words, 'absolute form,' 'that has proved itself to be the absolute foundation and the ultimate truth.'[439] This, Hegel suggests, is to be considered as the truer meaning of universality.[440]

What remains in tension is on the one hand the definition of generality/universality as the 'method proper to each and every fact,'[441] a definition that suggests that the self-performance of every thing and thought is to come to the fore, and, on the other hand, statements proclaiming that there is nothing that 'could not be penetrated'[442] by the

[433] Ibid.
[434] Ibid.
[435] Ibid.
[436] Ibid. 736-37.
[437] Ibid. 736.
[438] Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik: Zweiter Band*, 237; Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 736.
[439] Ibid.
[440] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 737.
[441] Ibid.
[442] Ibid.

absolute method. The latter statements introduce a notion of external force and even threat. In tension, in other words, is the supposedly free performativity of the object of thought and of thought itself, the repeated assurance that all that is considered under the heading of method is the self-movement of form and, by contrast, the vocabulary of subjection. What exactly is, at this point, 'free of restrictions'?[443] This remains unclear.

Reason, analogous to method, names the truthful determination of both being and thought, and thus is one of these terms that does not indicate or decide which power – to perform or to subjugate – is really at stake. It remains undecided whether performativity or subjection comes to be the determination of universality itself. Or maybe it is this ambivalence that is 'the pure correspondence of the concept and its reality,'[444] and thus is what the universal law, if defined as activity (*Thätigkeit*) of form, really looks like. Reintroducing in the final chapter the concept of force, Hegel assures us that all force (*Kraft*) is now in the right place. And yet, a feeling of unease remains.

Nothing is decided at this point. What follows in the *Logic* is a treatise on the history and notion of dialectics that unfolds over several pages. Hegel outlines that 'all oppositions that are assumed as fixed, as for example the finite and the infinite, the singular and the universal,'[445] are in fact, on closer examination, dialectical by nature. They are, Hegel writes, 'transitions in and for themselves.'[446] Transition (*Uebergang*/*Uebergehen*), which signifies the movement of negative dialectics throughout the *Logic*, is up until this point the central mediating term. The problem with previous critiques of dialectics is, Hegel argues, the 'fundamental prejudice […] that dialectic has *only a negative result*.'[447] While contradiction is thought in philosophy, it is not recognised as 'the essential moment,'[448] and thus negativity, which according to Hegel constitutes a '*turning point*',[449] remains here abstract

[443] Ibid.
[444] Ibid.
[445] Ibid. 743-44.
[446] Ibid.
[447] Ibid., 743.
[448] Ibid., 745.
[449] Ibid.

negation. Transitions are, according to Hegel, 'the innermost source of all activity [*Thätigkeit*].'[450]

Yet, since negative dialectics has to become positive, transition as a term will have to be replaced or substituted for another, more speculative word. This negative of the negative is the sublating of contradiction which constitutes 'the *innermost, objective moment* of the life of spirit by virtue of which a *subject* is a *person*, is *free*'.[451] The German does not use the word 'is' twice but simply reads *wodurch ein Subject, Person, Freyes ist*;[452] literally translated as 'whereby a subject, person, free(dom) is.' Transition, the innermost source, reaches its innermost objective moment in sublation, where – somehow – the possibility of freedom, which remained in question up until this point, is finally achieved. An enumeration that is also a forward movement, and that proceeds from one term to another without the interruption of a verb, is a reiteration of the opening to the *Logic* that starts with 'being, pure being, without any further determination.'[453] What is announced here is a new immediacy where what is, is now – almost – all at once. Further enumerations will follow, instantiating in language the new immediacy that is to be achieved in the last chapter. It is only at this point that sublation is explained outside of a passing remark.

With reference to the speculative sentence,[454] which was first introduced in the preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel explains that sublation is to be understood as a speculative term. The speculative sentence, the performative nature of which will be further explained in chapter six, links the very beginning and the conclusion of Hegel's two published books. That which is sublated, Hegel argues, is, as result, 'not a dormant third but […] self-mediating movement and activity [*Thätigkeit*].'[455] Only as such a result can pure form have content and become method properly so called. Following Hegel, 'method itself expands with this moment into a *system*.'[456] System is proposed by Hegel as the determinate result of the movement of form. It is the content of form, or form-content, that is purely logical and yet is not abstract but concrete. Thinking

[450] Ibid.
[451] Ibid., 745-46.
[452] Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik: Zweiter Band*, 246.
[453] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 59
[454] Ibid., 245.
[455] Ibid., 747.
[456] Ibid., 748.

the concept as method is thinking form as performativity (form) and thinking performativity as system (form-content). This, however, is not the final conclusion to absolute method. The determination of form, its performance as self-mediating *Thätigkeit* is, Hegel immediately interjects, 'equally the sublated determinateness, and hence also the restoration of the first immediacy in which it began. This it accomplishes as *a system of totality*. We now have to consider it in this determination,'[457] which means a return to the chapters on 'Objectivity'.

The determination of totality as system does not yet, Hegel argues, take into account that every determination is also a reflection into itself; that each new stage of *exteriorization*, that is, of *further determination*, is also a withdrawing into itself. The greater the *extension*, Hegel writes, just as dense is the *intensity*.[458] This double perspective of the micro and macro is reminiscent of the Leibnizian *Monadology*, where the wealth of the entire world finds itself represented in the unity of the one. For Hegel, as for Leibniz, '[t]he richest is […] the most concrete.'[459] What still has to be thought is the return from system to totality, the return to a beginning that is result, where the determination of method not just as system but as *a system of totality* (*ein System der Totalität*) is considered.

Hegelian performance(s) and dramatic speech acts: From law to speculation

Hegel has already been interpreted as a thinker of performance and performativity, two concepts that have been read as internal to and not superimposed onto Hegelian philosophy. The *Phenomenology* in particular has been understood as a book that presents itself as, in the words of Bo Earle, 'a *dramatic conflict*.'[460] In the *Phenomenology*, says Earle, 'philosophy, in Hegel's words, "tritt auf," it literally takes to the stage. Hegel evokes philosophy itself as a dramatic character in strife, at odds with itself, not yet having achieved what it wants for itself (truth).'[461] Its own taking to the stage has an effect on philosophy, in that it undergoes a transformation in its presentation and argumentation. Instead of simply giving a formal definition of the

[457] Ibid., 749.
[458] Ibid., 750.
[459] Ibid.
[460] Bo Earle, "Performance of Negation, Negation of Performance: Death and Desire in Kojève, Bataille, and Girard," *Comparative Literature Studies* 39, no.1 (2000): 49.
[461] Ibid.

philosophical problem, the *Phenomenology* performs it.[462] The *Logic* too, though less dramatic, has a performative element as just described. But if the *Logic* is strictly speaking "beyond experience," at least beyond the experience of consciousness, then what kind of performance can we expect to find in this book?

Staging the development of the concept and of conceptual forms which is, following Hegel, dramatic in its own right, the *Logic* moreover elaborates a conceptual account of performativity. Already nascent in the *Phenomenology*, specifically in its rendering of language, such an account is now properly developed. By pointing to shifters such as "I" or "now," or indeed to the use of examples, the *Phenomenology* lets language perform the philosophical problematic in question.[463] The speculative proposition in the preface to the *Phenomenology* introduces, moreover, a treatise on the performative character of philosophical reading and writing. There is, Hegel suggests, a performance characteristic of philosophy, which operates on propositions. As a complex event type which involves the performance of certain basic acts, the philosophical proposition always makes things with words.[464] If, by producing a logical determination, the philosophical proposition doubles the natural existence of a thing, then the power of philosophy resides in the power of such a doubling.[465] The *Logic*, drawing attention again to the performative element of language, further develops this thought. Hegel elaborates how language explicitly performs the philosophical claims that are being put forward. Particularly interesting is Hegel's remark on speculative words, which hold together multiple, even opposite meanings in one single term. The problematic of contradiction, Hegel argues, comes already to the fore in language which generates a moment of happy surprise. Hegel accordingly is alert to the performative functions of language, and an explicit use of language as performance[466] is what links the two Hegelian acts – *Phenomenology* and *Logic*.

In what follows, we will return again to the last chapter of Hegel's *Logic* and to the particular expression of the performativity of language therein. The chapter on

[462] Ibid.
[463] Martin Donougho, "Hegel's Pragmatics of Tragedy," *Idealistic Studies* 36, no. 3 (2006): 154.
[464] Catherine Malabou, "Power and Performance at Play: A Question of Life and Death," in *Inter Views in Performance Philosophy: Crossings and Conversations*, eds. Anna Street, Julien Alliot, and Magnolia Pauker (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 130.
[465] Ibid.
[466] See also Donougho, "Hegel's Pragmatics of Tragedy," 154.

absolute method, it will be argued, should not only be read as a logical demonstration, "philosophy properly so called," nor as dramatic performance in the sense of the *Phenomenology*. Rather, parts of this chapter are presented to the reader in the form of a speech act, that is, as an utterance with a performative function. As speech act, the last chapter is not merely descriptive but attempts to instantiate some of its claims through the very means of their communication. In this way, the immediacy of being, the return to the opening of the book, is actualised. 'Being, pure being' manifests itself, this time determinately, through an act of speech that initiates the *Philosophy of Nature*. It becomes clear in this chapter that immediacy, in order not to be formal or abstract, can only be as act (*Thätigkeit*). The relation between concept and reality, which was already at stake in the *Phenomenology* and which had been posited as actual in the chapter on 'Life,' is now finally defined as performative.

While Kant defined theoretical reason as speculative, he only thought the ideas of reason as a mode of cognition, as the *a priori* necessary but objectively unjustifiable systematic determination of all relations. Hegel's claim in the *Logic* is that the Kantian limitation of speculative reason fail to think the idea in its mode of being. As mode of being, Hegel argues, the idea is 'active principle.' The *Logic* then proposes performativity as ontological conceptual form, more concretely, as the conceptual form of the speculative ontological *Thätigkeit* – the idea of reason as mode being. This will be explained in more detail in the following through an analysis of Gillian Rose's reading of the concept of the universal law.

Gillian Rose on the law and (abstract) ends in Hegel's *Logic*

In the last chapter of the *Logic*, the 'Doctrine of the Concept' is also referred to as doctrine of '*universality*.'[467] Hegel writes that it is by virtue of sublated mediation 'that *being, essence*, and *universality*, are differentiated.'[468] At the point when conceptual form is thought as speculative idea, concept and universality truly become one. Under the name of 'absolute method,' a new speculative law of the universal is proposed. Gillian Rose too, in her reading of the *Logic* in *Hegel Contra Sociology*,

[467] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 749.
[468] Ibid.

focuses on the concept of the universal law as it is elaborated in the subjective logic. 'The subjective logic,' she argues 'seeks to present a different law [of the universal] which is not posited but which has determinate existence.'[469] Rose's argument unfolds around a reading of the unity of theoretical and practical reason, as proposed by Hegel in the final chapters. While her work centres primarily on the 'Idea of Cognition,' in particular on the section 'The Idea of the Good' within this chapter, and thus has a different focus from the reading of the *Logic* as presented here, Rose's focus on the notion of the law in Hegel is of interest here.

Rose thinks the concept of the law, and the concept as law in the *Logic*, as a question of relation. According to her, the good is the law that includes all relations and as such is speculative. In the chapter on 'The Idea,' this universal and actual law will finally be free power (*Macht*). As idea, Hegel argues, the law is itself and takes its other within its embrace, but without *doing violence to it*.[470] According to Rose, however, this law that is both universal and individual has never existed. **'**For, historically, the law is either bourgeois law, the universal (concept) which dominates the particular (intuition), or the law of Athens, which is individual law, Athena, the goddess of the *polis*, but not universal.'[471] Despite its promise, the good might in the end not be attained, and if not attained, Rose argues, then it must be concluded that the 'end' of the *Logic*, just like its 'beginning,' is still abstract.[472] What this means is that 'Being, pure being' is not reconstructed as determinate beginning. The end, in other words, does not introduce a new notion of being, since the law of the concept as idea can only be thought in the *Logic* but can, according to Rose, not be instantiated.[473] Absolute method, on this account, remains abstract. Real actuality, Rose writes, would mean real possibility. It would not be unconditioned and inexplicable, but a recognition of *the totality of conditions*, a dispersed actuality that reappears, more or less, in our subjective acts and productions.[474]

Following Rose, the real possibility of being is only thought abstractly, but as such twice. The end, according to her, is just like the beginning. It is undetermined. This,

[469] Gillian Rose, *Hegel Contra Sociology*, 198.
[470] Ibid., 221.
[471] Ibid.
[472] Ibid., 214.
[473] Ibid., 221.
[474] Ibid., 220.

Rose argues, is not a flaw on Hegel's part: quite the opposite, since it means that 'Hegel has not imposed a concept on intuition, but has recognised the abstraction, the reality of unfreedom. This recognition itself [then] *commends* a different way of transforming that unfreedom.'[475] The last chapter of the *Logic*, Rose writes, 'admits and *justifies* this abstraction in the exposition of absolute method.'[476] What remains to be thought, according to her, is absolute ethical life, the unjustifiable and unstable alternative, which is neither the legitimation of 'something actual', but not visible, nor a new imposed *Sollen*, 'a concept which commands.'[477]

Rose's reading of the law in Hegel is compelling in that the *Logic* indeed seems to think the concept as law and, doing so, attempts the search for a new universal, thought specifically in its logical determination. The conclusion that 'absolute method' presents nothing but an abstract statement seems, however, unconvincing. Rose reads the *Logic* as the untroubled continuation of the *Phenomenology*. Both are said to be of the same genre and to build towards the same aim, namely a transformation and rethinking of ethical life. But what if there is no such common ground between Hegel's two books? If the passage from the *Phenomenology* to the *Logic* exposes experience to its own impossibility,[478] as Rebecca Comay and Frank Ruda observe, and as Rose also remarks, then does it not instantiate a radically new beginning? Disorientation is characteristic of the *Logic*, where we do not even know what the precise subject matter of the science really is:[479] in the words of Comay and Ruda, '[n]ot only have the established forms of objectivity been systematically dismantled but the form of subjectivity itself has been undone.'[480] The latter point remains unthought in Rose's account of the *Logic*. *Hegel Contra Sociology* does not reflect on the peculiar genre of the *Logic* qua logic, which is why Rose is not interested in the notion of 'absolute method' as a strictly logical category, that is, as the final determination of conceptual form.

[475] Ibid., 214.
[476] Ibid.
[477] Ibid., 216.
[478] Comay and Ruda, *The Dash*, 4.
[479] Ibid., 89.
[480] Ibid., 4.

How does the beginning differ from the end? '*[I]n the beginning there is no relation.*'[481] While the *Logic* opens with 'Being, pure being,' with the absence of relation,[482] the last two sections ('Objectivity' and 'The Idea'), by contrast, offer an analysis of different forms of relation. The chapter on absolute method is no exception in this regard: 'Relation implies that there is already determination.'[483] For this reason it is in the last chapters that the thought of relation is really brought to the fore. It is also for this reason that the vocabulary of force, violence, resistance and freedom becomes crucial at this point. While these terms are more or less absent from the chapter on 'The Idea of Cognition' that is Rose's primary point of engagement, they reappear, as we have seen in the final section. Absolute method is neither an indifferent concept nor abstract, but a re-elaboration of the previous chapters. As such, performativity as conceptual form also thinks relation. Hegel takes up the Kantian definition of the idea as mode of cognition that allows for the systematic determination of all relations.

The determination of form as absolute method has to be understood, Hegel argues, 'as *a system of totality*',[484] that is, as relational form. For Hegel, however, as we have seen, the speculative *Thätigkeit* of the concept is equally a mode of being. Absolute method, accordingly, in defining the law as performative, introduces a new, relational concept of being at the very end. As such, the definition of absolute method is not primarily, and contrary to Rose, an ethical imperative, but the universal law in its logical formulation. While Rose correctly emphasises the political nature of the *Logic*, this aspect of the text is initially to be understood as a question for logic, that is, as a question of form. Hegel's announcement that subjection, resistance, force, and drive are at the heart of logical form and characteristic of determinate being needs to be discussed in this regard. Maybe Rose, however, just like Hegel, transgresses the *Logic* because there is no other way to understand its propositions and philosophical implications. The *Logic*, quite clearly, demands transgression. It requires a disavowed before, the *Phenomenology*, and a never fully formulated after-life, the *Encyclopaedia*.

[481] Ibid., 99.
[482] Ibid.
[483] Ibid.
[484] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 749.

Concepts that name the relation between the actual and the real

Two concepts in particular, "actuality" (*Wirklichkeit*) and "activity" (*Thätigkeit*), determine the relation between the concept and reality in the final chapter of the *Logic*. Do these terms coincide with the notion of performativity? And do all three terms, in the same way, refer to the idea as determinate being? While, as it was argued here, performativity as a term delineates best the speculative *Thätigkeit* of the concept as idea, bringing to the fore its ontological effects and determined immediacy, the concept of actuality fulfils a slightly different function. Actuality, as Rose explains, is '[t]he totality or determinateness which is related to others and to itself.'[485] If the concept is activity (*Thätigkeit*), and performativity further qualifies the speculative *Thätigkeit* of the concept as idea (form), then actuality more specifically thinks this *Thätigkeit* as system of totality (form-content). Thus, while all three concepts refer to the determinateness of form, that is, to its being, actuality explicitly defines such determinateness to be relational. Actuality, therefore, is the concept of being, announced by Hegel at the end, which as new immediacy 'is in this form as *totality – nature*.'[486] As totality, nature is inherently relational. But the conception of nature and thus of actuality already belongs no longer to the realm of *Logic*. The transition from a logical concept of determinate being to the *Philosophy of Nature* is, Hegel writes in the last paragraph of the *Logic*, 'to be grasped […] in the sense that the idea *freely discharges* itself.'[487]

The *Logic* ends with the free discharge of determinate being as nature. Hegel claims that this simple being to which the idea has in the end determined itself is perfectly transparent to itself.[488] The transparency of the idea and its free release have to be thought together: since all opposition at the level of logic comes only from within itself, the idea 'remains with itself',[489] and in doing so, Hegel argues, is free. Two questions arise at this point. First, to what extent is performativity, the *Thätigkeit* of the logical concept as idea, transparent? And second, is this transparency not brought

[485] Rose, *Hegel Contra Sociology*, 222.
[486] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 752.
[487] Ibid., 752-53.
[488] Ibid.
[489] Ibid.

into question by the continuous reference to subjugation, resistance, force and drive that are characteristic also of the last chapter?

According to Hegel, in the absolute *Befreiung* (liberation/release) arguably no transition could take place. In their co-written book *The Dash* Rebecca Comay and Frank Ruda interpret this moment as the definition of a non-voluntarist decision.[490] Catherine Malabou, in *The Future of Hegel*, makes a similar claim. The free release of the absolute idea is, according to Malabou, the work of *no-one*.[491] This is not the end of all activity (*Thätigkeit*) but its most formal or plain instantiation, a declarative definition or speech act of some sort. Hegel seems to argue that while the law subjugates, performativity is transparent free release. At the same time, however, the idea is a "*machthabender Begriff*," a powerful concept or one that rules. There is, as was noted earlier, a tension or contradiction inherent to the presentation of the Hegelian idea. Since the form of the universal law, if understood as performative, is no longer external to the content that it refers to, there is no mention of "violence" (*Gewalt*) in the last chapter, only the absence of violence. However, the question of "power" (*Macht*) is still present, which leads to the question of whether the conceptual form of being pure being in all its determinacy can really simply be an expression of free activity. Though the claim that being only is what it performs illustrates a certain transparency, the *Thätigkeit* of method is at the same time, as the recurring references to force, subjection, resistance and drive reveal, not an indifferent "doing".

Conclusion: Now we have got a concept of performativity – where to go from here?

Hegel remarks that 'getting away from the indeterminate beginning, is also a *getting back closer* to it.'[492] Since the end is to retroactively construct and to formulate once more the opening of the book, a new notion of being will have to be introduced at the end. According to Hegel, to understand the immediate also as result is only possible when considering the activity of form, which is speculative by nature. Being, accordingly, is a question of conceptual form, while form is, in the *Logic*, essentially and fundamentally related to *eidos* or idea.[493] The discourse on absolute method

[490] Comay and Ruda, *The Dash*, 18.
[491] Malabou, *The Future of Hegel*, 165, emphasis in original.
[492] Ibid., 750.
[493] Malabou, *The Future of Hegel*, 151-52.

describes the speculative *Thätigkeit* of the concept as idea which, as mode of cognition, allows for the systematic determination of relations and as mode of being is performative. The latter definition, which cannot be found in Kant, is retroactively constructed as the opening of the book, meaning that 'the logic also has returned in the absolute idea to this simple unity which is its beginning.'[494] This, in other words, is the positive result of speculation. The pure concept, 'the *simple self-reference* which is being,' is now, at the end, also the '*fulfilled concept*, the *concept that comprehends* itself *conceptually*.'[495]

Only as performative can pure being, in the realm of logic, be *erfülltes Sein* (fulfilled being). As pure concept the idea 'is still logical; it is shut up in pure thought.'[496] All that has been gained is a conceptual form, that of performativity, as new speculative law of the universal. But what to do with this speculative concept of form as elaborated in the *Logic* which is supposed to lay the foundation for the entire *Encyclopaedia of the Sciences*, of a philosophy of nature and of mind? What to make of the Hegelian proposition of performativity which, as such, is not a political theory or proposition? In the end, Hegel writes, there remains only this to be said of the idea, namely that in it, *in the first place*, the *science of logic* has apprehended its own concept.[497] Nothing more and nothing less.

The concept of the performative, tentatively introduced in the concluding chapters of the *Logic*, gains further meaning in the *Philosophy of Right*. Operative within the confines of the state and civil society, which mutually legitimate each other, the meaning of performativity as ontological *Thätigkeit* (activity) raises further questions. While Hegel had already drawn attention to the performativity of language in the *Phenomenology* and *Logic*, where he demonstrates that individual words and the grammar of the sentence explicitly perform the philosophical claims that they are supposed to express, the performative power of the speech act has, furthermore, a distinctly social and political dimension. Instead of drawing on the exemplarity of semantics and syntax, the *Philosophy of Right* allows for the social manifestations of language to come into view. Language becomes discourse. The speech act draws

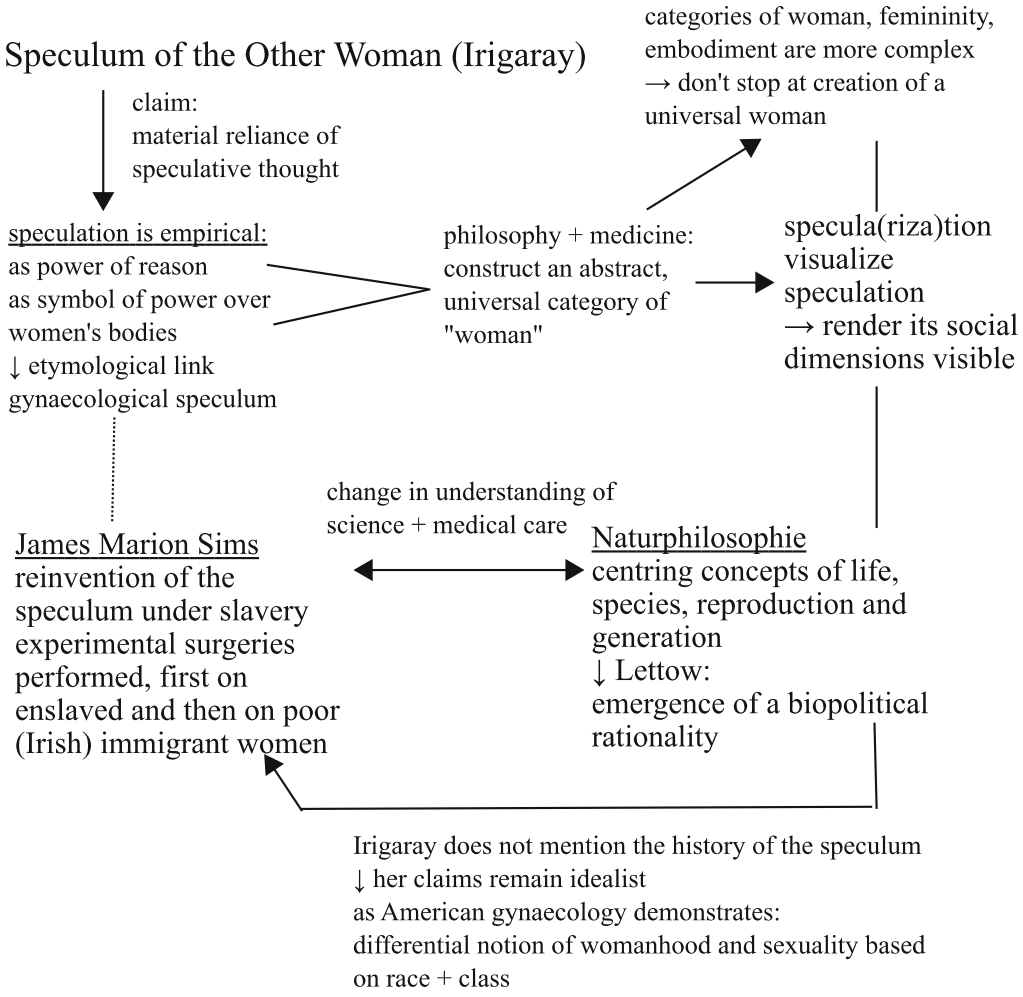
[494] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 752.
[495] Ibid.
[496] Ibid.
[497] Ibid.

attention to the fact that language is a social and communal practice. The vocabulary of violence, resistance and freedom, central to the concluding chapters of the *Logic* and to its definition of speculation and of a performative *Thätigkeit*, is for this reason equally of relevance in the *Philosophy of Right*.

Here the examples of the state and the sexual relation take on a more central role, for they form the two main instances that demonstrate the limits of social contract theory. It is these two examples that demand a concept other than that of the contract in order to be adequately understood. Hegel confirms in the *Philosophy of Right* that these concepts are central to the definition of both speculation and performativity. In a certain sense, the *Philosophy of Right* situates the theory of performativity developed in the *Logic*. Here, performativity was proposed as the speculative law in its ontological dimension. However, as *Thätigkeit* (activity) of the idea, performativity appears to be transparent. At the same time, this transparency is already brought into question in the *Logic* through the continuous references to subjugation, resistance, force and drive in the final chapters. By contrast, the performative power of the speech act, as introduced in the *Philosophy of Right*, is not a doing or power that seems to come from nowhere. The idea is here no longer purely transparent *Thätigkeit* (activity) or free release but the speech act is localizable. Being historically situated, it requires for its possibility a particular set of institutions. With the *Philosophy of Right*, it now becomes understandable why questions of violence, resistance and freedom are crucial to the theory of the performative. The question of whether a feminist and queer reinterpretation of the theory of performativity is possible, by subjecting the latter to new examples, will be resumed in the last chapter.

Chapter five

From speculum to specula(riza)tion: Thought thinking thought itself, but through the history of gynaecology and female mysticism



Introduction

In the last chapters it has been argued that the appearance of the state and the sexual relation, alongside the categories of violence, resistance and freedom, demonstrates that speculative or non-empirical reason already encounters political categories and that these might be exemplary of its nature. This possibility is addressed more closely by Luce Irigaray. In *Speculum of the Other Woman*, Irigaray demonstrates that speculation is empirical, already as power of reason, but also and importantly as symbol of power over women's bodies. Referring to the etymological history of the term, Irigaray draws a link between speculation, meaning to reflect, to view, and to observe from a vantage point or watchtower, and the speculum as gynaecological instrument, which is also derived from the Latin *speculum* meaning mirror, and *specere* to look at or to view.

While she mentions the speculum, Irigaray does not refer to any particular site of its use. In Irigaray's work the speculum functions as a generalizable trope, but the history of the speculum, and of gynaecology more broadly, is immensely complex. If not historically grounded, the link posited between the philosophical concept and the gynaecological instrument risks losing its analytical and critical power. Having, in chapter three, looked at the founding moment of gynaecology in Germany and the influence of the concepts of *Naturphilosophie* on the new human sciences, including gynaecology, comparative anatomy and anthropology more broadly, a second moment within this history will be analysed in the context of Irigaray's work. Now the reinvention of the speculum by James Marion Sims, the "father" of American gynaecology and key figure within American medical history, will be examined more closely.

Sims is of interest because his practice and his own self-reflection on his work as outlined in his autobiography are, as will be seen, exemplary for what Irigaray wants to explain. The speculum represents for Irigaray a masculine philosophical and medical gaze and mode of inquiry that claims for itself the name of science. Mapping the history of Western philosophy and its power structures, Irigaray demonstrates that philosophical observation is a situated knowledge and that the vantage point of the detached universal subject of philosophy requires for its possibility a support structure.

Speculation is not just an epistemological problem, but, following Irigaray, is ontological, though not primarily in the sense outlined by Hegel, that is, as name for a generic ontological or dynamic form.

Hegel, as was outlined in the previous chapter, proposes a concept of performativity as the definition of determinate being. This concept is to demonstrate that speculative reason has ontological effects. Speculation is to be conceptualised not just epistemologically (Kant) but also as a concept of a general activity or doing. However, according to Hegel, speculation, even when performative, remains at first a strictly non-empirical concept or idea. While Irigaray's work challenges this assumption, her claims themselves often remain idealist. By looking closely at the history of gynaecology, the following analysis will bring to light the element of material reliance of speculative thought, emphasised by Irigaray. This history makes apparent that knowledge is situated, that it is always already empirical, as it actively relies on certain bodies to carry its truths. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Sims' work. His surgical methods and tools, including the speculum for which he was to become famous, were "discovered" through experimentation on enslaved women. Slavery provided Sims with subjects for experimentation,[498] while his discoveries, allowing for the innovation of reproductive medicine, were essential to the maintenance and success of southern slavery.[499]

In the American context to which Sims contributes, medical science is remade specifically as a means of population control. Here a biopolitical view comes into focus, as will be shown in the following analysis. It will be demonstrated that Sims' innovations, though they transform gynaecology and women's health, at the same time contribute to the maintenance of slavery and to conceptions of sex, gender, and sexual difference as inseparable from race. Visibility and ownership, the themes addressed by Irigaray on philosophical grounds with reference to the speculum, also meet at the site of Sims' speculum exams. Initially performed on enslaved women, these experimental surgeries were continued on poor immigrant women, most of them Irish

[498] Terri Kapsalis, *Public Privates: Performing Gynecology From Both Ends* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 32.
[499] Deirdre Cooper Owens, *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2017), 4.

women at the first women's hospital found by Sims in New York in 1855. While these surgeries were responsible for much of the field's rapid advancement in caesarean sections, obstetrical fistulae repair, and ovariotomies,[500] the only women at the time who were "helped" by the newly invented gynaecological tools and surgeries – in exchange for high fees – rather than "controlled" or experimented on were a small group of bourgeois white European and American women. Sims' work illustrates that scientific progress and discoveries rely on bodies and lives that have been othered and that the effects and distribution of medical research are profoundly uneven, shaped by race, class, and citizenship. It is in this sense that medical science as performed by Sims is a biopolitical practice. Reproduction and reproductive care, moreover, as Michelle Murphy notes in her book *Seizing the Means of Reproduction*, are an important historical locus for the establishment of biomedicalization and bio-capital.[501]

With the end of *Naturphilosophie*, which, as previously argued, had introduced a biopolitical vocabulary, a change in the understanding of science and medical practice takes place. Gynaecology, as we will see, is at the forefront of this change. While European medicine had previously dominated global Western medicine, by pioneering gynaecological surgical procedures American medicine was moving from the periphery to the centre.[502] This geographical displacement manifests as a shift both in thought and in global political power relations. In the course of the following philosophical analysis, we will attempt to situate Irigaray's *Speculum* within the context of this broader historical, political and theoretical shift.

While Irigaray grounds her own philosophical work in part in the German idealist tradition, *Speculum* arguably requires another context. The following analysis therefore begins by juxtaposing two key moments in the history of gynaecology – its emergence as a scientific discipline in Germany in the context of philosophy of nature, and its biopolitical role in the nineteenth century American South. Against this background, a more detailed analysis of the middle part of Irigaray's *Speculum*, her

[500] Ibid., 5.
[501] Michelle Murphy, *Seizing the Means of Reproduction: Entanglements of Feminism, Health, and Technoscience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 20.
[502] Cooper Owens, *Medical Bondage*, 5.

critique of Kantian and Hegelian speculation, will unfold. The chapter will end with an analysis of the role that (female) mysticism plays in Irigaray's critique of Kantian and Hegelian speculation. While female mysticism is employed by Irigaray as an example for an alternative form of speculation that is neither Kantian nor Hegelian, it will be shown that the figure of the female mystic also historically precedes – and sets the scene for – the emergence of modern gynaecology. The persecution of female mystical practices and writings acts as a precursor to the witch hunts and thus to the demonization of both religious and medical lay practitioners, who were mainly female mystics and midwives. The professionalisation of medical and especially reproductive care that followed and, later, the emergence of first obstetrics and then gynaecology cannot be disassociated from this historical moment.

Two histories of gynaecology: From philosophy of nature to biomedicine

As was outlined in chapter three, Susanne Lettow has demonstrated that the emergence of a biopolitical gaze can be traced back to Schelling, Hegel and Carus. By centring the concepts of life, species, and generation, the *Naturphilosophen* introduce a number of key conceptual tools for thinking the emergence of a biopolitical rationality. However, even if a conceptual foundation is developed at this point, *Naturphilosophie* still operates from within a different political and institutional context. Gynaecology in the United States differs in significant ways from the *naturphilosophische* elaboration of a general science of woman referred to in the previous chapters. Most importantly, the idea of both science and nature is not the same.

For Schelling, Hegel and Carus, nature is understood philosophically as a self-organising whole, while science refers to the systematic presentation and understanding of all knowledge. Even though Carus relies, for the justification of his claims about sexual difference, on findings from comparative anatomy, the practice of which, according to Foucault, leads to the emergence of a bio-political medical discourse,[503] Carus still understands science as above all a means of uncovering truth about nature and not its governance within a political field. The idea of nature as active

[503] Michel Foucault, *"Society Must be Defended": Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975-76*, eds. François Ewald and Alessandro Fontana, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 1989), 243.

principle, as elaborated by Schelling and Hegel, provides the general basis for Carus' theoretical writings, together with the belief that the particular can only be understood through the idea of the whole. In this sense, the attempt to provide a systematic outline of woman's nature forms part of a broader project to comprehend – in philosophical terms – the working of nature for medical and scientific purposes.

Sims, by contrast, seems to understand science primarily in biomedical terms, that is, as 'the manipulation of life as a means of both understanding it, and remaking it.'[504] Though Carus' "gynaecology" is not without political agenda, his understanding of his own work and of his role as both philosopher and medical practitioner differs substantially from Sims'. For Carus medical and philosophical discourses are intrinsically related, and his writings address both audiences. Sims' writings also address two audiences. However, these are at the same time more specialised and less knowledgeable: medical professionals on the one hand, and the slave-owning population on the other hand, that is, a lay audience that has a specific investment in medical care. Since health problems proved to be an economic burden to slave-owning southerners, as well as to those who had a stake in maintaining a healthy slave labour force, the availability of professionalised medical advice via medical journals was welcomed.[505]

It is therefore not surprising that one of the first specialised American medical journals would be an obstetrical journal.[506] In the south of the United States, '[s]lavery, medicine, and medical publishing formed a synergistic partnership in which southern medicine could emerge as regionally distinctive, at least through its representation in medical literature, and especially with regard to gynaecology.'[507] Moreover, after Sims' pioneering 1852 article on vesico-vaginal fistulae appeared in the *American Journal of the Medical Sciences*, the number of medical articles on sexual surgeries on women published by the journal increased by more than a hundred percent.[508] The

[504] Sarah Franklin, "Anthropology of Biomedicine and Bioscience," in *The SAGE Handbook of Social Anthropology*, eds. Richard Fardon et al. (London: SAGE Publications, 2012), 36.
[505] Cooper Owens, *Medical Bondage*, 18.
[506] G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Horrors of the Half-Known Life: Male Attitudes Toward Women and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 82.
[507] Cooper Owens, *Medical Bondage*, 18.
[508] Ibid., 55.

emergence of specialised medical journals marks a break from the mode of presentation and publication of the works of the *Naturphilosophen*.

Already thinking in terms of the concepts of life, generation, species, and so on, Schelling, Carus and Hegel introduce a specific vocabulary and with it a new gaze or point of focus for thought. However, biopolitics, as defined by Foucault in terms of the politics of the control and production of life, does not just refer to a set of concepts that serve as analytic tools.[509] As a practice, biopolitics as much involves the regulation of and experimentation on bodies. What matters is not so much its "starting point," but that biopolitics is always already enacted. For this reason, to understand biopolitics we cannot only think with Hegel, Schelling and Carus. The example of Sims illustrates how gynaecology is transformed into such a practice.

Rather than the search for truth or the attempt of systematic knowledge production, gynaecology after Sims performs an openly strategic aim, namely that of population control. The epistemic virtue of letting "nature speak" is, in the American South, opposed to the ethic of making useful, applicable and instrumental.[510] It is in this sense that Sims' work displaces the first – idealistic – moment of gynaecology referred to in chapter three. In the words of Michelle Murphy:

> Instrumentality – what could be done – increasingly trumped abstract truth claims as a virtue. Science was remade as a 'technoscience' that explicitly intervened in the world – treated it, engineered it, built it, experimented with it.[511]

Visualizing Kantian and Hegelian speculation: Speculation as specula(riza)tion

It was argued that the new academic discipline of gynaecology, in the context of German philosophy of nature, contributed to the development of the concepts of reproduction, generation, sexual difference, race and species. These concepts emerged simultaneously across a number of disciplines, including philosophy, anthropology,

[509] Foucault, *"Society Must be Defended": Lectures at the Collège De France,* 243.
[510] Murphy, *Seizing the Means of Reproduction*, 71.
[511] Ibid., 71.

comparative anatomy and gynaecology. It could be argued that a first elaboration of a biopolitical vocabulary within philosophy takes place at this point.[512] Moreover, it is also at this time that the newly established anatomical research finds its way into philosophy,[513] specifically philosophy of nature and German idealism more broadly, but also Kant's critical philosophy, as outlined in chapter one. Thus, while these disciplines were separating from each other and while the newly established sciences were displacing philosophy, certain concepts were developed simultaneously across disciplinary lines. In other words, emphasis on these concepts, which are to constitute new fields of knowledge, leads to the displacing of philosophy and to the specialisation of academic knowledges, while at the same time building cross-disciplinary conversations.

According to Foucault, the new sciences of man are 'under the dominant sign of the visible'.[514] The anatomical dissection, in particular, treats the body according to the demands of a science that is ordered in line with the exercise and decision of the gaze.[515] By re-inventing a tool for visualisation, gynaecology and the speculum in particular have 'a unique relationship to the art of making visible.'[516] The speculum's use and function reveal a broader tendency, namely the logic of visual identification and recognition of bodily organisation as described by Foucault. Though her mode of inquiry differs from Foucault's, in her analysis of speculation Irigaray too intends to understand the relation of science and visibility. According to Irigaray, the question after the conditions of possibility for scientific discourse is a question of speculation and the speculum. For Irigaray, this means analysing the role played in science, including philosophy, by perspective, vision, and the gaze.

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[512] See Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A. M. Sheridan (London, Routledge, 2003), 198.

[513] Foucault observes in *The Birth of the Clinic* that clinical medicine, which develops out of the practice of the dissection and anatomisation of corpses throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe, marks the emergence of the first science of "man," since for the first time human beings are conceptualised as object of positive knowledge alongside other living objects in the realm of nature. However, the field thus opened up is divided up according to the principles of the normal and the pathological, the criteria of which form the unique character of the science of man. – see Catherine Waldby, *The Visible Human Project: Informatic, Bodies And Posthuman Medicine* (London: Routledge, 2000), 40 and Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*, 36, 197. The emergence of gynaecology forms a part of this wider project of the science of man.

[514] Foucault, The Birth of the Clinic, 4, 165.

[515] Waldby, *The Visible Human Project*, 66.

[516] Kapsalis, *Public Privates*, 7.

As Martin Jay observes in *Vision in Context*, '[p]erhaps nowhere have the problematic implications of certain scopic regimes been as rigorously probed as in the area of gender, where the notion of the objectifying "male gaze" emerged,'[517] for instance in the works of Luce Irigaray, Laura Mulvey and Griselda Pollock. Irigaray was arguably one of the first scholars in the field of philosophy to investigate its past and present commitments by unveiling the effects of visual metaphors and practices on its most essential claims. From a different perspective and with different intent than Foucault, Irigaray analyses the problematic methodological primacy of the visible. The interplay of vision, visibility and mastery functions as a guiding thread in *Speculum of the Other Woman* and is summarised under the concept of "specula(riza)tion." With this term, Irigaray emphasises the visual element in the question of speculation as addressed by Kant and Hegel.

On the one hand, Irigaray points out that these philosophers rely on specular effects, that is, on vision, perspective and mirroring, in their argumentation. On the other hand, she puts forward the concept of "specula(riza)tion" as a critical analytic and, arguably, feminist tool, which allows her to render visible the social and political dimensions of philosophical discourse. Both aspects will be looked at in more detail. It will be argued that Irigaray retains, despite her critique, the concept of speculation; not, however, to either secure the unity of knowledge and thus the stability of the (transcendental) subject (Kant), nor to allow for the transparent sublation of subject and object (Hegel), but methodologically, as a means to visualise what is deemed purely conceptual and in this way to open up the possibility of a critical philosophical knowing. In this chapter the history of the gynaecological speculum is recounted alongside an analysis of Irigaray's engagement with the philosophical canon, particularly the Kantian and Hegelian concepts of speculation. The aim is not to force these two conceptual histories to neatly overlap, but to encounter their points of convergence. In doing so, we will attempt to carry Irigaray's analysis further, to do what she suggests but ultimately does not do, that is, to visualise and historicise her claims.

[517] Martin Jay, "Vision in Context: Reflections and Refractions," in *Vision in Context: Historical and Contemporary Perspective on Sight*, eds. Teresa Brennan and Martin Jay (New York: Routledge, 1996), 4.

Speculum of the Other Woman (*Speculum de l'autre femme*) is divided into three parts of unequal length. Reversing historical chronology, the book opens with 'A Blind Spot of an Old Dream of Symmetry,' a critique of Freud and psychoanalysis that sets the scene for Irigaray's broader deconstructive project that aims to expose the dependence of Western philosophical thought on the construction of an abstract concept of "woman." Systematically analysing key thinkers of the Western philosophical tradition, in both a philosophical and psychoanalytic sense, *Speculum* ends with a reading of Plato's myth of the cave. While the first and third sections are of equal length and constitute the main body of the book, the middle section is less known. Even on the contents page, this section is easily overlooked. In contrast to the other two, the sub-headings for this part contain no further annotations and, taking up less space in this way, this part of the book appears to be much shorter.

At the same time, however, carrying the title of the book, this section fulfils a curious mediating function. Irigaray here elaborates a theory of the subject and addresses the limits of strategic mimicry, that is, the very strategy employed throughout the rest of the book to deconstruct the philosophical canon. Thus, it is the only place where her own mode of engaging philosophy is not primarily to mime the discourse of different male philosophers.[518] In '*La Mysterique*' in particular, by looking at the role of female mysticism, a positive account of speculation is developed.

While much of Irigaray's work is influenced on the one hand by psychoanalysis, particularly Lacan, and on the other hand by Nietzsche and Heidegger, and is rightly read from within this context, her starting point in the middle section of *Speculum of the Other Woman* is Kant's transcendental philosophy, and more precisely its emphasis on the produced nature of both subject and object. Kant, as was outlined in chapter one, inherits this philosophical problem from Leibniz, who in the seventeenth century claimed that even the unity of the simplest substance or monad cannot simply be assumed but needs to be accounted for. What is constant, according to Leibniz, is not substance as such, but the principle that secures its unity. With this claim, as was

[518] See for instance Philippa Berry, "The Burning Glass: Paradoxes of Feminist Revelation in *Speculum*," in *Engaging with Irigaray: Feminist Philosophy and Modern European Thought*, eds. Carolyn Burke, Naomi Schor, and Margaret Whitford (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 240, and Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 2002), 130.

argued in the first chapter, Leibniz initiated a broader philosophical shift away from the assumed immediacy and constancy of being towards an analysis of the organization of simple substances and their composites.[519] While with Leibniz it became necessary to determine those forces that can account for unity, both material and metaphysical, the categories of subject and object were, however, not central to his thought. Only with Kant, and with the transfiguration of metaphysics into epistemology, did the question of the production of unity become primarily about the conditions of possibility of the subject and object, which for Kant are always the subject and object of knowledge.

The middle section of *Speculum of the Other Woman* introduces the concept of speculation with reference to Kant and the transcendental subject. The question of perspective and visuality that ties speculation to the speculum and links philosophy to the birth of modern gynaecology unfolds from this context. While the conceptual history of the subject in philosophy seems to be somewhat separate from the question of speculation, visuality and perspective, for Irigaray these two histories are tightly connected. The real meaning of the Kantian Copernican revolution, Irigaray suggests, is not the decentring of the subject, but the subject's attempt at becoming the sun, so that 'it is around him that things turn, a pole of attraction stronger than the "earth".'[520] This perspective requires cutting off from empirical relationships.[521] It is, Irigaray writes, an attempt at '[r]ising to a perspective that would dominate the totality,' a striving 'to the vantage point of greatest power.'[522] In order to occupy this perspective which is dependent on but at the same time also removed from empirical matter, or from "the earth," the transcendental subject has to 'specularize and to speculate.'[523] Speculation, following Irigaray, is what holds the subject-object complex together, in Kant as well as in Hegel. Because it is a necessary requirement or condition of possibility of the subject, speculation and its specific mode of operation have to be analysed.

[519] See also Cassirer, *Leibniz' System*, 34.
[520] Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 133-34.
[521] Ibid.
[522] Ibid.
[523] Ibid., 134.

Irigaray observes that the production of the object of knowledge in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is highly complex, depending on numerous faculties, operations and conditions of possibility. Yet, though complex, these operations are generalizable and follow universal rules. According to Irigaray, the origin of these rules is the desire of the transcendental subject to know and to fix its world. Irigaray proposes that the object of knowledge guarantees the auto-sufficiency and autonomy of the transcendental subject. Based on this reading, Irigaray wonders what would happen if the object would start to speak. What disaggregation of the subject would that entail?[524] While it could be argued that Irigaray underplays the Kantian reliance on the external by reading Kant as an empirical idealist, such criticisms, even if justified, should not lose sight of her broader philosophical project. Challenging her solely on the ground of "misreading" the philosophical canon would mean overlooking the rhetorical force of her analysis. The peculiar genre of Irigaray's writing will be explained further throughout the following analysis. It will become apparent that *Speculum* is not a standard philosophical interpretation.

According to Irigaray, the concept of nature that Kant equates with the unity of experience always already fragments man's project of representation: 'The "object" is not as massive, as resistant as one might wish to believe and her possession by a "subject," a subject's desire to appropriate her, is yet another of his [the subject's] vertiginous failures.'[525] Following Irigaray, the equation of nature and experience is constantly under threat of dissolving. This is because this equation is in truth a reflection.[526] Since the transcendental subject is not immediately given, it is under constant pressure to reaffirm itself. According to Irigaray, in order to remain ever and again the same, the production of an object as screen of reflection or mirror is required. However, because the object is never a neutral projection screen, the reflection that it enables is not without risk. The subject always depends on its conditions of possibility, which it also needs to reproduce.

Irigaray, not unlike Kant, proposes that numerous operations sustain the subject and make it appear. Moreover, she recognises the deconstructive moment in the Kantian

[524] Ibid., 135.
[525] Ibid.
[526] Not in the sense of a Kantian reflective judgement, though this could be an interesting point of analysis to further develop, but reflection as mirror reflection.

project. Since the transcendental subject cannot be conceptualised in isolation and independent of its object of knowledge, the unity of the transcendental subject is not pre-given but is generated or produced. Though this complicates previous accounts of the subject, Kantian philosophy nonetheless privileges a very specific subject, as feminist and postcolonial critics have repeatedly pointed out.[527] Irigaray's critique of the conceptual history of the subject does not deny that there have already been attempts from within the philosophical tradition to complicate and deconstruct ideas of subjectivity. Rather, Irigaray sets out to explore why deconstruction remains ineffective and how it still centres a certain type of subject as universal.

Irigaray demonstrates, as we will see, that the philosophical subject will in the end reassume its stable and familiar place, regardless of how complicated or laborious its construction. She thus demonstrates that a simple critique of the philosophical subject as male and of the philosophical universal as excluding women might ultimately miss the point, for such a critique does not address the actual problem, namely the question of how an attempt at decentring ends up consolidating an already known position. The task of the feminist philosopher is not to downplay or to deny philosophy's deconstructive moments, but to inquire into where exactly in thinkers like Kant the displacement of the subject takes place and when an attempt at decentring has the opposite effect, one of reaffirming the stability of the already known. What other mechanisms are at work to produce the status quo? As soon as the subject is no longer given, speculation becomes, according to Irigaray, crucial. Irigaray writes that speculation is, alongside the positing of ideas of reason, the pedestal for the subject. In order to understand speculation, a return to Kant, says Irigaray, is required.

Subject of speculation / Subject to speculation

As outlined in the first chapter, speculation, according to Kant, goes beyond the bounds of experience to establish a "*focus imaginarius*." For Kant such a perspective

[527] See, for instance, Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, "The Color of Reason: The Idea of 'Race' in Kant's Anthropology," *The Bucknell Review* 38, no. 2 (1995): 200-241; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Denise Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007); Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*; Iris Marion Young, "The Ideal Community and the Politics of Difference," *Social Theory and Practice* 12, no. 1 (1986): 1-24; Michèle Le Doeuff, *The Philosophical Imaginary*, trans. Colin Gordon (London: Continuum, 2002).

is necessary because it allows the understanding, and thus experience, to achieve the greatest possible unity and extension.[528] Because the systematic coherence of the understanding cannot be achieved by the understanding itself, reason projects an imaginary point of reference that will bring unity into cognitions. Irigaray interprets this to be saying that the transcendental subject, by means of the ideas of reason as "*focus imaginarius*," continuously approximates its own closure and self-identity. This is a strong interpretation of Kant and the following descriptions of the Kantian project should be read as Irigaray's interpretation of the latter. Irigaray, herself, does not always make her reader aware – arguably on purpose – when she is summarizing and when she is, at times violently, interpreting Kant.

Irigaray acknowledges that the concept of the subject truly changes with Kant. According to her, the subject in Kant is fragile because it has to speculate on its own closure, which means speculating on the closure of its world. According to this account, the subject is never simply one but is 'multiple, plural, sometimes di-formed.'[529] And yet, Irigaray observes, 'it will still postulate itself as the cause of all the mirages […].'[530] The Kantian critical turn, Irigaray argues, announces a 'destruc(tura)tion in which the "subject" is shattered, scuttled, while still claiming surreptitiously that he is the reason for it all.'[531] Destruc(tura)tion alongside specula(riza)tion, or cause and effect. As soon as the unity of the subject is no longer a given, Irigaray suggests, speculation becomes central. This is why, despite its destruct(tura)tion, the logic of the Kantian subject is still the logic of the same, that is, Irigaray writes, the logic whereby 'everything outside remains forever a condition making possible the image and the reproduction of the self.'[532]

According to Irigaray, the following questions arise: What does it mean to bring unity into cognition, to speculate on the closure of one's self and one's world? What social and political consequences does speculation entail and who or what makes such speculation possible? Irigaray suggests that the ideas of reason, though not empirical in themselves, need to be projected upon some empirical surface. What is needed,

[528] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A644/B672.
[529] Irigaray, *Speculum*, 135.
[530] Ibid.
[531] Ibid.
[532] Ibid., 136.

according to her, is a 'faithful, polished mirror, empty of altering reflections.'[533] Women, she argues, come to take this place; they are 'the matter used for the imprint of form.'[534] This, however, only works if women do not project or speculate themselves in search of another closure or of non-closure. By closure, Irigaray means the attempt of the transcendental subject to produce and maintain its unity by reference to something external to it. Women, Irigaray writes, must not speculate on the unity of their subjectivity, for that would be to challenge the coherence of the philosopher's world. To prevent the mirror from turning into an obstacle of knowledge, the philosopher 'must challenge her for power, for productivity. He must resurface the earth with his floor of the ideal.'[535]

While this Kant, as presented in the previous paragraphs, might be unrecognizable to a Kantian, this is precisely the aim of Irigaray's analysis. Though she offers a careful and rigorous analysis, Irigaray does not leave the primary text untouched. For her, a close reading does not mean a "correct" reading of the text, one that would leave it intact. But what is Irigaray's genre of interpretation? While Irigaray, in *Speculum* and elsewhere, defines her approach as strategic mimicry, something else seems to be at work here. Irigaray seems to write a hyperbolic commentary of the philosophical canon.

Irigaray's interpretation seems implausible at first. Why women? Why would the (male) subject not choose a less resistant, less difficult, less hysteric object? Surely there are other, better projection screens? Attempting to address these questions, Irigaray turns to Hegel. In the famous chapter on lordship and bondage in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel writes that '[s]elf-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged'[536] or recognised. Mutual recognition, according to Hegel, is constitutive. Irigaray similarly suggests that only resistance by another can ensure recognition of the self. His determination, she writes, is assured 'only if she now seeks to reclaim his property from him […].'[537] According to Irigaray, the economy of this

[533] Ibid.
[534] Ibid., 141.
[535] Ibid., 140.
[536] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §178.
[537] Irigaray, *Speculum*, 141.

struggle for recognition is what constitutes history.[538] The ideas of reason, of which "woman" is one, are truly formative. By constituting the unity of experience and thus the determination of the world as we know it, the possibility of a concept of history is introduced. However, since these ideas come to matter empirically, as they are projected on living beings, the struggle for recognition forms a crucial moment. Yet, contrary to Hegel, recognition, for Irigaray, is by definition limited. This is because, on Irigaray's account, recognition only works in favour of what is already recognised as worthy of recognition. The mirror only reflects back the image that we already invested in. Out of a failed process of recognition then develops, according to Irigaray, a failed history.

How do we get to the struggle of recognition? From the point of view of traditional commentary, the move from Kant to Hegel is too quick. Irigaray, it seems, is inconsiderate of their differences and of the intricacies of their argument. However, if we think more closely about the genre and style that she develops throughout *Speculum*, it become possible to see what her analysis does. Insistence from within the history of philosophy to write and comment on philosophy in a particular way and style – that is to say and do philosophy in always the same way – is not simply an insistence on rigorous work, but the shutting down of a problem. This is what the reception of Irigaray's work also demonstrates.

On the one hand her analysis is extremely rigorous and produces a close textual reading, while on the other hand it is not overly interested or invested in producing a "correct" interpretation of the texts at hand. Rather, Irigaray aims to uncover what is symptomatic about a certain philosophy, for instance Kantian transcendental philosophy, and to analyse whether this is symptomatic for the discipline as a whole. Once such a point is uncovered, her analysis starts to accelerate. The individual instance, so carefully uncovered, brings to light other instances, which in turn reveal an ever broader and interconnected picture. As a psychoanalyst, Irigaray knows that an analysis can fail if the interpretation by the analyst is put forward too early or too forcefully. Even if an analyst thinks they understand and see through a complex problem, analysis has to unfold in all its entanglement and confusion. Similarly, in

[538] Ibid., 142.

Speculum, the reader has to follow patiently the workings of philosophy, get caught in its abstractions and deconstructions, and experience Irigaray's attempts at subversion through mimicry. While taking her time to analyse Freud and Plato, Irigaray in this chapter moves from one thinker to another without warning or introduction. The pace is slow until it accelerates, as in the move from Kant to Hegel and back to Kant.

An empirical idea of reason?

There is an intrinsic relation in Kant's thought between the subject of knowledge and the category of totality, since it is only through speculation, that is, by means of the construction of a non-subjective, total, or God-like point of view, that the unity of cognition can be achieved. Irigaray attempts to empirically ground these terms – the transcendental subject, the ideas of reason, as well as the category of totality. She sets out to demonstrate that speculation is, contrary to Kant, already empirical. For Irigaray, an abstract concept of "woman," and thus a social and political category, functions akin to an idea of reason, which in turn is projected onto women's bodies. This idea of reason is not static. "History" is an empirical and dynamic concept of totality; or rather displaces totality as abstract, logical term. In line with Hegel, Irigaray argues that epistemological questions necessitate an ontological examination. However, in *Speculum*, epistemology and ontology do not correspond as neatly as proposed by Hegel.

In the *Science of Logic*, political categories already appear and exemplify the nature of speculative reason; however, the material element that speculative reason relies on is never acknowledged. Irigaray, by calling on the gynaecological speculum in her analysis of theoretical speculation, opens up the possibility of a closer analysis of the material dependence of speculative thought. In doing so she reintroduces questions of vision and perspective, foreclosed by Hegel in the *Science of Logic*. For Hegel, once the ontological dimension of speculation is established, speculation as a question of standpoint or point of view becomes irrelevant. The visual element introduced by Kant when he refers to the ideas as "*focus imaginarius*" is deliberately lost in Hegel. The thought of speculation dissolves into the question of performativity, the doing and undoing of conceptual form. Speculation, Hegel argues, does not require a standpoint

or *focus imaginarius* for its unfolding. This is challenged by Irigaray, who suggests returning to Kant after Hegel.

The question after the conditions of possibility for knowledge is central to Irigaray's work. For Irigaray, thought thinking thought itself cannot entirely break away from its own conditions of possibility, nor are these, as Hegel argues, entirely internal. For Irigaray, specula(riza)tion refers to the support structure that makes thought possible and that creates the vantage points of science, both medical and philosophical. The gynaecological speculum illustrates this point. Sims' work, as mentioned earlier, exemplifies both the dependence of thought on a support structure and the centring of a male scientific gaze. Whether his reliance is the same as Kant and Hegel's or whether it is more specific to the way in which scientific thought postulates requires further thought. What Irigaray emphasises, and here science and philosophy are similar, is that the eye looking through the speculum sees 'with speculative intent.'[539] Neither the philosophical nor scientific views are neutral. As will be demonstrated in the following, they each only make visible a very specific subject, while actively making invisible others.

Like Kantian philosophical speculation, the speculum, 'a funnel- or tube-shaped instrument that is introduced into a body orifice to allow visualization of the cavity beyond,'[540] enables a perspective of what was previously hidden or unseen. As James Marion Sims, inventor of the modern speculum and father of American gynaecology puts it: 'Introducing the bent handle of the spoon I saw everything, as no man had ever seen before.'[541] This is precisely the point that Irigaray aims to address. According to her, 'man's use of the speculum signifies the "masculine" usurpation of the right to look at everything.'[542] Both the speculum and speculation allow for the creation of a vantage point, one that makes visible – primarily to a male gaze – what had previously been closed off to human eyes, thus creating a new field of knowledge.[543]

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[539] Ibid., 144-45.
[540] Michael J. O'Dowd and Elliot E. Philipp, *The History of Obstetrics & Gynaecology* (Carnforth: Parthenon, 2000), 397.
[541] James Marion Sims, *The Story of My Life* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1885), 234-45.
[542] Lynne Tatlock, "Speculum Feminarum: Gendered Perspectives on Obstetrics and Gynecology in Early Modern Germany," *Signs* 17, no. 4 (Summer 1992): 759.
[543] Speculation, Irigaray writes, is the attempt at '[r]ising to a perspective that would dominate the totality.' This perspective requires cutting off from empirical relationships. It is a striving 'to the vantage point of greatest power.' Irigaray, *Speculum*, 134.

Unlike Kantian speculation, which only creates an imagined point of unity, the speculum as gynaecological instrument allows enlightened science to enter women's bodies, making the internal structures of the live woman visible to medical eyes.[544] As such, the speculum helps to organise and establish the female body as a scientific object, particularly the female reproductive organs.[545] By contrast, philosophy does not want to have to deal with any particular body, especially not the female body. For this reason, gynaecology is, as Irigaray observes, 'no longer by right a part of metaphysics – that supposedly unsexed anthropos-logos whose actual sex is admitted only by its omission and exclusion from consciousness.'[546] And yet, there are striking similarities between philosophy and gynaecology. This similarity resides in the fact that both have "woman" and sexual difference as their object. There is, in both disciplines, a "body" that is 'specularized through and through.'[547] Gynaecology, arguably, does not only study women's bodies, but to an extent it makes female bodies, defines and constitutes them.[548] Philosophy, in turn, does not simply observe the world, but by defining the philosophical subject as male actively constructs it. According to Irigaray, philosophy only lets a very particular subject come into view, while others are foreclosed. This, moreover, leads to the further foreclosure of all questions deemed unimportant by the male philosopher.

However, rather than "making," philosophy undoes certain bodies, including female bodies, which become invisible and, in Irigaray's words, are turned into a support structure or tool for philosophy's own purposes. In this sense, modern gynaecology offers a shift of perspective. This is the shift away from a disembodied concept of woman to a biopolitical mode of inquiry. And yet, even though women's bodies are now foregrounded as scientific objects of analysis, the concept of "woman" remains abstract and static. Irigaray suggests that while the concept of "woman" had often in the past been traced back to some divinity or other transcendence invisible as such, in the future its ultimate meaning will perhaps be discovered by tracking down what there is to be seen of female sexuality.[549]

[544] Kapsalis, *Public Privates*, 38.
[545] Ibid., 39.
[546] Irigaray, *Speculum*, 183.
[547] Ibid.
[548] Kapsalis, *Public Privates*, 6.
[549] Irigaray, *Speculum*, 144-45.

Despite these remarks, the ways in which the speculum has historically made female sexual organs visible and thus allowed medical practitioners to speculate on her sexuality are not documented in Irigaray's work.

Irigaray offers a psychoanalytic reading of the philosophical canon but does not track down the historical changes of the "ways of seeing" female sexuality and reproductive organs and the political and philosophical consequences that such seeing entails. Thus, while Irigaray historicises 'past metaphysics,' which according to her covers an epoch from Greek philosophy to the twentieth century,[550] she does not ground her own claims historically. Her feminist critique risks being idealist since her claims remain detached from their social, historical conditions, and it will not be possible to find a place for women to speak if this place is again entirely idealist. The aim of this analysis is to confront Irigaray with a historical analysis of those concepts central to her work, such as "woman" and the speculum. The following sections offer a first, even if broad, attempt at giving an account of the history of the speculum, showing how its invention and reinvention within the history of gynaecology has altered previous understandings of sex and gender, medically as well as culturally.

Gynaecology and the "science of woman"

Gynaecology, as elaborated in earlier discussions of Carus and German *Naturphilosophie*, was not an independent subject area prior to the nineteenth century. Until then, the care of women's health was not the specialised concern of any one group of medical practitioners[551] but was part of surgical practice, midwifery and later obstetrics.[552] The speculum, moreover, did not belong to the standard practice of either of these groups. While the first speculum can be traced to as early as A.D. 97, it only

[550] If Irigaray's conception of the history of philosophy and its major benchmarks, which is largely in concordance with Marin Heidegger's, is inaccurate, then what does this mean for her project? Recent work suggests it is – for instance Peter Parks' *Africa, Asia, and the History of Philosophy: Racism in the Formation of the Philosophical Canon, 1780-1830* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2013), and Alain de Libera's work on the history and emergence of the subject in 'When did the modern subject emerge?' in *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 82, no.2 (2008), and in the 'Subject' entry in the *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, co-authored with Barbara Cassin and Étienne Balibar. If Irigaray's conception of the philosophical canon and its history ought to be challenged, then the encounter with Irigaray needs to be rethought. However, and as discussed above, simply accusing her of "misreading" the canon forecloses a more productive engagement with her work.
[551] Moscucci, *Science of Woman*, 7.
[552] Esther Fischer-Homberger, *Krankheit Frau und andere Arbeiten zur Medizingeschichte der Frau* (Bern: Verlag Hans Huber, 1979), 24.

finds its way into modern medical practices with its reinvention first by Joseph Récamier and later by James Marion Sims.[553] As will be shown, while the speculum is an ancient instrument and many different specula were designed and used throughout the ages – according to a list published by Ricci 614 different models were devised during the years A.D. 79 to 1940[554] – its modern material and symbolic value is specific.[555]

The speculum, however, is not the only instrument that made the emergence of a "science of woman" possible. The invention of the forceps, which led to the success and establishment of obstetrics and to the decline of midwifery, was another significant moment. In the seventeenth century, women midwives in Europe were losing their monopoly over assisting at childbirth to male doctors.[556] Midwifery until now had not been considered to be a medical responsibility, but was a lay craft.[557] Obstetrics meant the medicalization of childbirth, marking a first step towards a scientific gaze on reproductive care and the female sex that would eventually culminate in a "science of woman," that is, in gynaecology.

The introduction of forceps was significant because forceps were cast as surgical instruments which women were disallowed from using. While a scholarly gaze on the female sex had begun to emerge,[558] it was midwives who were at the centre of the struggle over control of reproductive care and knowledge, as well as over definitions of "woman's nature." Doctors stressed that practitioners of child birth should be trained in the new principles of anatomy; midwives, however, were unable to receive such training, since as women they were barred from universities and scientific

[553] Kapsalis, *Public Privates*, 38.
[554] O'Dowd and Philipp, *The History of Obstetrics & Gynaecology*, 397.
[555] Already known and used in the Greco-Roman period, the speculum lapsed into disuse during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and was only rediscovered at the beginning of the nineteenth century when it was popularised by Joseph Récamier, professor of medicine at the Collège de France in Paris (Moscucci, *Science of Woman*, 112; see also Marlene Faro, *„An heymlichen orten". Männer und der weibliche Unterleib; eine andere Geschichte der Gynäkologie* (Leibzig: Reclam, 2002), 46). While the speculum had long been known, it was only with Récamier that it became associated with the aspiration of the male physician to open up the organs of the female body to their meaning (Fischer-Homberger, *Krankheit Frau und andere Arbeiten zur Medizingeschichte der Frau*, 27).
[556] Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (London: Wildwood House, 1982), 150-51.
[557] Moscucci, *Science of Woman*, 10.
[558] Ibid., 58.

academies.[559] As a consequence, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it is male physicians who have exclusive access to the female body.[560]

The speculum and the medical knowledge of female reproductive organs that it facilitates does not simply amount to a neutral search for knowledge, but serves, as Irigaray emphasises, to enhance capitalist profit production. According to Irigaray, 'man's eye understood as substitute for the penis will be able to prospect woman's sexual parts, [and] seek there new sources of profit.'[561] These sources of profit are not just material but 'are equally theoretical.'[562] Bringing to light these theoretical "profits" is what Irigaray considers her contribution. Theoretical profit, it seems, is what is gained at the expanse of women as material support. '[I]f not only the woman but the mother can be unveiled to his sight, what will he make of the exploration of this mine?'[563] Irigaray sets this question aside. She returns to it in her essay 'Women on the Market,' published in *This Sex which is not One*,[564] where she turns to Karl Marx and Claude Lévi-Strauss to analyse the commodification of women in Western European societies. However, here as elsewhere Irigaray's analysis abstracts from the historical conditions that render women commodities. In this essay Irigaray rewrites Lévi-Strauss' description of the circulation of women as gifts and instead refers to the circulation of women as commodities. However, as in Lévi-Strauss, "woman" remains a universal and undifferentiated category. The many ways in which women are rendered into commodities, as well as the fact that some women exploit and thus commodify others, remains invisible.

In the case of Sims, theoretical and financial knowledge correlate. The financial profit of slavery and, more specifically, the contribution of female slaves to American medicine is immediately visible. What is less visible is the role philosophy played in this profit-making game. In *Speculum*, the question after speculative profit production remains a strictly theoretical question, to which Irigaray provides a psychoanalytic

[559] Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex?*, 267.
[560] Marita Metz-Becker, *Der Verwaltete Körper: Die Medikalisierung Schwangerer Frauen in den Gebärhäusern des Frühen 19. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1997), 59.
[561] Irigaray, *Speculum*, 145.
[562] Ibid.
[563] Ibid.
[564] Luce Irigaray, *This Sex which is not One*, trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), 170.

answer. According to her, in philosophy as well as in medical science, man is looking for 'the place of origin, the original dwelling.'[565] And yet, Irigaray writes, no matter how clear his vision, ultimately 'the mystery remains,'[566] that is to say, 'the right to look at everything, at the whole thing'[567] will not be satisfied. However, there is arguably more at stake than an underlying search for origin. The example of Sims shows what else was made 'of the exploration of this mine.' Motherhood and population control were central to maintaining slavery in the American South and were a key motivating force for the reinvention of the speculum and the experimental surgeries that revolutionised the field of gynaecology. 'What will he, what will they [medical practitioners and philosophers], have seen as a result of that dilation?'[568] If read as a political question, and in the context of Sims' gynaecological practice, another picture emerges.

With the need to produce greater populations in both Europe and the colonies, reproductive policies become a central government concern.[569] While this concern remains, today the containment and limitation of specific populations has gained political priority. Throughout the United States, family planning and birth control are used to limit the population size of African Americans and other minority groups.[570] For instance, the government funded the first birth control clinics in the 1930s as a way of lowering the Black birth rate.[571] While it might seem that this policy is contradictory with the fact that some states have outlawed abortion, this is in fact not the case.[572] The necropolitical[573] management of black lives continues as the state refuses to care how children from minority backgrounds live. Quite clearly the

[565] Ibid.
[566] Ibid.
[567] Ibid.
[568] Ibid.
[569] Jordanova, *Nature Displayed*, 6-7.
[570] Vernellia R. Randall, "Slavery, Segregation and Racism: Trusting the Health Care System Ain't Always Easy! An African American Perspective on Bioethics," *Saint Louis University Public Law Review* 15, no. 2 (1996): 202.
[571] Ibid.
[572] "sterilization abuse of women of color was rampant … Yet, white U.S. women had no access to fertility control, until in 1965 when the U.S. Supreme Court awarded married women the right to use birth control as a constitutional right to privacy (…)." Sharmila Rudrappa, 'Reproducing Dystopia: The Politics of Transnational Surrogacy in India, 2002 – 2015' in *Critical Sociology*, 44 (2018), 1090. Also see, Sophie Lewis, *Full Surrogacy Now: Feminism Against Family* (London, New York: Verso, 2019), 201n.
[573] For a definition of necropolitics see J.A. Mbembé, "Necropolitics" in *Public Cutlure*, 15, no.1 (2003), pp.11-40.

question of population control, of profit production through reproductive policies and the construction of a political and theoretical concept of motherhood, is not just psychoanalytic.

Reproductive technologies to foster pregnancy are marketed at wealthy, predominantly white women, while new technologies aimed at limiting reproduction are most often used experimentally on poor women of colour and subsequently aimed at them through accessibility and legislative incentives.[574] 'What we witness, then, are the twin development of policies directed at desisting fertility in poor women in the Third World and medicotechnical at assisting the fertility of privileged, mostly white women, in the First World.'[575]

As in Sims' times, it is predominantly women of colour and/or poor women who are being medically experimented on. In the Unites States, for example, it is mainly women of colour who have been sterilised without their informed consent so that medical practitioners could gain additional experience in performing tubal ligations and hysterectomies.[576] At the same time, as Terri Kapsalis notes, '[p]oor women of color in developing countries are used consistently as experimental subjects in order to test new hormonal contraceptive technologies before they are used on North American women.'[577]

Against this background, Gayatri Spivak's question of who the "other woman" in Irigaray's work is can be asked anew. In 'French Feminism in an International Frame,' Spivak looks at the works of Irigaray, Kristeva and Cixous to address their Western-centric focus in their analysis of phallogocentrism. Spivak argues that

> [i]n spite of their [French feminism's] occasional interest in touching the *other* of the West, of metaphysics, of capitalism, their repeated question is

[574] Kapsalis, *Public Privates*, 32.
[575] Sharmila Rudrappa, *Discounted Life: The Price of Global Surrogacy in India* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2015), 24.
[576] Randall, "Slavery, Segregation and Racism," 199.
[577] Kapsalis, *Public Privates*, 56.

> obsessively self-centered: if we are not what official history and philosophy say we are, who then are we (not), how are we (not)?[578]

There has to be, Spivak argues, 'a simultaneous other focus: not merely who am I? but who is the other woman? How am I naming her? How does she name me? Is this part of the problematic I discuss?'[579]

This conversation is arguably missing from Irigaray's work. It could, however, be addressed with reference to the history of the speculum that Irigaray mentions but does not properly engage with. Though drawn to morphology, that is, the form and structure of bodies, Irigaray is not interested in documenting the social and historic conditions under which the body has been constructed and become a central element in the constitution of femininity and masculinity. Thus, while she outlines the invention of a universal woman that serves as condition of possibility for science, including philosophy, Irigaray does not inquire into the historical roots that led women to become the object of scientific observation and study. Was this process the same for all social classes and strata?[580]

The history of the speculum and of gynaecology more broadly is immensely complex, not only in Germany and the United States, as analysed above, but also in France, where Irigaray is writing. In nineteenth century France it was registered sex workers who were forced by law to have regular gynaecological examinations with a speculum, and who had to undergo compulsory treatment if any irregularities were found.[581] This law was later established in other countries too. In the United Kingdom, for instance, it was introduced in the form of the Contagious Diseases Act, which passed in 1864 and allowed police officers to arrest and examine women suspected of being sex workers. As mentioned earlier, the only women who, at the time, were "helped," rather than "controlled," by the newly invented gynaecological tools and practices was a small group of bourgeois white European and American women. Irigaray's analysis,

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[578] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "French Feminism in an International Frame," *Yale French Studies* 62 (1981): 158-59.
[579] Ibid, 179.
[580] Metz-Becker, *Der Verwaltete Körper*, 13-14.
[581] Ilana Löwy, *A Woman's Disease: The History of Cervical Cancer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 22.

despite its philosophical wit and rigor, does not allow for these complexities to come into view.

Irigaray's analysis universalises women's experiences and thus does not elaborate which women are most affected by patriarchal control. This knowledge, however, is crucial for understanding how gender operates and for effectively challenging gendered oppression and violence. While Irigaray rightly points to the symbolic function of the speculum as one of the main symbols of power of male doctors over women's bodies and of male philosophers over the definitions of the meaning of justice, ethics, language, and subjectivity, I argue that her own ahistorical analysis reiterates what she critiques about philosophy, namely that it makes invisible its own conditions of possibility. Irigaray, as was demonstrated, erases the racialised history of the speculum that is also a history of class relations, an erasure that is reflected in her conceptualization of sexual difference.

At the time of Kant and Hegel, when gynaecology first emerged as a distinct field alongside comparative anatomy and anthropology, it formed part of a broader discourse on species, gender and reproduction. Now again, in the context of nineteenth century American medical history, questions of reproduction and race are intrinsic to the development of gynaecology and women's medicine. The surgical treatment of Anarcha, Betsey and Lucy, among other unnamed enslaved Black women, "othered" their skin based upon a construction of race but at the same time "samed" their bodies for purposes of extracting reproductive knowledge and surgical innovations that could benefit all women.[582] When looking at Sims' experimental surgeries it becomes evident, as Donna Haraway puts it, that '[s]cience projects are civic projects; they remake citizens.'[583] As in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Europe, now again, though in a different context, '[r]acial formation theories were being created and debated just as women's professional medicine was developing.'[584]

[582] Deleso Alford Washington, "Critical Race Feminist Bioethics: Telling Stories in Law School and Medical School in Pursuit of 'Cultural Competency'," *Albany Law Review* 72, no. 4 (2009): 964-65.
[583] Donna, J. Haraway, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millenium FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouse™: Feminism and Technoscience* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 175.
[584] Cooper Owens, *Medical Bondage*, 5.

While relying on the symbolic function of the gynaecological speculum to support her argument, Irigaray does not address that gynaecology, which was only fully established as a formal branch of medicine from the 1870s, relied during its nascent period on slavery and enslaved patients, who were crucial to the work that physicians performed to cure female ailments.[585] Even on psychoanalytic grounds, Sims' biography would offer a perfect case study for Irigaray, as the following statements show. When first employing the speculum, Sims remarks: 'If there was anything I hated, it was investigating the organs of the female pelvis. But this poor woman was in such a condition that I was obliged to find out what was the matter with her.'[586] Revulsion with the female body quickly leads to the desire to master it: 'Introducing the bent handle of the spoon I saw everything, as no man had ever seen before.'[587]

Despite the repeated failure of his experiments and suffering of his patients, Sims does not stop operating.

> But my operations all failed, so far as a positive cure was concerned. This went on, not for one year, but for two and three, and even four years. I kept all these negroes at my own expense all the time. As a matter of course this was an enormous tax for a young doctor in country practice.[588]

Instead of acknowledging the extreme suffering of his patients, who were operated on without anaesthesia and made addicted to opium by Sims in order to be able to endure their post-surgery pain, Sims emphasises his economic expenses and the damage done to his social and professional esteem. Sims dehumanises his patients. Anarcha, Betsey and Lucy are not always referred to by name but as the "three cases," while others remain entirely unnamed. Their existence is only mentioned in passing: 'I got three or four more to experiment on.'[589] When Sims finally discovers a cure to treat vesico-vaginal fistulas, he remarks that he 'made, perhaps, one of the most important discoveries of the age for the relief of suffering humanity.'[590] The racialization of

[585] Ibid., 12.
[586] Sims, *The Story of My Life*, 231.
[587] Ibid., 235.
[588] Ibid., 241.
[589] Ibid.
[590] Ibid., 246.

bodies is the condition of possibility for experimental surgeries. While black female bodies are othered for the duration of surgical experimentation, once a cure is found it applies not only to all women but to the entirety of humanity.

Health care struggles: The re-appropriation of the speculum by the Women's Liberation Movement

To summarise, it seems that Irigaray borrows from Hegel when she suggests that the ideas of reason are not to be understood as static ahistorical facts. For Irigaray, as for Hegel, the idea is not merely a cognitive necessity but a general condition of both being and thought. Irigaray, however, challenges Hegel's onto-logic. Specula(riza)tion is an attempt to visualise speculation and, in doing so, to render its social dimensions visible. By centring the question of perspective and visibility, Irigaray's interpretation differs from preceding critiques of Hegel, such as those of Marx, Adorno, or Derrida,[591] that also question the coherence of the Hegelian system and its apparent closure. Irigaray, moreover, asks the Kantian question: under what legitimacy does speculation proceed? Is this reason gone mad?

Since the ideas of reason, though abstract, manifest historically, speculation is not just hypothetical but also, according to Irigaray, lived and experienced. For this reason, speculation has to be made visible or visualised. Visualizing speculation, Irigaray suggests, offers a way to question the foundations of philosophy. The strength of Irigaray's analysis in *Speculum* is that she points towards the empirical manifestations of speculative reason. However, she does not, in her attempt to make philosophy's (material) support structures visible, ground her own claims socially and historically. For this reason, her analysis risks being idealist. By using Irigaray's tools and by looking more closely at the history of gynaecology, it was shown that speculation itself has conditions that manifest materially. It thus became possible to explain what seems to be merely accidental in Hegel, namely the appearance of social and political categories in a study of non-empirical reason.

[591] See for instance Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right"*, trans. Annette Jolin and Joseph O'Malley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2970); Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (London: Routledge, 1990), and Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, trans. John P. Leavy, Jr. and Richard Rand (Lincoln, London: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

The sexual relation that features prominently in Hegel's work and already appears in the *Logic* is for Irigaray intrinsic to philosophical thought. The weakness of her analysis is her unwillingness to locate these conditions historically. Irigaray is not wrong to point out that both philosophy and modern medicine construct an abstract and universal category of woman, in the case of philosophy as its outside and condition of possibility and in medicine as object of gynaecological surgery and reproductive health care. However, in both cases the categories of woman, femininity and embodiment are more complex, for they do not stop at the creation of a universal woman but also, as the history of American gynaecology demonstrates, call for a differential notion of womanhood and sexuality, wherein a white female body and sexuality is imagined as fragile, frigid and glorified as the norm, and a black female body and sexuality imagined to be lascivious, excessive, strong and ultimately pathological.[592] Irigaray's unwillingness to account for the many ways in which particular women are othered based on class and based on constructions of race and sexuality arguably limits her analysis and understanding of sexual difference and of the speculative nature of political categories that are inherent to philosophical thought.

Thus, despite her attempt at thinking the social and historical foundations of the Kantian transcendental subject, there remains something static in Irigaray's response. Though "*la femme*" in French has grammatical consequences and thus introduces an important change, the encounter with "woman" in *Speculum*, which is a conceptual one, seems to remain caught within the Kantian frame that Irigaray critiques. "Woman," as we come across her in quotation marks throughout *Speculum*, seems to be an idea of reason in the Kantian sense, and not the Hegelian sense. She, in the singular, is the transcendental idea of the philosopher who speculates on the closure of his own self-identity and the closure of his world.[593] An idea in the Kantian sense, "woman" is a static and ahistorical term, a *focus imaginarius*. Through challenging Kant, it is questionable whether Irigaray breaks with the use of the concept of "woman" as ahistorical idea. This is not due to her mimetic strategy but rather because no new concept of "woman" emerges out of her mime. Irigaray, in this sense, misses her chance. In the end, she does not challenge the concept of woman where she

[592] Kapsalis, *Public Privates*, 20.
[593] Closure is Irigaray's psychoanalytic interpretation of the reliance of the transcendental subject on an outside.

demands change, that is, at a conceptual level. "Woman" remains a non-empirical concept in *Speculum*, regardless of how many references there are to "nature," "the earth" or to "matter."

However, her attempt to reclaim speculation as a feminist methodology remains important and part of a broader feminist project. I therefore suggest reading Irigaray alongside Donna Haraway and Michelle Murphy, among others, who also attempt reclaiming both philosophical speculation and the gynaecological speculum for feminist purposes. It is striking that, in rethinking speculation, Haraway and Irigaray raise similar questions. For instance, Haraway asks: 'How is visibility possible? For whom, by whom, and of whom? What remains invisible, to who, and why?'[594] These are also Irigaray's concerns. 'Whose story is this? Who cares?'[595] Haraway emphasises, as becomes evident when reading Irigaray's *Speculum*, that speculation is not innocent, even when reimagined within a feminist context. This, however, does not mean that speculation cannot function as a critical analytic tool. The task of feminist technoscience studies, Haraway writes, 'is to construct the analytic languages – to design the speculums – for representing and intervening in our spliced, cyborg worlds.'[596] Though she does not consider herself a cyborg, or technoscience feminist, Irigaray, it might be argued, puts forward a similar proposal. Specula(riza)tion, arguably, is a critical analytic tool – not innocent – but one possible means to intervene in philosophical texts and challenge its modes of representation.

It is productive to read Irigaray alongside Haraway, but also Michelle Murphy, since the latter look towards the United States where the speculum became the symbol of feminist politics in the early 1970s. In *Seizing the Means of Reproduction* Murphy recounts the history of the United States women's health movement and the role of reproduction for the establishment of biomedicalization and biocapital, as well as feminist attempts not simply to critique but to "do" technoscience and thus to intervene in the domain of reproductive health. Haraway, too, refers to this history. In line with Irigaray, Haraway observes that '[v]ision itself seemed the empowering act of the conquerors.'[597] Since the speculum signifies the displacement of the female midwife

[594] Haraway, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millenium*, 202.
[595] Ibid., 192.
[596] Ibid.
[597] Ibid., 193.

by the specialist male physician and gynaecologist, reclaiming the speculum is, according to Haraway, an attempt to seize the masters' tools.[598]

However, within the women's liberation and health movement, the speculum is not only symbolic. Offering 'self-help and self-experimentation practices in a period in which abortion was still illegal and unsafe,'[599] the women's movement in the United States reclaimed the speculum as medical tool. As Murphy notes, the vaginal self-exam and group sessions attempted to operate outside of professional and profit-driven biomedicine, and in so doing grappled with the role of capitalism and authority in knowledge making.[600] Taking back representations of female anatomy is here not only a discursive task. However, as Kapsalis says, 'putting the tool or prop of the speculum in the hands of the woman client is not any guarantee of control, knowledge, or complete agency.'[601] Self-help alone is arguably not enough and might even have the opposite effect, since, in a neoliberal climate, rather than being empowering, 'self-help practices are designed expressly to incite individuals to take responsibility for their own health and illness.'[602]

While the feminist self-help movement directed medical control in new directions, it also maintained liberal notions of individualism.[603] The movement was by no means unproblematic. However, it offered a rethinking of science, medical practice and female embodiment. The relationship of particular and universal, for instance, was renegotiated. The movement 'was concerned with challenging the generalised and abstract accounts of female biology by recharting bodies as instances of *variability*.'[604] It was argued that while the fact of embodiment is universal, bodies are individual.[605] Thus, rather than comparing themselves to an abstract, universalised norm, as might be found in a medical textbook, the feminist self-help movement relied on comparisons within small groups of women and with each woman's own chronicity,

[598] Ibid.
[599] Ibid.
[600] Murphy, *Seizing the Means of Reproduction*, 72.
[601] Kapsalis, *Public Privates*, 167.
[602] Margaret Lock and Vinh-Kim Nguyen, *An Anthropology of Biomedicine* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 28.
[603] Michelle Murphy, "Liberation through Control in the Body Politics of U.S. Radical Feminism," in *The Moral Authority of Nature*, eds. Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 353.
[604] Ibid., 351.
[605] Murphy, *Seizing the Means of Reproduction*, 94.

producing a topography that would allow a remapping of what is "natural" about women's bodies.[606]

La Mystérique

We might wonder why Irigaray, in search for a positive account of speculation, looks to female mysticism instead of engaging with more recent attempts from within the women's liberation and feminist movement at reclaiming the speculum and speculation. What are the motivations for her reading of the mystic tradition, and female mysticism in particular?

Though she is never mentioned by name, the chapter '*La Mystérique'* in *Speculum* is in part intended as a response to Simone de Beauvoir, in particular the chapter 'The Mystic' of *The Second Sex*.[607] Irigaray stands in a negative dialogue with de Beauvoir, who is sceptical of the emancipatory power of female mysticism. De Beauvoir questions the mystic's emphasis on love, which she argues has been historically assigned to women as their supreme vocation.[608] While de Beauvoir distinguishes between different mystics, admitting that some, such as Saint Teresa and Joan of Arc were independent thinkers,[609] her conclusion is overall critical. According to de Beauvoir, while mystical experiences, and even love, can be integrated into active and independent lives,

> in themselves these attempts at individual salvation can only result in failures; either the woman establishes a relation with an unreal: her double or God; or she creates an unreal relation with a real being; in any case she has no grasp on the world; she does not escape her subjectivity, her freedom remains mystified; there is only one way of accomplishing it authentically: it is to project it by a positive action into human society.[610]

[606] Murphy, "Liberation through Control," 352.
[607] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (London: Jonathan Cape, 2009).
[608] Ibid., 726.
[609] Ibid., 733.
[610] Ibid., 734.

Irigaray interprets the tradition of female mysticism otherwise. But if she intends to salvage the female mystic, and to write her own conclusion regarding women's liberation, why does she fail to cite de Beauvoir? Why would Irigaray not acknowledge her own philosophical debts to another woman? It seems she repeats what she critiques in the male philosopher. The non-mentioning of de Beauvoir and the feminist movements haunts '*La Mystérique*.'

As will be outlined in the following analysis, de Beauvoir's short analysis of female mysticism can be challenged, since it can be historically demonstrated that the discourse of the female mystic subverted gender hierarchies and challenged the authority of the male clergy. Mystics projected 'positive action into human society,' and their power led to a violent response on behalf of the clergy and the state, that ended with the enclosure of women and ultimately the witch hunts. Moreover, though not always, female mystics acted as a collective subject. Irigaray, however, does not raise these points.

What inspiration does Irigaray find in female mysticism? Though *La Mystérique* does not mention de Beauvoir, this is, as Philippa Berry notes, 'the only chapter in the book where Irigaray does not mimic the discourse of different male philosophers.'[611] It is here where a different strategy and new philosophical proposition can be found. Irigaray's main motivation in this chapter is, as will be argued, of a discursive or linguistic nature. Irigaray draws an analogy between the speech and visions of female mystics and her own tactics of strategic mimicry, employed throughout *Speculum*. Mystical language or discourse, according to Irigaray, is the name imposed by conscious rational reason to signify that which it finds cryptic.[612] 'This is the place where consciousness is no longer master.'[613] It is also 'the only place in the history of the West in which woman speaks and acts so publicly.'[614] Mysticism, like speculation, is of a double nature. On the one hand it is defined negatively – its name, as Irigaray argues, is imposed from the outside – as a marginal or liminal space that goes beyond

[611] Philippa Berry, "The Burning Glass: Paradoxes of Feminist Revelation in Speculum," in *Engaging with Irigaray: Feminist Philosophy and Modern European Thought*, eds. Carolyn Burke, Naomi Schor, and Margaret Whitford (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 240.
[612] Irigaray, *Speculum*, 191.
[613] Ibid.
[614] Ibid.

the empirical and needs to be contained. On the other hand, mysticism and speculation offer a possible space for challenging and displacing social hierarchies.

Mystical speech and visions in turn fulfil a similar role to Irigaray's mimetic strategy, or specula(riza)tion. Both discourses are not freely chosen but arise out of a limited context where they can provide 'an alternative mode of thought for women.'[615] Style, Irigaray seems to suggest, as well as speech more generally, is not entirely voluntary and freely chosen but evolves out of a pre-given context. How to speak and write effectively from within a predetermined discourse? The speech and visions of female mystics, like her own strategic mimicry, addresses this question and the possibility for subversion. At the same time, questions of authority, sovereignty and subjectivity are raised. When does acting in public become possible, meaning, when is it effective?

Female mysticism is of interest to Irigaray because this discourse experiments with the loss of subjecthood, at the same time as claiming public authority for women. Since 'women through mystical experience found the assertiveness and authority necessary to speak, teach and influence others,'[616] mysticism demonstrates the possibility of an alternative discourse where women can speak publicly, and have historically done so. Given that the writings of women mystics are among the first by women in Western Europe,[617] and given that they function as alternatives to the authority of the clergy and thus are examples of a successful subversive strategy, Irigaray's interest in these texts is not surprising. In the following, the peculiar style of female mystical speech and writing will be examined in its historical context in order to better understand the potential of this discourse for a subversive critique of the Western European philosophical canon as imagined by Irigaray. This will then allow us to understand the strategic place of '*La Mystérique*' in *Speculum*.

While Irigaray inserts her voice directly into the mystic's texts, the following analysis makes use of a different strategy in order to better understand the potential of female mysticism for feminist thought. Historicizing, or the work of zooming out of a

[615] Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 18.
[616] Ibid., 88.
[617] Amy M. Hollywood, "Beauvoir, Irigaray, and the Mystical," *Hypatia* 9, no. 2 (Autumn, 1994): 160.

particular text in order to contextualise its language and claims, diverts from Irigaray's immersive rereading of the mystical tradition. This is quite clearly not the technique of strategic mimicry. The intention, however, is not to substitute Irigaray's analysis for another approach, but rather to work alongside it, to address its limitations in this way, and to collaborate by adding context.

All you need is love? The language and genre of female mysticism

From historical records it is evident that mystical thought was more prominent in women's religiosity and claims to sanctity than in men's.[618] The writings by female mystics, moreover, differ in style from those of their male counterparts. The reason for this is 'that women usually wrote not in the formal scholastic Latin taught in universities, but in the vernaculars – that is, in the languages they grew up speaking.'[619] This explains why certain themes are more central to women's spiritual writings. While love and courtship feature prominently in female mysticism, it is important to note that the major literary genres available in the vernaculars were various kinds of love poetry and romantic stories.[620] The vocabulary provided by these genres is a vocabulary of feelings. Rather than being "obsessed" with love, this was the genre known and available in writing to women mystics who used and co-opted this language for their own purposes. It provided the tools and means for their own literary experimentation and, importantly, for their claims to public authority.

Moreover, it is notable that in their attempts to claim some authority of their own, '[a] sharply defined sense of the male as superior was unimportant in women's writings and visions.'[621] As Carolyn Walker Bynum outlines, while men wrote about the nature of woman and saw gender as dichotomous, women, by contrast, worked with imagery more fluidly, and tended to write not about gender but about the soul or humanity.[622] Woman's sense of self was nevertheless formed within and influenced by the symbolic

[618] Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness*, 71; Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 60.
[619] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 196.
[620] Ibid.
[621] Ibid., 169.
[622] Ibid., 175; Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Woman* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 293-94.

dichotomies of the dominant theological tradition, a tradition in which the male-female dichotomy is a symbol for many other oppositions, where notions of God, mind and power are male whereas soul, flesh and weakness are female.[623] Women did not actively contend this religious symbolism. Both men and women agreed that female flesh is more fleshly than male flesh, but this led both sexes to see themselves as in some sense female, this femaleness being in turn a sign of their humanness and, moreover, a means to approach the humanity of God.[624]

Though these women wrote less in gendered terms, mysticism as a religious practice related to gender and had social implications. While mysticism was 'perhaps especially available to women,'[625] because it offered a means to claim public authorship and teaching outside and alongside established institutions, their means of expression, through visions, writing and bodily practices, was more limited and precarious than those of their male counterparts. Constraints in style and writing, most importantly the use of local languages instead of the formal and more global Latin, also translated into religious practice. In basic terms it can be said that men renounced power and wealth as part of their religious practice and women gave up and/or distributed food. Mystical practices, as Bynum argues, are religious manifestations of social facts, most importantly of the sexual division of labour.[626] In a world in which food was woman's primary resource, fasting and feeding was an effective way to manipulate their environment.[627]

Given the emphasis on love and courtship in their writings and their obsession with controlling food, female mystics are easily portrayed as stereotypical – that is, hysterical – females. Instead of understanding their social position and constraints, they are often said to take female characteristics to their extreme. On a generous reading, female mystics are portrayed as charismatic or extraordinary. Otherwise, they are depicted as mad women or out of control. Instead of a feminist figure, the female mystic comes to amplify either a stereotypical understanding of "woman," or the idea

[623] Ibid., 293-94.
[624] Ibid., 296.
[625] Grace M. Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1
[626] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 192.
[627] Ibid., 218.

of a heroic figure that is centred around an exceptional individual. This forecloses the opportunity of thinking a social and collective subject, since the mystic's experience is seen to be deeply personal and private. However, if contextualised, their writings and practices can be seen as an active attempt to use their resources to gain some form of public authority and control over their lives.

Le Mirouer des simples ames (*Speculum simpliciarum animarum*)

The chapter '*La Mystérique*' is indebted to the writings of several women mystics, including Angela of Foligno, Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila and Marguerite Porete.[628] The latter's text is of particular importance. Entitled *Le Mirouer des simples ames* (or *Speculum simpliciarum animarum*), Porete's work, which was written sometime between 1296 and 1306 and was only recently rediscovered, seems to have inspired Irigaray's own version of *Speculum*. While Porete was burned in 1310 for writing *Le Mirouer*, which was declared heretical, the book was secretly preserved. One copy of the original French was saved after her death by clerics, who transmitted the text as an anonymous work of Christian mysticism.[629] The book moreover continued to survive in five medieval translations; two Latin, two Italian and one Middle English.[630] For a time, it was believed that *Le Mirouer* was written by the male mystic Ruysbroeck, whose orthodoxy to the church remained unquestioned.[631] The manuscript was only identified as Porete's in 1946, by Romana Guarnieri.[632]

The popularity and attribution of her work to a male writer suggests that Porete's writing was always more acceptable than her person.[633] This will have been the case, because Porete was a Beguine, most likely wandering, and thus not connected to an enclosure.[634] As such, she will have had no formal training in theology and was unqualified to engage in a theological position of authority.[635] As neither clergy nor

[628] Berry, "The Burning Glass: Paradoxes of Feminist Revelation in Speculum," 241.
[629] Anne Carson, *Decreation: Poetry, Essay, Opera* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2006), 180.
[630] Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness*, 82.
[631] Ibid.
[632] Michael A. Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 117.
[633] Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness*, 82.
[634] Andrea Janelle Dickens, *The Female Mystic: Great Women Thinkers of the Middle Ages* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 119.
[635] Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*, 203.

lay, married or cloistered, her life and writing openly threatened established social, intellectual, and theological boundaries and ultimately acquired for her the inquisitorial epithet of 'pseudowoman.'[636] Porete's way of life and religious practice was, however, not exceptional.

While there were many kinds of pious women in later medieval Europe – canonesses, nuns of old and new orders, Beguines, tertiaries, recluses, Cathars, Waldensians, pilgrims, ordinary laywomen in shops and kitchens – the contrast between lay female saint and clerical male saint became increasingly sharp.[637] By the sixteenth century the model of holy behaviour offered to the Catholic laity was almost exclusively female.[638] This means 'that behind the wide variety of women's roles a unity can be found.'[639] In this regard, an analogy can be drawn with the female midwife. With the professionalisation of medicine and obstetrics in particular, the female midwife was increasingly seen as a lay practitioner who as such had less authority than her university-trained male counterpart.

Both midwives and mystics saw themselves as caretakers. Angela of Foligno and Catherine of Siena, for instance, describe their vocation to care for the sick, and Hildegard of Bingen was deeply interested in women's diseases, sexual reproduction and what is today gynaecology, and wrote on medical and pharmacological matters.[640] Society expected women to be intimately involved in caring for the bodies of others, especially the young, the sick and the dying, and the professionalisation of medical care in the later Middle Ages, which established the male control of healing procedures, was not intended to alter this.[641] Women retained the right and obligation to nurse, but their positions became increasingly precarious. Lay piety as well as medical practice became female piety and care and, as such, more and more suspect.

[636] Ibid., 204.
[637] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 23-24.
[638] Ibid., 21.
[639] Ibid., 23-24.
[640] Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 197.
[641] Ibid.

From the Beguine movement to the witch hunts

The Beguine movement, which developed shortly after 1200 in the Rhineland, Switzerland and northern France,[642] consisted of groups of women who did not join a religious order or take vows like cloistered nuns did, but rather tried to develop their own pattern of prayer, manual work and effort of charity, in particular relief of the poor and sick.[643] These all-female self-governed communities increasingly came to be seen as a potential danger to church and state. While they lived a contemplative life, the Beguines did not remain in one enclosed space but frequently travelled without male permission.[644] What made matters worse was that these women, like Marguerite Porete, wrote in the vernacular. Not only was mysticism available to pious women who were not strictly controlled by a religious order, but their teaching was available and would extend to women and men outside ecclesiastical authority altogether.[645]

As a consequence, visionary women and the Beguines in particular were increasingly suppressed: in the words of Grace M. Jantzen, in her *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*,

> Throughout Europe, the emphasis was on bringing women who sought to live a life of holiness into strict monastic enclosure, not allowing them to live independent lives which threatened anarchy to the church and to the whole ordering of the world.[646]

While mysticism continued to flourish, the Beguine movement was halted in the early fourteenth century by accusations of heresy and witchcraft.[647] As such, the Beguines were one of the first groups to be enclosed and their persecution acts as precursor to the witch hunts and the enclosure of the commons. The figure of the heretic became increasingly that of woman, 'so that, by the beginning of the fifteenth century, the main target of the persecution against heretics became the witch.'[648]

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[642] Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness*, 77.
[643] Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*, 134.
[644] Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*, 141-42.
[645] Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*, 204.
[646] Ibid., 197.
[647] Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness*, 77.
[648] Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (New York:

The importance of the history of the witch hunts for Marxist and feminist thought is recounted by Silvia Federici among others. In *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* Federici makes mention of the heretic movement. However, she does not elaborate that the enclosures of the commons, that is, the dispossession of communal land, the discontinuation of the open field system that targeted women in particular, and the professionalisation of medicine and persecution of midwives and lay healers, was a continuation of the earlier persecution of heretics, in particular of the Beguines, whose enclosure and physical containment marks a direct attack on the free movement, liberty and independence of women. From the physical enclosure of women to the general enclosure of communal land, the forms of political control and enclosure become more and more wide-ranging.

Since Marguerite Porete's burning at the stake in 1310 marks a historical turning point, it is of significance that Irigaray would name her book after Porete's famous treatise. According to Michael A. Sells's *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*, Porete's trial was a critical moment that led to the intensification of the prosecution of women who claimed authority either through their religious and theoretical work or their medical work. At the same time as the professionalisation of both church and medicine took place, the inquisitorial process was gaining momentum in Europe and intensified the prosecution of female mystics, lay practitioners and witches as heretics.[649] As already indicated, historically there is a link between the mystic and the witch, who was often a midwife or general healer. Is *Speculum* also alluding and responding to this particular historical moment?

In order to break with the continuous repetition of what she terms a phallogocentric tradition, Irigaray recounts and in doing so re-writes both the history of Western philosophical thought as well as *Speculum*, that is, the mystic's attempt to subvert male discourse. The aim of '*La Mystèrique*' is to begin to rethink the modern European conception of the subject on philosophical grounds, as well as its claim to political and epistemological authority. Irigaray presents the problem in the following terms:

Autonomedia, 2004), 40.
[649] Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*, 137.

> Given that the horizon line is already drawn, and drawn, in fact, by the 'subject' who defines himself at the same time, in a circularity that knows no end except the return, over and over again, upon itself/himself. The problem is to break down the walls around the (male) one who speaks, sees, thinks, and thereby now confers being upon himself, in a prison of self-sufficiency and a clarity made of the shadows of denial.[650]

The whole of *Speculum* can be read as an attempt to break down these walls, and Irigaray turns to female mysticism as an example of how to effectively intervene in a discourse from a limited positionality. Female mystics in the Middle Ages, instead of engaging primarily in a critique of male power, for instance of the clergy, created an alternative discourse and model for religious teaching and authority. These thinkers did not employ binary gender oppositions. What is being proposed in their writing and practice is not a simple reversal of opposites but the emergence of a new symbolic imaginary. It is for this reason that Irigaray finds inspiration in mysticism, and in particular Porete as a guiding figure for rethinking the speculum and speculation.

The chapter '*La Mystèrique*' positions itself strategically in the middle of the book. It is an intervention in the book's own flow and successful strategy of critique by means of subversion, irony and playful illustration of the blind spots and paradoxical moments of the Western philosophical and psychoanalytic canon. '*La Mystèrique*' is arguably a first attempt to go beyond what was offered so far, without abandoning the strategy of mimicry. What had remained unthought in the previous chapters is an alternative approach of philosophical writing and speech that goes beyond a critique of the canon, as well as an alternative model of subjectivity and authority. As such, this chapter is particularly interesting with regards to a positive feminist sense of speculation.

With the exception of the quotes that open the chapter, Irigaray does not mention the mystics by name but refers to them by means of indirect quotations and creative appropriations of their texts, and thus to an extent erases their individuality and authorship. However, she also does not address the female mystic as a collective

[650] Irigaray, *Speculum*, 192.

subject. While there are examples within the mystical tradition of communal living and attempts for alternative kinship models, especially within the Beguine movement to which Marguerite Porete the author of *Speculum* or *The Mirror of Simple Souls* allegedly belonged, Irigaray does not engage with these aspects of the female mystical tradition. This is arguably also reflected in her analysis of sexual difference, which is not conceptualised by Irigaray primarily as a social and collective struggle.

What can language do?

For Irigaray, the main question as regards the mystic tradition is what language can do. The guiding question here is how the discourse of the female mystic subverts gender hierarchies and challenges the authority of the male clergy. But what happens if a contemporary feminist writer inserts her voice into these texts? Irigaray does not elaborate on in what sense mysticism evokes different connotations today and plays a different role in public discourse and the cultural imaginary. For instance, mysticism has been picked up and appropriated by the far right.[651] Moreover, in most European nation states religious institutions are no longer the main centre of power. As Jantzen argues, '[i]t was only with the development of the secular state, when religious experience was no longer perceived as a source of knowledge and power, that it became safe to allow women to be mystics,' and that mysticism came to be seen as compatible with a woman's role and was constructed as private and personal, having nothing to do with politics.[652]

Though Irigaray does not deny the political importance and implications of female mysticism, this aspect of the mystical tradition is not her primary concern. However, female mysticism arguably cannot be presented as an alternative discourse and celebrated as such without also addressing the difficulties and repercussions women mystics faced. The imagery that was employed by female mystics was re-appropriated

[651] See, for instance, Jeffrey S. Kaplan and Heléne Lööw, eds., *The Cultic Milieu: Oppositional Subcultures in an Age of Globalization* (Oxford: AltaMira Press, 2002); Daniel Trilling, *Bloody Nasty People: The Rise of Britain's Far Right* (London: Verso, 2012); Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology: The Aristosophists of Austria and Germany, 1890-1935* (London: Tauris, 1992).
[652] Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*, 326.

by state and clergy, most importantly the imagery of fire. In the mystical vision, as Irigaray observes, surfaces and spatial constructions collapse in a conflagration.[653]

> Fire flares up in the inexhaustible abundance of her [the female mystic's] underground source and is matched with an opposing but congruent flood that sweeps over the 'I' in an excess of excess. Yet, burning, flowing along in a wild spate of waters, yearning for even greater abandon, the 'I' is *empty* still, ever more empty, opening wide in rapture of soul.[654]

Irigaray here alludes to Porete, who thinks the annihilation of opposites, of the soul, will, and reason together in the image of a fire that is completely self-consuming.[655] Fire, however, did not remain the symbol of a joyful, transformative vision, as imagined by Porete. Since burning was the prevalent punishment for heretics and witches from the twelfth century on, fire came to be associated primarily with disciplining and torture.[656]

> Through burning at the stake, the reburning of the charred remains of the victim, the scattering of the ashes, and the burning of all copies of the condemned works of the heretic, the Inquisition sought total annihilation of all material aspects of the heretical being.[657]

The burning of Porete and her writings was meant by church authorities to send a warning to women.[658] The annihilation of the soul and oneness with God, expressed through the mystic's fire-imagery, was directed against them and materialised in a most brutal form. Since female mystical practices and discourses led to the enclosure of women and eventually escalated in the witch hunts, to celebrate these women and their works also means to think the repercussions brought against them by state and clergy. If their discourse is to have any meaning today, it will also be necessary to

[653] Irigaray, *Speculum*, 195.
[654] Ibid.
[655] Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*, 138.
[656] Ibid.
[657] Ibid., 143.
[658] Dickens, *The Female Mystic*, 129.

think the repercussions women face today, especially poor, trans, and queer women and women of colour. Everything else would seem irresponsible.

In the Middle Ages, knowledge of God validated claims to public authority. While women were mostly excluded from religious and public office, the mystical life offered a possibility to bypass official institutions. Mystics claimed to have direct access to the divine:

> What better basis for authority could possibly be claimed than a direct vision from God? By those who accepted it as authentic the authority claimed by the visionary could not possibly be gainsaid; and it cut straight across all the usual channels like education and ecclesiastical position, rendering them totally unnecessary.[659]

Female mysticism offers not only a model of critique but also a strategy of subversion by way of bypassing official institutions of power. This is what appeals to Irigaray. But can this strategy still work today? While she points at the transformative potential of mystical discourse and its feminist origins, Irigaray does not elaborate what it would mean to learn and to borrow from mysticism today. Answering this question would arguably involve identifying key institutions, globally and locally, that block change today and require some form of bypassing. It would mean to think possible ways to overstep their bounds in order to claim new knowledge systems and forms of authority. This of course is an enormous task that means different things in different locations, and, if not further specified, remains an empty demand. On Irigaray's part, it would mean a more serious theoretical engagement with Marx and the feminist canon, particularly with trans, queer and black feminist scholarship. For those engaging with Irigaray, it might mean to look more closely at Irigaray's involvement with the Communist Party in Italy, as well as to use the theoretical resources she offers and to historicise her claims.

Irigaray nonetheless manages to capture an important aspect of the mystical tradition. Offering an intuitive rather than a historically "correct" reading, she might in fact

[659] Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*, 169.

remain closer to the mystic's intention. Her poetic reading, an invitation to immerse yourself in the text, catches something of the mystic's spirit. Even when her analysis is highly abstract and philosophically complex, it remains accessible. For even if the theoretical claims are not understood by the first-time reader, something is nonetheless being communicated. This is the affective language of the female mystic who co-opts official discourses for her own purposes and literary experimentation in order to convey her vision. *Speculum*, accordingly, is a text that cannot solely be read as an accumulation of arguments. It is not just the rational claims that carry this text but equally its poetic style, that is, the very doing of the writing, the subversion of the authors Irigaray chooses to engage.

However, it should be mentioned that not only mysticism, but Irigaray, too, has been appropriated by the right. Irigaray is the darling of very conservative theologians who use her statements of the naturalness of the two sexes,[660] an appropriation which Irigaray does not openly distance herself from. Of course, her work has also been used for critical and progressive ends. However, the question remains: what in her work lets itself be easily appropriated for regressive political purposes? First is the heterosexual male/female binary that is emphasised throughout her work. Thus, while Irigaray emphasises that she, like Derrida and Deleuze, always takes difference as her starting point, she is not interested in any difference, or difference as such. According to Irigaray, sexual difference is the most universal paradigm through which to think difference, as 'an irreducible difference between two.'[661] When confronted with questions of race and trans, Irigaray argues that these may risk focusing more on identity, rather than difference. That the categories of trans and race, in so far as they have become identity categories, have been violently imposed in an effort to categorise

[660] See for example the work of John Milbank, professor of theology, philosophy and ethics in the department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Nottingham. Milbank uses Irigaray's ideas, even if he does not refer to her by name, especially her claim of a natural sex/gender binary and her emphasis on a dual difference to make an intrinsic link between sex, procreation and marriage. Moreover, he employs Irigaray's pun of "homo-sexuality" for his own purposes, arguing that granting equal rights to gay and queer people would result in making everything 'ontologically homosexual,' a sameness that reduces difference. For Milbank, the recognition of homosexuality as norm rather than pathological exception has let, for instance through the work of Judith Butler, to "transgenderism", which, he argues, renders sexual difference null and thus has to be fought politically and theoretically. Interview with Milbank at Goldsmiths University London: https://www.gold.ac.uk/faithsunit/current-projects/reimaginingreligion/landmark-interviews/john-milbank/ and https://catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2017/01/13/long-read-what-liberal-intellectuals-get-wrong-about-transgenderism/

[661] Luce Irigaray, *In the Beginning, She Was* (New York: Continuum, 2012), 18.

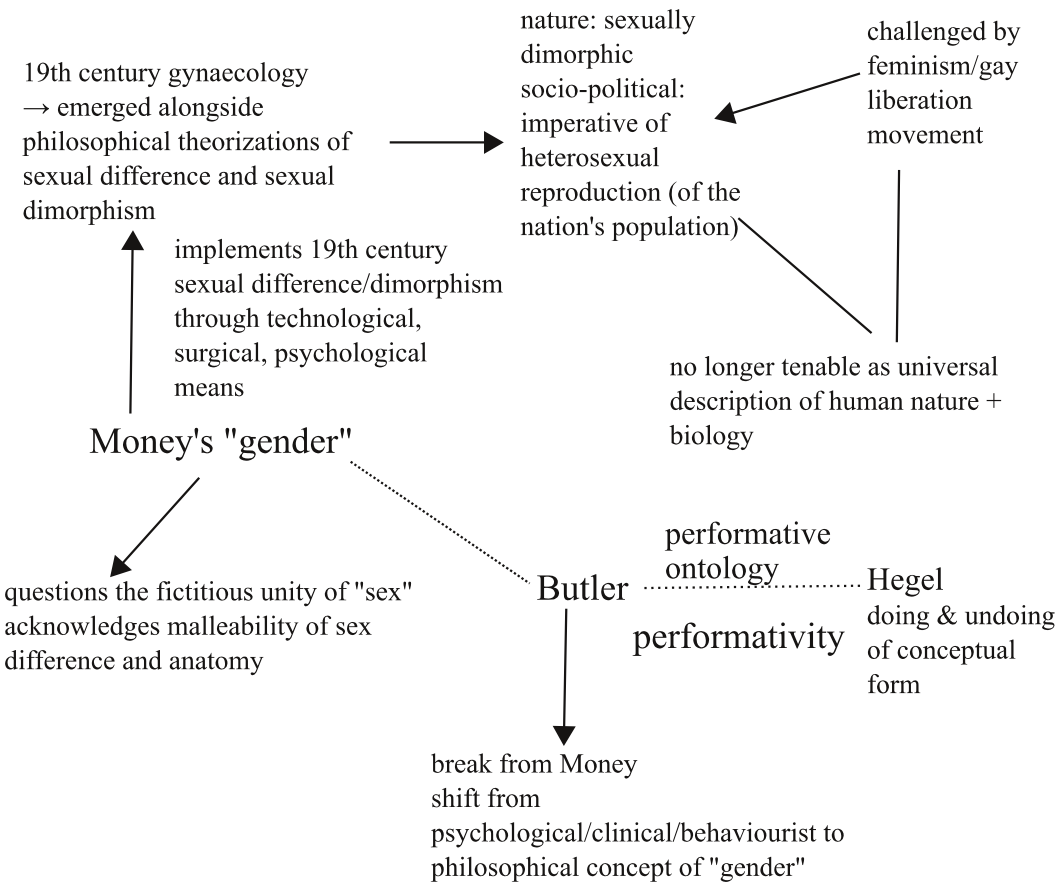
and to differentiate human bodies is not acknowledged by Irigaray. While it might be argued that Irigaray's concept of sexual difference could be interpreted differently, most importantly that sexual difference does not have to be binary, this would mean, I argue, to entirely depart from Irigaray, who never questions the (sexual) binary.

Conclusion

Hegel introduces a concept of performativity as speculative concept of being. Irigaray and, as we will see in the following chapter, Butler outline another way of thinking the ontological expression of speculative thought. Butler introduces her own concept of performativity, while Irigaray proposes the concept of specula(riza)tion as a response to the problematic notion of speculation that was first elaborated by Kant. Specula(riza)tion and performativity are intrinsically linked to questions of gender, sexual difference, biopolitics and the history of the gynaecological speculum. There is, according to Irigaray and Butler, no apolitical, non-empirical power of reason, but theoretical reason is still problematic, and is distinct from other types of reason. The questions raised by Kant and Hegel therefore still require a response.

Chapter six

A Hegelian speculative ontology? Butler's concept of gender performativity



Introduction

The last chapter looked at Irigaray's concept of specula(riza)tion, which challenges the transparency and immediacy of Hegelian speculative onto-logics. Speculation as a question of perspective becomes irrelevant for Hegel once the ontological dimension of speculation is established. The *Logic* attempts the dissolution of perspective. In other words, it forecloses questions of viewpoint or standpoint, which are deemed unimportant for an analysis of the ontological dimension of speculative thought. While Irigaray agrees with Hegel's initial critique of Kant arguing that the ideas of reason, though abstract or, rather, purely conceptual, must nonetheless be understood as manifesting ontologically, Irigaray calls Hegel's framework into question.

According to Irigaray – who initially borrows from Hegel to make this point – speculation is not merely hypothetical. However, Irigaray poses questions of perspective and vision to outline a feminist critique of the Western European philosophical canon. In doing so, she explains what appears merely accidental in Hegel, namely the appearance of social and political categories in a study of non-empirical reason. It will be argued in this chapter that Judith Butler outlines another way of thinking the ontological dimension of speculative thought. While Irigaray transforms speculation into specula(riza)tion, Butler introduces her own concept of (gender) performativity, one that relies, it will be argued, on a Hegelian notion of the *Thätigkeit* or "doing" of conceptual form.

In chapter four it was proposed that Hegel introduces a concept of performativity at the end of the *Science of Logic*. Performativity refers to the activity or *Thätigkeit* of conceptual form and introduces a new concept of being. The following chapter will draw on chapter four to think performativity through a Hegelian inheritance. However, in this chapter, rather than only looking at Hegel, we will also look at an explanation of gender performativity as developed in the work of Judith Butler. Gender is one of the core concepts of feminist theory and philosophy, where this concept functions as an analytic tool to uncover and critique all forms of patriarchal relations. Though effective, often no reference to the history of the concept of gender is made. This, it will be argued, is problematic since gender was at first a clinical behaviourist category, introduced to medicalise intersex- and trans-bodies, and was only later appropriated

for feminist purposes. In this chapter I will explain that it is Judith Butler's rewriting of gender as gender performativity that marked a decisive change in the meaning of this term. With Butler, and through the notion of "performativity," gender became a philosophical concept.

This chapter will begin with Butler's critique of Irigaray, and her replacement of the concept of sexual difference with gender. It will then be shown that the concept of gender, due to its history, is problematic in its own way. A historical account of the concept of gender will be followed by an analysis of gender performativity as philosophical concept. It will be argued that gender performativity, as a dynamic and historical concept that only is what it performs, remains within a Hegelian speculative tradition. This is because both Hegel and Butler aim to think a speculative ontology, or a concept of being that is not static but is its own past and future acts. This is a deconstructive ontology since there is no foundation to being and, in Butler's words, echoing Nietzsche, no doer behind the deed. Performativity as ontology, it will be demonstrated, is for the first time thought by Hegel and redefined in Butler's work. It will be shown that Butler's claims about ontology work in relation to Hegel. With Butler however, and against Hegel, performativity becomes a social ontology.

The end of sexual difference?

This chapter begins with an end, namely the end of sexual difference as useful framework for philosophical thinking. Butler critiques the concept of sexual difference, including Irigaray's, at several points throughout her work, most notably in her essay 'The End of Sexual Difference?' in *Undoing Gender*. This essay, as well as Butler's counter-proposal, will be analysed in the following. For Irigaray, sexual difference as a question was meant to criticise what she calls "mono-sexualism." All terms in philosophy and in society and culture more broadly that seem neutral are, Irigaray argues, in fact gendered and by default male. While sexual difference is to call into question the predominance of male subjectivity, it never questions, as Butler remarks, the initial binary of the two sexes. As will be outlined in the following, Butler's main criticism of sexual difference is that it is a static and ahistorical concept that cannot respond to its own conceptual history. While Irigaray claims that sexual difference is the most important question of our time, according to Butler this concept

does not allow us to address what is urgent in feminist philosophy today, most notably questions of race and transness.

It is against this background that we must read Butler's programmatic essay 'The End of Sexual Difference?' The title of the essay seems to announce a philosophical intervention. However, while the reader of *Gender Trouble* might expect an affirmative answer, followed by a proposition for a future feminist philosophy that would foreground thinking the historical dimension of political categories, these expectations are not met. The question is carried forward into the next chapter, 'The Question of Social Transformation,' where it will again be partially answered and partially deferred. Contrary to the bold title, the essay on the end of sexual difference begins in a cautious tone and with a disclaimer. Butler clarifies that she 'do[es] not ask the question about the end of sexual difference in order to make a plea for that end.'[662] In other words, she does not want to propose and enumerate reasons for why that framework is no longer worth pursuing.[663]

Butler outlines and follows Irigaray's definition, according to which sexual difference is not a bedrock of any sorts but is rather a question for our time. According to Butler, it is the irresolution of this question that forms a historical trajectory for us.[664] But can a question come to an end, lose its power and its meaning, even though no answer has yet been reached? How does one declare the end of something that one has not yet encountered or come to know? In other words, how to critique a non-foundational concept, such as Irigaray's invocation of sexual difference, which 'is not a given, not a premise, not a basis on which to build a feminism'?[665] Butler's strategy is to shift the focus and frame of the problem in question. In 'The End of Sexual Difference?' Butler traces the inconsistent histories of the concepts of gender, sex and sexual difference and demonstrates the political effects that these terms have, the real fears they cause, the associations and expectations that are attached to each individual term, and the misunderstandings that accompany their employment. Telling this story, it almost seems as if Butler forgets about her initial question. I contend that this is

[662] Butler, Judith, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 176.
[663] Ibid.
[664] Ibid., 177.
[665] Ibid., 178.

precisely her aim. Butler remains faithful to Irigaray: she will not declare the end of sexual difference. But she will offer another philosophical proposition to keep interrogating the initial question.

What interests Butler in the notion of sexual difference is its status as a 'border concept,' one which has at the same time psychic, somatic and social dimensions.[666] Since sexual difference is neither fully given nor fully constructed but is partially both, it registers ontologically in a way that is permanently difficult to determine.[667] We are therefore best advised, Butler suggests, not to interpret sexual difference as a thing, a fact, or a presupposition, but as a demand for rearticulating a specific question or problematic, 'namely, the permanent difficulty of determining where the biological, the psychic, the discursive, the social begin and end.'[668] It is at this point that Butler proposes her own interpretation and departs from Irigaray.

What we mean by gender, she suggests, might be that part of sexual difference that does appear as the social, the negotiable and the constructed.[669] Rather than contradict it, gender interrogates a specific site of sexual difference. It is the extreme of sociality in sexual difference. Butler suggests that we do not have to decide whether gender is a better theoretical proposition than sexual difference because these are not mutually exclusive analytical frameworks. It might thus seem at first that the question regarding the end of sexual difference is resolved by Butler in a fairly generous way, by allocating distinct theoretical territories and fields of influence. However, throughout this chapter and the following, Butler also raises, almost in passing, the question of heterosexism and of allyship, thus suggesting that, in fact, we do have to make a decision on what sexual difference is and defines.

Since Irigaray's project, like Butler's, is one of social critique, sexual difference cannot remain a vague and general question for thought but has to be further defined and contextualised. Following Irigaray, sexual difference is always already at work. The task accordingly is to make sexual difference visible as well as to imagine a positive

[666] Ibid., 186.
[667] Ibid.
[668] Ibid., 185.
[669] Ibid., 186.

account of sexual difference that would construct a theory of subjectivity that is not automatically masculine. Is a different theory of the subject possible? This is the central question of Irigaray's analysis. Butler seems to suggest that the concept of sexual difference remains an inadequate response to this question, because it never questions the binary of the two. This binary, Butler argues, is grounded in heterosexism. Moreover, by making the question of difference primarily about sexual difference, Irigaray erases or renders secondary other differences that constitute subjectivity, including racial and class difference.

The question regarding 'The End of Sexual Difference?' is followed, in Butler's narrative, by 'The Question of Social Transformation.' In this chapter, Butler reminds us that at the heart of feminist thought and praxis is the demand for the 'the social transformation of gender relations,' a goal that we could probably all agree on, 'even if "gender" is not the preferred word for some.'[670] While it may seem at first that the search for the right word, gender or other, is not what is primarily at stake, it will turn out in the course of this essay that differences in terminology are problematic after all. For Butler, the multiple co-existing frameworks of feminist theory are not all equally suited to transform social relations. They are hence not simply a matter of choice, of focus, or preference. Butler states that she worries about the potentially harmful character of the frameworks that feminists commit themselves to. More specifically, she worries about the stakes of sexual difference, which describes patriarchal domination so well that it makes us see that very domination as inevitable or as primary, more primary in fact than other operations of differential power.[671]

This is not the only cause for concern. There also remains the question of whether sexual difference is really other to its instituted form, the dominant one being heterosexuality itself.[672] The question of whether the framework of sexual difference can itself move beyond heterosexism and beyond binarity into multiplicity is one that Butler interrogates on several occasions.[673] Butler, however, makes a further claim. She suggests that the choice of frame, of gender over sexual difference, is also a

[670] Ibid., 204.
[671] Ibid., 213.
[672] Ibid.
[673] See, for instance, Ibid., 197.

question of allyship. Sexual difference, she writes, 'is clearly out of favour within some reigning paradigms in queer theory.'[674] Queer theory, according to Butler, describes feminism as a project unambiguously committed to gender.[675] Moreover, Butler continues, within critical race studies too one finds 'very little reference to sexual difference as a term.'[676] This, it seems, is the true end of sexual difference, that Butler quietly declares after all.

The philosophical reasons for this incompatibility that Butler detects between on the one hand queer theory and critical race studies and on the other theories of sexual difference are not further elaborated in *Undoing Gender*, and thus require the reader to return to *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies that Matter*. Here, Butler argues that the category of gender can address what Irigaray wants to address, namely the gendered reality of constitutive exclusion. However, gender, as Butler proposes, will not prevent us from thinking other social exclusions, such as race, class, disability and sexual orientation, as equally constitutive. Butler proposes that gender is a better term because of its inherent potential or plasticity to re-interpret and expand its current meanings. By contrast, the structuralist concept of sexual difference, including Irigaray's, refuses to engage with and to respond to its own exclusions. As such, Butler argues, sexual difference remains static, and consequently fails to address the demands of queer theory and critical race studies.

The shift from the framework of sexual difference to that of gender, and with gender to a set of interrelating categories including race, class, sexuality and disability, none of which are ontologically primary, introduces the concept of "identity" as a key point of reference. The question central to Irigaray about the symbolic and structures of representation is no longer at the centre of the analysis. The pairing of gender and identity as interrelated analytical tools is already announced in the title of *Gender Trouble* which, if read in its entirety, proclaims its concern as being *Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. "Gender" and "identity," "trouble" and "subversion" are aligned and define the theoretical framework and the political stakes of the book. The subtitle, however, is only printed on the first publication and disappears from the

[674] Ibid., 185.
[675] Ibid.
[676] Ibid.

second Routledge edition that remains in print (and still relatively widespread circulation) today. This abbreviation of the original title gives the impression that the topic of gender could be discussed on its own terms, separate and distinct from a discourse on identification and identity formation. For Butler, however, such a separation is, in fact, impossible. Since the concept of "gender" leaves the relation between different identity categories open, it is presented as a more neutral or nuanced category of analysis, especially when contrasted with sexual difference. However, as will be outlined in the following, its introduction was not unproblematic and not without a political agenda.

The biopolitical origins of "gender"

An analysis of gender performativity requires a historical and genealogical analysis of the concept of gender. "Gender," introduced in order to name and describe the social dimension of human sexed bodily life, was not invented by Butler, but proposed in a clinical context. Gender performativity arguably marked a radical intervention in the use and understanding of this concept – subverting what was first and foremost a clinical behaviourist and, as we will see, highly problematic term, into a critical concept and feminist analytical tool, though with its own problems. In order to understand this shift in meaning, the concept of performativity will have to be analysed, alongside a historical account of the concept "gender."

As Jemima Repo outlines in *The Biopolitics of Gender*, 'the idea of gender was not invented by feminists but rather emerged in US sexological studies of intersexuality and transsexualism in the 1950s and 1960s.'[677] The child psychologist John Money, who treated "hermaphrodites" and "intersex" babies, was the first to make use of the grammatical category of *gender* as a clinical and diagnostic tool.[678] In Money's own words, gender was given 'a new lease on life'[679] with the 1955 publication 'Hermaphroditism, Gender and Precocity in Hyperadrenocorticism' in the *Bulletin of the Johns Hopkins Hospital*. 'In this paper the word *gender* made its first appearance

[677] Jemima Repo, *The Biopolitics of Gender* (New York: Oxford University Press), 75.
[678] Paul B. Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era* (New York: The Feminist Press, 2013), 99.
[679] John Money, *Gendermaps: Social Constructionism, Feminism and Sexosophical History* (London: Bloomsbury 2016), 11.

in English as a human attribute, but it was not simply a synonym for *sex*.'[680] Rather than referring to the gender of pronouns, gender, as Money conceives of it, names the ways that people comport themselves in their roles as boys and girls, men or women.[681]

In the 1995 publication *Gendermaps*, Money observes that this new usage, medical at first, quickly spread into the vernacular,[682] though not without misunderstandings. Money, in this later text, demarcates his "invention" from its use in feminist and queer studies, but also sociological and cultural studies more broadly. Gender accordingly went from being a nominator of types to explaining and regulating the sexual order of things,[683] but, as Money himself indicates, the concept took on another life, as both an analytic category in the social sciences, demography and public policy as well a as critical analytical tool within feminist and queer studies. Though a somewhat different concept or category in each of these areas, for scientists, governments, and feminists alike, the question posed by "gender" revolves around the problem of not only how to understand sex, but of how to govern it.[684]

The question of how to govern sex is at the centre of Money's research, which is mainly focused on the treatment of hermaphroditism, later referred to as intersex. Hermaphroditism, according to Money, demonstrates that the unitary definition of sex as either male or female has to be abandoned.[685] Money argues that the term "sex," at least as it is commonly used, is too narrow to cover the masculinity or femininity of hermaphrodites.[686] Characterised as a 'genital birth defect,'[687] hermaphroditism is the medical anomaly or problem to which Money proposes "gender" as both an explanatory response and a clinical solution. In view of this "defect," which means that the sex of the baby cannot be specified – at least not within the binary frame of male and female – "gender," according to Money, comes to signify 'the overall degree of masculinity and/or femininity that is privately experienced and publicly manifested in infancy, childhood, and adulthood, and which usually though not invariably

[680] Ibid, 18-19.
[681] Ibid., 11.
[682] Ibid.
[683] Repo, *The Biopolitics of Gender*, 2.
[684] Ibid., 4.
[685] Money, *Gendermaps*, 21.
[686] Ines Orobio de Castro, *Made to Order: Sex/Gender in a Transsexual Perspective* (Amsterdam: Spinhuis, 1993), 24.
[687] Money, *Gendermaps*, 18-19.

correlates with the anatomy of the organs of procreation.'[688] While gender is not disassociated from the biological factors of sex, in his 1955 article Money argues that gender is more connected to early life experience than to chromosomal or gonadal sex.[689] It is this proposition that is enthusiastically taken up by psychoanalyst and psychiatrist Robert Stoller, who popularised the term "gender identity," as well as by feminists in the 1960s and 1970s, often in isolation from Money's other claims.

Money not only proposes the category of "gender" in addition to "sex," he also redefines the latter. Instead of a unitary notion, Money proposes a list of five prenatally determined variables of sex which can be independent of one another, namely, chromosomal sex, gonadal sex, internal and external morphological sex, and hormonal sex (prenatal and pubertal).[690] According to Money, two postnatal determinants have to be added to this list. First the sex of assignment or rearing, and second what Money terms "gender role" – that is, the private imagery and ideation, and the public manifestation and expression, of masculinity and femininity.[691] For Money gender, as this list indicates, is part of "sex," one of its seven variables. It is not to be understood as a psychological term opposed to the somatic "sex." It is Stoller who makes this distinction in his *Sex and Gender Volume 1: The Development of Masculinity and Femininity*, which separates sex from gender, due to the overdetermination of the concept of sex.[692] As a consequence, Stoller, rather than Money, is cited in the second wave feminist literature on "gender".

However, though not thought as opposites, "gender" still marks a radical intervention in the thinking of sex: Money reverses the categorial order of importance. While all variables of sex are important, they are, following Money, not all equally decisive. In Money's work, what is projected as stable or enduring is no longer what was previously known as sex – the five prenatally determined variables – but rather the potential of every human being to achieve a stable gender identity and role. The

[688] Ibid.
[689] Terry Goldie, *The Man Who Invented Gender: Engaging the Ideas of John Money* (Vancouver: UBC Press), 39.
[690] Money, *Gendermaps*, 21.
[691] Ibid.
[692] '(…) the word *sexuality* usually does not communicate much, for it covers so much. Trying to be more precise, we have split off "gender" as a distinguishable part of "sexuality"', Robert Stoller, *Sex and Gender Volume 1: The Development of Masculinity and Femininity* (London: Maresfield, 1984), vi.

potential of this stability, the acquisition of a strong binary gender role and identity, justifies, for Money, early infantile correction surgery and pubertal or life-long hormonal interventions. It is in this sense that the invention of "gender," as a variable of sex and as potential overall organizing principle, allows for the appearance and development of a series of new biopolitical techniques for the normalization and transformation of living beings.[693] Thus, while Money does not precisely split off gender from sex, the order of stability and, with it, the order of importance, is reversed. "Gender" is proposed as a response to the question of how to govern (inter)sex. As such, gender is not simply an explanatory concept but is a strategic response, invented above all to rationalise and correct those bodies which visibly do not live up to medical standards. Given this origin, as will be shown in the following analysis, gender has been since its birth a site of political struggle.[694]

Gender is trans-gender

Butler only engages with Money once, in her 2004 publication *Undoing Gender*. Though her analysis of the Reimer case, Money's most prominent study, is convincing, Butler does not analyse Money's role in conceptualizing "gender" more broadly. But why would such an analysis be necessary? If Butler radically changes the meaning of "gender," then why revisit Money? Current debates within feminist theory and activism, I argue, require this confrontation. Given the transphobic trend within contemporary feminism and, relatedly, the theoretical debates to which feminist philosophy has to respond to, an engagement with Money and the clinical and biopolitical "origins" of gender seems unavoidable. In other words, since anti-trans sentiments are strong within society, taking a stance against transphobic feminism and politics – as, for instance, elaborated in the works of Sheila Jeffreys and Janice Raymond[695] and dispersed online by people who have been identified as "gender critical feminists" and "trans-exclusionary radical feminists" ("TERFs") – is one of the urgent tasks that feminists are confronted with today.

[693] Preciado, *Testo Junkie*, 111.
[694] Repo, *The Biopolitics of Gender*, 4.
[695] Janice G. Raymond, *The Transsexual Empire* (London, Women's Press, 1980) and critical response by Sandy Stone 'The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto' in *Camera Obscura* 29 (1992), who was personally attacked by Raymond.

But while feminist theory finds itself in search of theoretical tools to adequately address the question of trans, trans theory and activism can arguably not simply be "added" to a feminist agenda. Rather, it will have to be acknowledged and demonstrated that trans theory and activism is at the heart of feminism itself. An engagement with Money makes evident that no artificial link needs to be constructed, since "gender" was in fact from the start a discourse about intersex and trans bodies, albeit with the aim to normalise these. With gender being a key category of feminist thought – though not the only one – trans and intersex issues do not have to be "added" after the fact. Acknowledging the clinical "origin" of gender becomes important for this reason. This, however, is not spelled out by Butler. If she were to admit Money's role in coining and circulating the concept of gender, then trans and intersex issues would be immediately foregrounded and not, as in the second preface to *Gender Trouble*, only be acknowledged in retrospect, as an addendum to the text. Since "gender" as a new category was developed within medical and psychological discourses to respond to and regulate intersex- and trans- bodies, an analysis of Money must precede a closer reading of Butler.

Money's publications were singularly influential from the mid-1950s to 1970s,[696] and until very recently have been the main point of reference for medical theory and practice. The concept of gender-identity/role introduced psychological principles into the medical treatment of intersexuality, and in doing so provided a link between the fields of psychology, endocrinology, and surgery in gender assignment and treatment.[697] Introducing both a relation and a point of convergence, gender became the major sexual discourse of the mid-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, just as sexuality had been the subject of scientific and biopolitical discourse in the nineteenth.[698] It was, however, not just Money that made this shift possible, but the historical context more broadly.

[696] Iain Morland, "Gender, Genitals, and the Meaning of Being Human," in *Fuckology: Critical Essays on John Money's Diagnostic Concepts*, eds. Lisa Downing, Iain Morland, and Nikki Sullivan (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 69.
[697] Katrina Karkazis, *Fixing Sex: Intersex, Medical Authority and Lived Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 48.
[698] Repo, *The Biopolitics of Gender*, 1.

Naturphilosophie meets cybernetics

As Repo points out, the medical interest in hermaphroditism that gave birth to the notion of gender occurred at a time when the West was rebuilding social, political, and economic order after the Second World War.[699] While the management of sex was an integral part of post-World War order, war technology in turn was a condition of possibility for new approaches to intersex treatment. Plastic surgery, which had advanced in World War I, endeavoured not only to reconstruct broken bodies but also shell-shocked minds by means of operations.[700] Surgeons emphasised the positive psychological impact of their operations, which came to justify surgical intervention more broadly. As Iain Morland notes in 'Gender, Genitals, and the Meaning of Being Human,' the symmetries between interwar treatments for inferiority, caused by the losing of limbs in the war, and Money's advocacy of gender reassignment surgery are striking.[701]

Until Money's publications in the mid-twentieth century, medical intervention in hermaphroditism remained uncommon, partly due to a lack of technological capacity.[702] While there was an interest in intersex bodies, the medical establishment, rather than thinking about possible ways of intervening, had previously focused on how to understand and classify these bodies.[703] Advancement in surgical techniques, the discovery of "sex" hormones, new understandings of sex differentiation in embryology, and the ability to test for sex chromosomes all shaped Money's understanding of sex as a differential term and his proposed protocol and movement toward intervention.[704] However, there was another important influence that might seem unexpected at first. Money was motivated in his work not only by surgical and psychological innovation, but also by cybernetics, the study of communication and control that was first conceived in military research during the 1940s.[705] If understood as part of the general post-war U.S. scientific context, this influence on his work will

[699] Ibid., 47.
[700] Morland, "Gender, Genitals, and the Meaning of Being Human," 83.
[701] Ibid.
[702] Karkazis, *Fixing Sex*, 31.
[703] Ibid.
[704] Ibid., 31-32.
[705] Iain Morland, "Cybernetic Sexology," in *Fuckology: Critical Essays on John Money's Diagnostic Concepts*, eds. Lisa Downing, Iain Morland, and Nikki Sullivan (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 101.

be less surprising. As Morland demonstrates, Money uses a cybernetical vocabulary of "variables," "thresholds," and "feedback systems" to offer a more up-to date sexology and to provide an alternative to both psychoanalytic and biological explanations of sex, gender and sexuality.[706] Given its cybernetic roots, the discourse of gender must also be understood in the context of communication, warfare and control.

When Money was using the term "gender," he was thinking of the possibility of using the new medical technologies from surgery and hormones as well as the cybernetic ideas of communication, feedback and control to modify intersex bodies, and to intentionally produce subjectivities in line with a pre-existing biopolitical and social order. In Money's framework, as Repo outlines, the body no longer simply reveals the truth of sex; this truth is rather learned and stabilised through imprinting, which in turn is supported by surgery.[707] Thus, one could argue, as Paul B. Preciado does in *Testo Junkie*, that gender, just like the pill or the Oncomouse, is a biotechnical industrial artefact.[708] Yet, even though the possibility of a straightforward revelation of sex is no longer conceivable in Money's framework, he does not conceive of a new understanding of sex/gender that escapes necessary binarism. Even if understood to be partly socially constructed, the body still has to live up to the same preconceived standards. What emerges is a new sex-gender regime – the unexpected alliance between a nineteenth century naturalist metaphysics of sexual dimorphism, which focuses on heterosexual reproduction, and the rise of cybernetics and of a hyperconstructivist medical biotech industry, in which gender roles and identities can be artificially designed.[709] According to *Naturphilosophie* sexual difference is rooted in nature and structures all of human life. Schelling, Hegel and Carus propose, as outlined in chapter three, a theory of sexual complementarity according to which men and women are not physical and moral equals but complementary opposites. Money's theory of "gender" does not question the *naturphilosophische* conception of sexual difference as a complementary dualism that structures all of human life, but rather envisages those clinical, medical, and surgical procedures that will implement sexual

[706] Ibid.
[707] Repo, *The Biopolitics of Gender*, 47.
[708] Preciado, *Testo Junkie*, 101.
[709] Ibid., 103.

duality. "Gender," accordingly, is where *Naturphilosophie* meets biotechnological medical care.

In absence of another protocol Money's guidelines were rapidly and widely adopted, and, despite challenges from the intersex community, have remained the basis for much contemporary thinking about treatment interventions for intersexuality.[710] Money's work, moreover, gained not only medical but also public recognition. In the 1970s and 1980s, Money was interviewed in numerous mainstream magazines, appeared frequently on television and was often quoted in newspapers.[711] In this way, his ideas travelled beyond a medical readership. While feminists in the same period hijacked the concept of gender as a means to oppose biological determinism and its control over women's bodies and capacities, and while this uptake has resulted in the production of new knowledges and of a radical rethinking of sex, gender, masculinity, femininity, reproduction, and so on, Money's influence on feminist theory has remained largely unanalysed.

From gender to gender performativity: A question of history

I begin my discussion of Butler not with *Gender Trouble* or *Bodies That Matter*, though both these works will be analysed throughout, but with *Undoing Gender*, Butler's further re-elaboration of the question of gender performativity from 2004. The reason for this non-chronological approach is that in *Undoing Gender* Butler first mentions and engages with Money's work and includes trans- and intersex discourses as inherent to the question of gender performativity. Until *Undoing Gender*, Butler, in line with feminist theory more broadly, had ignored 'the medical and biotechnological dimensions of gender production.'[712] In this book, moreover, the definition of gender performativity as a doing (*Thätigkeit)*, as well as an undoing, is further elaborated. *Undoing Gender* accordingly brings together the two separate but related discourses that are of interest here, namely an analysis of gender that includes its historical origin as a term meant to answer questions regarding the status and medical treatment of

[710] Karkazis, *Fixing Sex*, 48.
[711] Goldie, *The Man Who Invented Gender*, 3.
[712] See Preciado, *Testo Junkie*, 106.

intersex and trans people, as well as a philosophical account of (gender) performativity.

Butler's discussion of intersex and transgender activism and theory demonstrates her political and theoretical commitment to intervening in and challenging mainstream feminist discourses. As with *Gender Trouble*, which was meant as a critical intervention in contemporary feminism highlighting and challenging the fact that 'its own practice sets up exclusionary gender norms within feminism, often with homophobic consequences,'[713] *Undoing Gender* shows Butler's continued investment in opening up feminist theory and practice. As she states in the opening to the book, it is meant to investigate 'what it might mean to undo restrictively normative conceptions of sexual and gendered life.'[714] Though in different and varying ways, also dependent on other social factors such as class, race and age, this normative pressure effects not only women but queer, trans and intersex people – who might identify as women or not, but who have a shared interest and language in challenging the violence of gender norms.

Cheryl Chase, a founder of the intersexual[715] movement and one of its most outspoken activists, points out that much of the language of intersexuals has been decisively formed by the history of the gay liberation movement.[716] There are, she argues, parallels in the process of, and in the public responses to, "coming out" as either gay or intersexual.[717] This might be, in part, due to the fact that these discourses have a shared origin and history. According to Katrina Karkazis, the author of *Fixing Sex: Intersex, Medical Authority and Lived Experience*, historically the emergence of the terms of "homosexual" and "heterosexual" coincided with an intense interest in hermaphroditism.[718] This double concern emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries out of medical discourses on deviance.[719] There might then also be, as Chase hopes, parallels in the struggle for liberation. Just as homosexuality has come to be

[713] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), "Preface (1999)," viii.
[714] Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 1.
[715] The movement decided to use the term "intersexual" rather than "intersex."
[716] Suzanne J. Kessler, *Lessons from the Intersexed* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 83-84.
[717] Ibid.
[718] Karkazis, *Fixing Sex*, 40.
[719] Ibid.

understood by many people as a social construct, intersexuality, too, might be reinterpreted, from the thought of it as a monstrous condition to thinking of the management of intersexuality as monstrous.[720] Feminist, queer, intersex and trans theory, though distinct, share common goals and strategies.

Butler emphasises that she wants to understand gender historically and biopolitically, yet, as Repo points out, she does not look at the history of this term. A historical analysis of the concept of gender can be found in Repo's *The Biopolitics of Gender* as well as in the chapter 'Technogender' in Paul B. Preciado's *Testo Junkie*. According to Butler, '[t]o understand gender as a historical category […] is to accept that gender, understood as one way of culturally configuring the body, is open to a continual remaking, and that "anatomy" and "sex" are not without cultural framing.'[721] Butler, as will be shown, historicises ontology and presents this as a historical account of gender. Her project, in other words, is to construct a concept of being that is open to change and that in its definition includes an understanding of social temporality and of the cultural shaping of what "is." Such a concept then serves as a foundation for explaining gender performativity.

Butler argues that the concept of gender, if understood through the concept of performativity, contains a reference to history inherent to its definition. Performativity in Butler names, in line with Hegel's speculative proposition, as will be outlined in more detail, a deconstructive and temporal definition of language and of being. Defined as such, the concept of gender, according to Butler, stands in tension with some versions of sexual difference as outlined at the beginning of this chapter. The sexual difference framework, according to Butler, is unable to respond to the following questions: 'What is the history of this category? Where are we in its history at this time?'[722] Yet, when it comes to the concept of gender, Butler does not have an answer to these questions either.

When Butler emphasises that gender as a concept is inherently historical, her argument seems close to Malabou's conception of the plasticity of form – a means to rethink

[720] Kessler, *Lessons from the Intersexed*, 83-84.
[721] Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 10.
[722] Ibid, 38.

ontology as always already deconstructed and inherently temporal.[723] While she makes a convincing argument regarding the nature of the concept of gender, this is a philosophical claim about conceptual form and its ontological instantiation, which does not translate into a retelling of the particular history of "gender." This does not invalidate her critique of Irigaray and of sexual difference, but Butler will have to specify what kind of "history" she is talking about. There are at least two histories of gender at stake: one at the level of conceptual form and ontology, which is about the nature of ontology itself; and one that looks at and traces the history and politics of "gender" as a social category and notes its changing meanings over time. It seems that when it comes to gender both accounts are necessary. While Butler addresses the former, the latter remains largely unaddressed in her work.

Repo critiques Butler's emphasis on rethinking ontology, which, she argues, comes at the expanse of a Foucauldian analysis of the operations of power that are necessary to understand the historical origin and workings of the concept of gender. According to Repo, 'Butler's gender theory evades these questions of biopolitical strategies and tactics that are central to Foucault's analysis of the apparatus of sexuality/sex.'[724] Repo argues that, instead of a Foucauldian analysis of power, there is in Butler's work an overemphasis on 'the rules of the dialectical production of meaning that serves to satisfy the subject's laborious desire for recognition.'[725] Here Butler is critiqued for being too Hegelian in her analysis. It will be argued in the following that Repo's criticisms are justified, and that Butler does not sufficiently engage with Money and the clinical protocol out of which the discourse of "gender" emerges. At the same time, Butler's interventions in ontology are nonetheless important and should not be underestimated. Moreover, they do not prevent an analysis of power. Rather, Butler should be credited for these interventions. A philosophical analysis of this kind does not imply that her findings would be politically irrelevant.

[723] See, for instance, Catherine Malabou, *Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity*, trans. Carolyn Shread (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), and Malabou, *The Future of Hegel*.
[724] Repo, *The Biopolitics of Gender*, 6.
[725] Ibid.

The "Reimer case"

Considering 'the term "sex" inadequate to describe the lived embodiment of those whose anatomies are either "discordant" or do not appear to match the sex roles associates with masculinity or femininity,'[726] "gender" was a term coined in an attempt to solve the "dilemma" that the intersex body presented to Money. While in *Undoing Gender* Butler engages with intersex activism, she does not relate this activist work back to the origin of "gender," as a challenge to this origin. Butler mentions Money for the first time in *Undoing Gender* and refers to the Reimer case that is consistently used in Money's publications as proof for his claims.

The "John/Joan" case, as it was referred to for reasons of anonymity, details the childhood and adolescence of David Reimer, an identical twin, who in 1965 had his penis burned off in a circumcision accident and who was subsequently raised as a girl under Money's medical care.[727] While this case was central to changing beliefs about the relationship between the social construction of gender and biological sex, Money failed to mention that Reimer rejected his female gender assignment as an adult and lived the rest of his life, until his suicide in 2004, as a male.[728] In 2000, John Colapinto published a critical book on the case that sought to reveal Money's mistreatment, leading to a number of angry responses raising concerns about the ethics of Money's practice, but also vindicating biological explanations of gender.[729] According to the latter critiques, Money's writing and experiments had done violence to the unassailable nature of "man" and "woman."[730]

The strengths of Butler's retelling of the Reimer case is that she makes his story heard and questions Money's clinical framework, which enforces gender stereotypes and sexual dimorphism, without however using Reimer's story for her own theoretical and political purposes. What Butler shows is that David Reimer's experiences at school, at home and in the medical establishment shed light on the experience of non-binary

[726] Lisa Downing, Iain Morland, and Nikki Sullivan, "Introduction: On the 'Duke of Dysfunction'," in *Fuckology: Critical Essays on John Money's Diagnostic Concepts*, eds. Lisa Downing, Iain Morland, and Nikki Sullivan (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 21.
[727] Goldie, *The Man who Invented Gender*, 4.
[728] Ibid.
[729] Downing, Morland, and Sullivan, "Introduction: On the 'Duke of Dysfunction'," 6.
[730] Ibid.

and trans people more broadly. Reimer's experience and double transition is presented in its complexity by Butler, who makes no final judgement on whether Reimer is "trans" or not.

Reimer functions, for Money, as an example of his own theoretical beliefs. Butler rightly observes that in Money's work Reimer's body becomes a point of reference for a narrative that is not about this body, but which seizes upon the body, as it were, in order to inaugurate a particular narrative about what it means to be human.[731] For Money "gender" describes the social dimension of sexed bodily life as noncausal and yet as utterly predictable and controllable. By means of the concept of gender, bodies are "normalised" and governed under Money's care. But why could Reimer not be a man without a penis? Or decide for himself, as he later did, whether he identifies as male, female or non-binary? Money's emphasis on "looking normal" not only reinforces gender norms, it also leads to early infancy surgery, which might permanently deprive a person of sexual function and pleasure.[732] The surgery, ostensibly for the patient's sake, is in fact performed for society's sake, a society which, as Butler observes, demands a "normal-looking" body.[733]

For Butler, the real question is 'to imagine a world in which individuals with mixed genital attributes might be accepted and loved without having to transform them into a more socially coherent or normative version of gender.'[734] In *Lessons from the Intersexed*, Suzanne J. Kessler makes a similar point: 'Why are unusually sized and shaped genitals not accepted as reasonable markers of gender – gender either as we know it in the two-option scheme or as we could know it in a new gender system?'[735] Kessler, moreover, points to the heteronormative bias that underlies Money's clinical protocol. When Money argues that Reimer, because of the loss of his penis, should not be raised as a boy but be reassigned the female gender, one of the justifications for this decision is that Reimer will not be able to have heterosexual intercourse. This supports Butler's claim that gender dimorphism is inherently linked to heterosexism, what she refers to as a heterosexual matrix or hegemony.

[731] Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 65.
[732] Ibid., 63.
[733] Ibid., 64.
[734] Ibid., 65-66.
[735] Kessler, *Lessons from the Intersexed*, 105.

A critique of idealised gender dimorphism, as put forward by Butler and Kessler among others, does not, however, lead to the conclusion that transsexuals should not be allowed the right to surgery. The difference between intersex and transsexual surgery is that in the first case physicians practice gender upon others – often, as in the case of early intersex surgery, without the explicit knowledge and permission of the patient.[736] In the second case, transgender people, sometimes with the help of physicians, practice gender on themselves – they "do" their own gender.[737] This is not an attempt to violently implement a norm; although this practice also does not take place outside of a normative framework. Transgenderism illustrates the malleability of anatomy, gender identity and role but, as Butler points out, unlike in the Reimer case, malleability is here not imposed.[738]

What, then, might be the future (of) "gender"?[739] Given the various (mis)uses of the concept of gender in the past and present that were both medical, as a tool to normalise bodies, and political, to advance liberal capitalist policies, population control and imperial politics, its critical potential for feminist theory has been questioned, for instance by Repo or by Joan Scott in her landmark paper 'Gender: Still a Useful Category of Analysis?'[740] Due to the history of this concept, the potential of gender, I argue, is that it offers feminist philosophy an opportunity to truly engage and address trans-, intersex-, queer-, and techno-feminist demands. Thus, while it is true that gender is a problematic concept, and while some feminists have argued that other terms might be better equipped or that feminist theory can do without gender, I suggest here that "gender" can frame feminist theory and practice in a particular way, specifically by foregrounding trans and intersex bodies.

[736] Ibid., 121.
[737] Ibid.
[738] See Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 66.
[739] The chiasmic form of this interrogation is underpinned by Catherine Malabou's meditations in *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality, Dialectic*, 5-6, on "the future of Hegel" [Hegel's concept of the future] / "the Hegel of the future" [conceptions of Hegel in the future] and the objective/subjective genitive.
[740] Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: Still a Useful Category of Analysis?," *Diogenes* 57, no. 1 (2010): 7-14.

"Gender": Implementing the promise of *Naturphilosophie*

What do the biopolitical origins of "gender" have to do with the history of gynaecology and of the speculum? The two previous chapters outlined the way in which nineteenth century gynaecology emerged alongside philosophical theorizations of sexual difference, with both grounded in the scientific project of understanding nature as sexually dimorphic and, simultaneously, in the socio-political imperative of the heterosexual reproduction of the nation's population. In German *Naturphilosophie* this was done by introducing such terms as generation, reproduction, sexual difference and sexual complementarity as key philosophical categories. This was an idealist position – a means to order, systematise and to explain "nature." However, as these concepts were taken up in the newly institutionalised medical discipline of gynaecology, these concepts and philosophical propositions took on a life outside of philosophy and, arguably, outlived the project of *Naturphilosophie*. Shortly after the publication and teaching of *Naturphilosophie* in Germany from around 1790 to 1830 and the simultaneous founding of gynaecology as an academic discipline, gynaecology came to be transformed – in an explicitly colonial context – in the South of the United States. Here gynaecology is understood primarily as a surgical practice and a biopolitical tool. Rather than a philosophical interest in discovering the truth of nature, what is at stake in this transformed gynaecology is the ongoing reproduction of slave labour. Intervention rather than truth, or intervention as truth, is here what produces medical knowledge.

The emphasis on intervention as part of the production of knowledge about the sexed body was maintained in the twentieth century. However, from the 1950s, the post-Second World War period is confronted, as Preciado outlines, with the political rise of feminism and with homosexuality, as well as with the desire of "transvestites," "deviants," and "transsexuals" to escape or transform birth sex assignment.[741] As a consequence of these political movements and demands, the dimorphist epistemology of sexual difference as conceived by the *Naturphilosophen* begins to crumble.[742] The concept of gender, as proposed by Money, offers a response to this challenge to the

[741] Preciado, *Testo Junkie*, 104.
[742] Ibid.

conceptual tools of *Naturphilosophie* – Money questions the fictitious unity of "sex." However, while acknowledging the malleability of sex difference and anatomy, Money, through his treatment protocol, keeps the normalizing functions of the nineteenth century sexual difference frame intact, as well as preserving the emphasis on heterosexual reproduction and population control. Once sexual dimorphism is no longer tenable as a universal description of human nature and biology, it was gender that implemented the promise of nineteenth century sexual difference and sex dimorphism through technological, surgical and psychological means.

The conceptualisation of "gender" thus marks a radical intervention in the sexual difference paradigm, challenging the framework established by *Naturphilosophie*. Though it does complicate the concept of "nature," this theoretical account nonetheless posits the "naturalness" of sexual dimorphism and complementarity, which it links conceptually to heterosexual reproduction. The clinical "gender" discourse challenges the positioning of "nature" as conceptually primary, and as ground for social and political conceptualisations of sexual difference within the family and the state. It thus challenges Hegel's chronology, whereby the *Philosophy of Nature* grounds or precedes the *Encyclopaedia*'s 'Anthropology' and the conceptions of sexual difference and distribution of labour in the *Philosophy of Right*; though, as was elaborated in previous chapters, the occurrence of sexual difference in the *Logic* had already complicated this order. Instead, the cultural instantiation of sexual dimorphism becomes the most important and primary conceptual concern. While the stability of nature is challenged, the framework of sexual dimorphism – and the necessity of implementing it by any and all means, including violent ones – remains unquestioned by Money and his disciples.

As regards the foregrounding and centring of the implementation of sexual dimorphism, the changed understanding of gynaecology as a surgical and more explicitly biopolitical tool, with its emphasis on intervention and the control of women's bodies and reproduction is key, and forms, I argue, part of the background for the emergent clinical discourse of gender in the 1950s. Although this discourse is not primarily about controlling women's biology and reproductive capacities, it remains coherent with nineteenth-century gynaecological research and practice. As such, it can also be read not only as a continuation of post-war psychology, surgery

and cybernetics, but also as a continuation of colonial gynaecological practices. While *this* "gender" was not primarily concerned with women, but with another group of bodies that require external intervention, namely intersex and trans people, the aim remains to regulate and to control. Moreover, reproduction, the couple form and marriage remain a key concern and guide for the implementation of this discourse of gender.

While chapter three was concerned with the co-emergence in philosophy, anthropology and gynaecology of the concepts of sex, gender and sexual difference that become biopolitical concepts, the racialisation of these concepts came into focus in chapter five. However, the question of race was already a question for *Naturphilosophie*. Carl Gustav Carus wrote not only the first book on gynaecology in a German-speaking context, he also wrote *Symbolik der Menschlichen Gestalt: Handbuch zur Menschenkenntniß*, a text that summarises his thoughts and teaching on the constitution, temperaments and abilities of human beings according to racial and sexual aspects. This book was published and republished in several editions well into the twentieth century and was used as a resource by the National Socialists for their racial ideology.[743] While Carus is celebrated for his contributions to medicine and culture, it is often – and conveniently – overlooked that the main aim of his anthropological work was to provide a classificatory scheme of the various human races, and that he posits a racially hierarchical division of humanity, which he understands to be philosophically grounded in the teachings of *Naturphilosophie*.[744]

The gynaecological practice and writings of James Marion Sims, celebrated as the father of American gynaecology, also demonstrate that the categories of sex and gender are always already racialised and classed. His reinvention of the speculum, "discovered" through experimentation on enslaved women, and the opening of the first American women's hospital in New York, where surgical experimentation was continued on poor immigrant women, most of them Irish, cannot be disassociated from the American slave trade, and, later, from the continued othering of the poor and racially-marked immigrant. As was argued in the previous chapter, while Sims

[743] Cathleen Melzer, "Cranioskopie und Konstitutionslehre," in *Carl Gustav Carus – Nature und Idee Katalog*, ed. Petra Kuhlmann-Hodick (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2009), 273.
[744] Ibid., 278.

transformed gynaecology and women's health, he also contributed to the maintenance of slavery. His legacy demonstrates that conceptions of sex, gender, and sexual difference are inseparable from both race and class.

When considering the history of "gender," it is worth reflecting on the race and class of the intersex bodies that were of concern to the medical establishment. For example, when defining the category of intersex, whose children was the medical establishment worried about? As Repo outlines, gender was primarily 'an apparatus designed to tame, normalise, and regulate White, middle-class children and parents into harmonious, reproductive, and productive nuclear units.'[745] But who goes without health insurance and never enters the hospital in the first place? Whose bodies are from the start not meant to ever form a part of the harmonious, reproductive nuclear family unit? If the medical category of gender was in the 1950s predominantly concerned with white and middle-class families, is this concern maintained by feminists who take up the category of gender and use it as a feminist analytical tool? According to Repo, the answer is yes. This, however, is not because gender could be a better and more critical term, but because the entanglement of feminist thought with the biopolitical practices of the post-War U.S. medical establishment have never been sufficiently analysed or addressed.

It is the unacknowledged origin of the concept of gender in medical, psychological and anthropological scholarship (the latter via Margaret Mead, a crucial influence on Money), and in post-World War II nation building in the U.S. which, remaining unanalysed, continues to trouble Butler's work. This brings us back to Butler's concern with the history and historicity of a concept and its effects. While Butler, through the concept of performativity and through her critique of Irigaray's sexual difference framework, thinks how history is inherent to the definition of ontology itself, the specific history of the concept of gender remains largely unaddressed, with the partial (and relatively belated) exception of *Undoing Gender*. Yet, what Butler wants to say – namely, that thinking trans and intersex experience is integral to thinking gender – as well as what should be more explicit in her work – that is, the ways in which sex and gender are always marked by race and class and how every

[745] Repo, *The Biopolitics of Gender*, 74.

racial marking is always imbued with a specific gender and sexuality[746] – could be explained by engaging more closely with this history.

While Butler explains that gender and sexuality are not immediately self-explanatory, race and class remain within her work, by and large, abstract terms, truths taken to be self-evident. Butler states that all social markers are inherently related, but the nature of their relation is never explicitly explored. This is surprising given that performativity is a term that – like the prefix trans-, in which Butler seems especially invested in her more recent work – implies a movement across or beyond given states of affairs.[747] However, even though "performativity," "trans" and "queer" are terms that speak to each other as they try to address a processual, anti-essentialist notion of being and being-with, they can also at times end up functioning, in their role of outlining the inherently deconstructive aspects of ontology, to cover up the specific and complicated histories of social and political categories. This is not to reduce the importance of doing this ontological work, as Butler's project demonstrates. Her concepts, even when critiqued, have been used by other feminists, critical race theorists and queer scholars for their own purposes, demonstrating the profoundly generative aspects of her analysis as a resource for thought.

Troubling gender / "Gender trouble"

What Butler offers by introducing the concept of gender performativity is an account of how identity categories function as ontological signifiers that come to be inscribed on the surface of the human body. This claim will be outlined in more detail in the following section. Butler's account of performativity highlights the role and power of state institutions in this process. Building on Butler's work, what feminist, queer, and trans theories now have to respond to is how women's rights, gay rights, sexual freedom, and, albeit rarely, though increasingly, trans rights are used by state institutions and political groups for the purposes of nationalist, imperialist and racist projects. This has, for instance, been documented – in Europe – by Christine Delphy in *Separate and Dominate: Feminism and Racism After the War on Terror*, and in the

[746] See Barnard, *Queer Race*, 2.
[747] On this see Tawny Andersen, "An Object that Belongs to No One," *Performance Research* 21, no.5 (2016): 12.

American context in Jasbir Puar's *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. In her book, Puar outlines that the successful incorporation in the late twentieth century of some queers into the domains of consumer markets and into the biopolitical optimization of life marks a shift.[748] There is, she observes, 'a transition under way in how queer subjects are relating to nation-states, particularly the United States, from being figures of death (i.e., the AIDS epidemic) to becoming tied to ideas of life and productivity (i.e., gay marriage and families).'[749] However, as Puar remarks, this incorporation into "life" is contingent upon ever-narrowing parameters of white racial privilege, consumption capabilities, gender and kinship normativity, and bodily integrity.[750]

Donna McCormack, who rethinks the concept of performativity with reference to Butler in *Queer Postcolonial Narratives and the Ethics of Witnessing*, argues that while living free of subjection to homo- or transphobic violence is an important socio-political goal, 'these ends are pursued through increased violence against those individuals who and those countries that do not conform to imperialist liberal agendas.'[751] Feminism is used in a similar way as a missionary discourse, often under the pretence of rescuing Muslim women from their oppressive male counterparts.[752] As Delphy writes, '[w]omen wearing a headscarf are little by little being excluded from jobs in the public sector, and now in the private sector as well – in the name of their emancipation.'[753] Moreover, in France, public swimming pools are being shut because of women wearing burkinis, which, according to French state authorities, greatly compromises the safety of these public spaces.[754] This persecution, as Delphy outlines, is disguised as the defence of French secularism (*laïcité*), which was never mentioned by any politician before the 2004 law banning headscarves in state schools.[755] Right wing groups in the United Kingdom including the UK Independence

[748] Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham: Durham University Press, 2007), xii.
[749] Ibid.
[750] Ibid.
[751] Donna McCormack, *Queer Postcolonial Narratives and the Ethics of Witnessing* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2004), 7.
[752] Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 5.
[753] Christine Delphy, *Separate and Dominate: Feminism and Racism after the War on Terror* (London, New York: Verso), xi.
[754] See https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/27/france-city-shuts-down-public-pools-after-two-women-wear-burkinis.
[755] Ibid.

Party (UKIP) and the Democratic Football Lads Alliance (DFLA) use a racist, specifically anti-Muslim rhetoric to argue that they will protect white women from grooming gangs, meaning specifically from black and brown men.[756] In these instances, the feminist, queer and politically progressive subject is defined as by default white and is used for the purposes of racist and imperialist political projects.

If gender is to remain a critical and useful concept for feminist analysis, then both its problematic past and the discourses that currently invoke it need to be addressed. Butler's response – the concept of performativity – is still helpful in this regard, as it outlines a speculative, social ontology of how the markers of sex and sexuality gain meaning and come to be embodied. Since ontology is understood to be always already a political project, gender is defined not as a descriptive but as a critical category. As such gender, to borrow a phrase from Irigaray, remains a question for our time[757] – currently, in two senses. On the one hand, if gender is a key category of feminist thought, then trans and intersex issues are, due to the history of this concept, always already an inherent part of feminist theory, and must be addressed as such. On the other hand, the ways in which gender is inherently racialised and classed require further analysis, since they are not prioritised by Butler. As such, gender remains a problematic term. It is necessary to consider how gender frames feminist theory and philosophy in a particular way. However, its problematic history also offers the potential to address current political questions.

The end of (the stability of) sexual difference, initiated by Money through his introduction of the concept of "gender," is pursued further by Butler, though under radically different premises. While Money wants to fix trouble, Butler asks 'how best to make it, what best way to be in it.'[758] It is therefore telling that, in the second preface (1999) to *Gender Trouble*, Butler remarks that if she were to rewrite the book under present circumstances she 'would include a discussion of transgender and intersexuality, the way that ideal gender dimorphism works in both sorts of discourses,

[756] See for instance: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/25/tommy-robinson-and-the-far-rights-new-playbook.
[757] Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).
[758] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, "Preface (1990)," xxvii.

the different relations to surgical intervention that these related concerns sustain.'[759] The discussion of gender would, thereby, come full circle.

Towards a performative ontology

Butler's work arguably constitutes an important break with the legacy of Money and Stoller. Other important critiques of gender have come from the intersex and transsexual movement, as well as from postcolonial and decolonial thinkers. Perhaps most important amongst these was the critical intervention of Hortense Spillers in 'Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book,' first published in *Diacritics* in 1987. Here Spillers explains that the models of sexual difference and gender do not 'suffice for occupied or captive persons and communities in which the rites and rights of gender function have been exploded, historically, into sexual neutralities.'[760] This scepticism, entailing the claim of the "explosion" of both sexual difference and gender by race, is shared by Denise Ferreira Da Silva in *Towards a Global Idea of Race* and 'Towards a Black Feminist Poethics,' as well as by Maria Lugones in 'The Coloniality of Gender.'[761] This explosion will have to be analysed in more detail, along with the potential affinity between anticolonial and trans and intersex struggles, in terms of the unrecognizable status of certain groups of people before the law, public institutions and society in general, and their continuous policing and control via the police, medical "treatment" and public policy.

The shift from a psychological, behaviourist and clinical concept towards a philosophical concept of gender is also addressed by Geneviève Fraisse in the *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, where it is posited that '[g]ender became a philosophical concept in Anglo-Saxon thought during the 1970s.'[762] Fraisse attributes

[759] Ibid., "Preface (1999)," xxvi.
[760] Hortense J. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," in *Black, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 231-32.
[761] Da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*; Denise Ferreira DaSilva, "Toward a Black Feminist Poethics: The Quest(ion) of Blackness Toward the End of the World," *The Black Scholar* 44, no. 2 (2014): 81-97; María Lugones, "The Coloniality of Gender," *Globalization and the Decolonial Option*, eds. Walter D Mignolo and Arturo Escobar (London: Routledge, 2010).
[762] Geneviève Fraisse, "Sex, Gender, Difference of the Sexes, Sexual Difference," in *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*, eds. Barbara Cassin et al., trans. Steven Rendall et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 969.

the origin of the notion of gender to Stoller. Since Stoller explicitly credits Money in his publication as the source for his conception of "gender," it is surprising that Money receives no mention in the *Dictionary*, neither under the category of gender nor of sex, both of which he had in fact redefined. Stoller's later contribution to gender theory was the coining of the term "gender identity," which then finds its way back into Money's work under the conception of "G-I/R" (gender identity/role), as well as the introduction of a split between sex and gender as mutually exclusive categories. While for Money, as Repo observes, 'gender was a new variable of sex,' Stoller 'split gender from sex, designating sex as a biological category and gender as a specifically cultural one.'[763] Since this definition was influential for feminist theory and 'marked the beginning of a terminological and philosophical debate,'[764] the emphasis on Stoller is not unjustified, though Money also deserves mentioning, as well as the broader context of Money's and Stoller's interrelated research agendas, which were aimed at defining protocols for the treatment of intersex (Money) and trans (Stoller) patients.

Fraisse acknowledges that feminist theory marks a break from this founding moment of gender in psychology and sexology. Gender comes to be redefined, and this redefinition, Fraisse argues, should be understood as a philosophical proposition.[765] While for Money and Stoller gender remained a clinical category, it comes to be transformed into a philosophical proposition, crucially through Butler's work. This delineation of the concept, as Fraisse rightly remarks, is a contemporary philosophical event.[766] Without precisely coining the term "gender," neither within nor outside of feminist theory, Butler nonetheless contributes importantly to its circulation and function. According to Fraisse, this philosophical event is first of all a terminological and an epistemological challenge and difficulty.[767] In what follows I will argue, with reference to Butler's work, that this challenge – this "trouble" – is, equally, an ontological one.

[763] Repo, *The Biopolitics of Gender*, 49.
[764] Fraisse, "Sex, Gender, Difference of the Sexes, Sexual Difference," 969.
[765] Ibid.
[766] Ibid.
[767] Ibid.

In *Gender Trouble*, Butler describes her project not simply as a genealogy of gender but as 'a genealogy of gender *ontology*.'[768] The emphasis on ontology here is, I suggest, important to an understanding of her work. For Butler, the terminological and epistemological questions raised by the concept of "gender" are also ontological; however, ontology needs to be rethought. Butler's inquiry seeks to demonstrate that there is no preestablished ontology of gender, because ontology in general does not in fact constitute a foundation. Rather, Butler argues, ontology should be understood in terms of a series of normative injunctions that operate by installing themselves into political discourse as its necessary ground.[769] Among these normative injunctions are, for instance, ideal dimorphism, heterosexual complementarity of bodies, and ideals and rule of proper and improper masculinity and femininity, all which are also underwritten by racial codes.[770] Political discourse, according to Butler, establishes an 'ontological field' in which bodies can be given legitimate expression.[771] Ontology thus understood will always ask questions about power, violence, resistance and freedom.

Inherently political, (gender) ontology is open to transformation. For feminist philosophy this means on the one hand the possibility of change but, on the other, that no pre-established and stable category of "woman" exists on which to build a politics. What these conclusions mean for philosophy more broadly remains to be investigated. A different understanding of ontology comes out of Butler's work, more precisely through her conception of performativity, as will be argued in more detail. By reading Butler's formulation of performativity alongside Hegel, it will become clear that ontology is always fundamentally political, even when it presents itself as a neutral discourse on being.

Gender as a doing

In the previous section two related claims were put forward. First, that "gender" was transformed in Butler's work from a clinical-psychological category into a

[768] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 43, my emphasis. Cited in Repo, *The Biopolitics of Gender,* 7.
[769] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 189.
[770] Ibid., "Preface (1990)," xxiii.
[771] Ibid.

philosophical concept; and, second, that it is through the concept of performativity that this becomes possible. While there has been a lot of work in recent years on linguistics and performativity, and the relation between performance studies and philosophy, the question of performativity as social ontology, already hinted at in Butler's work, has not been widely addressed.

Butler writes in the original preface to *Gender Trouble* that philosophy was the predominant disciplinary mechanism that mobilised her as author at the time writing, though on her account philosophy is not entirely separate or distinct from other disciplines.[772] Given this, an analysis of performativity as a philosophical concept is necessary, and here, I argue, Hegel is crucial for Butler. While Butler's notion of performativity explains a very specific doing, namely that of gender, and in this sense differs substantially from Hegel's aim to construct a general conceptual *Thätigkeit*; however, a more general notion, even if not explicitly addressed, is still at work in Butler, and allows her to transpose her concept of performativity onto other contexts, for instance in *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* and *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*.[773]

Although Butler acknowledges her Hegelian roots and engages with Hegel at several points throughout her work – for instance in *Subjects of Desire*, *The Psychic Life of Power*, and in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*[774] – it is never the notion of performativity that is discussed in relation or proximity to Hegel. It will be proposed in the following that, if we are to think Hegel's influence as going beyond a deployment of Hegelian conceptions of recognition and desire, then we need to analyse his proposition that speculation be thought as performativity. This conversation, I suggest, could unfold in a manner similar to Butler's discussion of Hegelian universality in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*. Here Butler outlines what is valuable in Hegel – particularly in the *Science of Logic* – for current political

[772] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, "Preface (1990)," xxxiv.
[773] Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York, London: Routledge, 1997) and Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).
[774] In *Subjects of Desire* Butler looks at the French reception of Hegel, focusing in particular on Hegelian and post-Hegelian conceptions of desire. In *Psychic Life of Power*, the confrontation with Hegel takes place through a reading of Hegel's 'Unhappy Consciousness' chapter in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, Butler engages with the Hegelian notion of the universal.

and philosophical debates. However, she does so without remaining entirely within a Hegelian frame, nor by leaving this frame as such untouched. I propose here that it is not her concept of universality – which remains anchored in the tradition of radical democracy as outlined by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe[775] – but rather her concept of performativity which shows Butler's proximity to Hegel.

Grounding gender performativity in Hegel's conception of speculation, as it is outlined towards the end of the *Logic,* is not to say that Butler's core concept is only this – a rewriting of Hegel – nor that it can be grasped in these terms alone. Clearly her work is heavily influenced by Foucault and grounded much more broadly in a range of philosophical, feminist, political and literary canons. More importantly, her concepts and ideas are her own inventions and contributions to thought and to political activism, and they should be read as such. Rather, what I would like to suggest here is that a reading of Hegel's *Logic* alongside Butler's work will allow for a better understanding of the kind of philosophical concept Butler is after when proposing the concept of gender performativity. While Hegel has nothing to say about "gender," since the term as used by Butler was, as discussed above, only introduced into English in the 1950s, Hegel's introduction of an implicit idea of performativity – of the doing and undoing of conceptual form – is, I argue, central to Butler's work.

Butler states her aim explicitly in this regard: the formulation of gender performativity 'moves the conception of gender off the ground of a substantial model of identity to one that requires a conception of gender as a constituted *social temporality*.'[776] Hegelian conceptual tools, especially as developed in the *Logic*, are helpful for critically reflecting upon notions of essentialism, identity and substance, and for rethinking these as dynamic concepts. When Butler claims in *Gender Trouble* that 'gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed,'[777] she seems to be in line with Hegel who, as Rebecca Comay and Frank Ruda have recently remarked, 'divests the first person in all its situatedness and

[775] See Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London, New York: Verso, 1985).
[776] Ibid. 191.
[777] Ibid., 34.

dilation […] of its last shred of positive substantiality.'[778] The doing or *Thätigkeit* described in the concluding chapters of the *Logic* is non-voluntarist.[779]

As mentioned earlier, the loss of a stable or fixed subject for Hegel does not mean the end of all activity (*Thätigkeit*) but marks a different plain of instantiation and a first formalisation of a dynamic and relational ontology. This does not mean that individual subjectivity and subjectivation become irrelevant, but that they have to be rethought. Butler's claim that 'there need not be a "doer behind the deed," but that the "doer" is variably constructed in and through the deed'[780] is, I argue, a philosophical proposition similar to Hegel's. What is being thought is a concept of activity that does not start from, nor rely upon, an already-given idea of subjectivity. Rather, what is thought by both Hegel and Butler is the activity of form. Gender, according to Butler, is performative in that it is a doing that constitutes the identity it is purported to be.[781] It follows that the gendered body 'has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitutes its reality.'[782]

It was argued in chapter four that Hegel introduces a concept of the performative under the heading of 'The Idea,' the final chapter of the *Logic*. Once the concept becomes idea it is, Hegel argues, no longer to be understood as general law subsuming the particular, but as active principle. While the law subjugates, a different relation between particularity and universality is now thought. Hegel concludes the *Logic* with the claim that the universal exists not as law but as performative. However, questions of violence, resistance and freedom that arise with the notion of law do not disappear with its replacement by a different term. The *Logic* ends with the conclusion that the universal law, if understood as in essence performative, is no longer external to the content to which it refers. Yet, at the same time, the question of power (*Macht*) remains present and unresolved. While the idea, according to Hegel, is 'free release' (and in this sense differs from the law which subjugates what comes before it), there is nonetheless a tension or contradiction that manifests itself here. This is because the idea is at the same time said to be a '*machthabender Begriff*,' a powerful concept or

[778] Comay and Ruda, *The Dash*, 18.
[779] Ibid.
[780] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 195.
[781] Ibid., 34.
[782] Ibid., 185.

one that rules (*machthaben*) and, in this sense, still seems to subsume or subjugate, resembling the power of the law.

In *Senses of the Subject*, Butler observes that Hegel 'searches time and again for an "animating law" [*belebendes Gesetz*] that operates in unity with a manifold that is "then itself animated" [*als dann ein belebtes*].'[783] With her notion of "gender performativity," Butler too seeks to find such an "animating law," but, supplementing Hegel with Foucault, she takes this law to be regulative. Here the discussion of the ideas of reason, as elaborated in chapter one, becomes relevant once more. In line with Kant, and supplemented by Foucault, Butler understands the ideas of reason as regulative ideals. Hegel's animating law is to be understood at the same time as a normative and regulative law. Therefore, questions of standpoint, viewpoint or perspective, as raised by Irigaray, do not become irrelevant here. Performativity is conceived as general ontological activity, while gender performativity describes a very concrete "act." Although Hegel, through his use of examples, hints at the inherently social and political nature of the ontological dimension of speculation, it is, I argue, Butler who develops the thought of a social, ontological doing and undoing. Though Butler does not propose it that way, I argue that her concept of performativity is better understood as performative ontology.

To summarise, both Butler and Hegel put forward the claim that being only is what it performs. However, while for Hegel this illustrates the transparency of determinate being, its own speech act and simultaneous becoming (as outlined in chapter four), Butler emphasises the normative and regulative dimensions of performativity. In this way, Butler addresses what remains unresolved in Hegel, namely that determinate being, understood as the performativity of form, is not simply an expression of free activity. For Butler, gender performativity as a doing 'is a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint.'[784] Gender, the social law that affects everyone, "subsumes" everyone, but in a certain sense is the activity of no one, is to be understood not as static law but as performative doing, a dynamic *Thätigkeit* within a

[783] Judith Butler, *Senses of the Subject* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 106.
[784] Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 1; Butler's "Stubborn Attachment, Bodily Subjection: Rereading Hegel on the Unhappy Consciousness" in Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) revisits this question of constraint / subjection.

scene of constraint. It is this relation of constraint and freedom, not sufficiently addressed by Hegel, that Butler makes the focus of the majority of her writings. In so doing, Butler makes a specific intervention in feminist theory, but also contributes to the broader philosophical understanding of the concept of performativity.

As will be further outlined in the following, in Hegel as well as in Butler thinking about performativity equally means thinking about ontology, language and philosophical method. Hegel introduces the idea of a speculative sentence or proposition in §61 of the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in order to set up the performative nature of the subject. The speculative sentence describes the active relation between subject, predicate and copula, and their movement through which the subject first comes to be. The sentence is a becoming and its reading a doing, as readers of Hegel, most famously Jean-Luc Nancy in *The Speculative Remark*, have pointed out.[785] Butler refers to this textual strategy in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, in her analysis of Hegel's concept of universality. The speculative proposition, according to Butler, is a useful approach because it makes visible how a concept like the universal undergoes revision in time, as well as showing that these successive revisions and dissolutions are essential to what it 'is.'[786] In order to bring the formative determination of the concept to the fore, the propositional sense of the copula must, Butler writes, be replaced with the speculative one.[787] Since Hegel's remarks about language are never only purely "textual" but serve to illustrate a broader point, we might wonder first what Butler's speculative proposition looks like, and second how it works: as a textual strategy, and beyond.

It is not primarily the formative but rather the denaturalizing aspect of the speculative proposition that is appealing to Butler. What seems to be a given and a fixed position in the sentence, and thus an essential relation between its parts, is revealed in its inherent movement, and thus shown to be otherwise: unstable, subject to undoing and to transformation. Rather than emphasising an immanent and progressive movement,

[785] Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Speculative Remark (One of Hegel's Bon Mots)*, trans. Céline Surprenant (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001).
[786] Judith Butler, "Restaging the Universal: Hegemony and the Limits of Formalism," in Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (London: Verso, 2000), 24.
[787] Ibid.

Butler is interested in the deconstructive elements of Hegel's thought. In Butler's speculative sentence, accordingly, the subject is not "done" but is "undone" through the movement of copula and predicate, and through this undoing becomes what it is. The speculative sentence, in Hegel as well as in Butler, serves as an interrogation of how ontological claims come to be. While Butler is suspicious about ontology, critiquing forms of ontological essentialism in philosophy and feminist theory alike, the speculative sentence offers a means of critique as well as an alternative proposition, that allows, as will be shown, for a speculative ontological account to come to the fore.

Although sceptical of traditional ontology, Butler's work nonetheless interrogates the conditions of possibility for ontological claims, since these are decisive for subjectivity and agency, and thus for any feminist and emancipatory project. Thus, despite her thoroughgoing critique of ontology, it is becoming increasingly clear, as Stephen K. White points out in his paper 'As the World Turns: Ontology and Politics in Judith Butler,' that Butler is herself affirming an alternative ontology.[788] Unmasking the essentialism at work in various conceptualizations of masculinity and femininity, and thus of subjectivity, gender and the body,[789] Butler also develops alongside this critique a concept of "performativity" that is mobilised to describe not only linguistic acts and theatrical performances, but more generally the processes through which ontological claims come to manifest on or in the body, or even as body. Butler, accordingly, by means of her concept of performativity, develops a new language of ontology, a new discourse describing how selves come to body forth – what Gerhard Thonhauser has recently characterised as 'a theory that could be called a social ontology.'[790] This is an attempt to move away from ontological essentialism towards a speculative ontology that is neither a voluntarism nor entirely pre-determined or constrained. What might such an ontology look like? Contrary to White, who in his paper draws on Heidegger to illustrate Butler's ontological claims, I argue that, on the question of ontology, Hegel's is the more relevant philosophical framework.

[788] Stephen K. White, "As the World Turns: Ontology and Politics in Judith Butler," *Polity* 32, no. 2 (1999): 156.
[789] Ibid., 158.
[790] Gerhard Thonhauser, "Butler's Social Ontology of the Subject and its Agency," in *Frei sein, frei handeln. Freiheit zwischen theoretischer und praktischer Philosophie*, eds. Diego D'Angelo et al. (Freiburg: Alber, 2013), 144.

Reading Hegel alongside Butler means understanding the latter's project not only as discourse analysis, nor as simply a discussion of Derridean iterability or of Foucauldian analysis of power, but moreover as an attempt to construct a speculative social ontology. Given that, for Butler, ontology is inherently unstable and works through a series of normative injunctions and within a field of constraint, this is not to break with either Derrida or Foucault. Nor is the question of ontology superimposed onto them, since iterability and the discursive production of meaning are always, as Butler also shows, linked to their bodily instantiation as ritual and habit. Moreover, thinking about or in terms of ontology does not mean that all other questions are bracketed. Rather, the question of being is dispersed, and is shown to be often as much a question of language, power, identity and discourse.

Understood as speculative proposition, the question of ontology comes to the fore at different moments in Butler's work. It is implied in the conceptualization of gender performativity through statements like the following: 'There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its result.'[791] Statements such as these could be interpreted as saying that gender is constructed and therefore is completely individually produced. However, recognizing that performativity is to be understood as social ontology complicates this claim. Norms, institutions, history, and culture performatively create the context out of which individuals' genders are produced. In line with Hegel's *Logic*, Butler's performativity is a doing and undoing that is not the wilful act of an already-determined subject. If read through Hegel, a more adequate account of performativity becomes possible, one that avoids some of the problems Butler is facing, such as the criticism, repeatedly addressed at her, that her account of gender performativity is a voluntarism.

"Performative," according to Butler, 'suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning.'[792] As in Hegel, this is meant as a textual strategy as well as an ontological proposition. Because it is, as Butler points out in the second preface to *Gender Trouble*, 'difficult to say precisely what performativity is,'[793] and because what

[791] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 34.
[792] Ibid., 190.
[793] Ibid., "Preface (1999)," xv.

performativity might mean is changing, the concept is not defined once but is repeated, slightly altered and rewritten throughout her texts, and the texts and bodies of others. Similar to Hegel's philosophical approach as described in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, Butler rewrites her main concepts through the course of her work over time. As such performativity is *itself* "done" and "undone" as it travels in and through different contexts. Moreover, what it "is," is not yet finished. Its definition as a concept translates into its textual presentation. That is, the question of how to define performativity comes down to a question of how to *write* performativity – including the question of what it means to write, or to think, performatively.

Is gender a bad habit?

'In other words, "sex" is an ideal construct which is forcibly materialised through time.'

- Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter*[794]

It has been argued that performativity explains the ontologising of the idea(s) of reason in Hegel and in Butler, in the *Science of Logic* as a generic account of the ontological nature of conceptual form, and in Butler's *Gender Trouble* more specifically as the bodily instantiation of gendered norms. Gender ideals "work," according to Butler, because 'performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body (…).'[795] In other words, through their performative repetition, gender norms come to be experienced and lived as second nature. What seems to be immediate, such as masculine and feminine gender norms, is a habitual production. In this sense, gender is produced '*on the surface* of the body' and comes to have 'the effect of an internal core or substance.'[796] Gender, then, has an ontological "effect," but, since performative, 'it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality.'[797] Gender, in other words, is produced habitually. However, this is not just a personal habit but institutional, and the result is that gender, rather than produced, becomes

[794] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (London: Routledge, 2011), xiii.
[795] Ibid., "Preface (1999)," xv.
[796] Ibid., 185, emphasis in original.
[797] Ibid.

enforced. Moreover, this enforced habit raises the Hegelian question of a bad infinity, the repeated and linear production of the same. Is gender then a "bad habit"? According to Butler, the task is 'not whether to repeat, but how to repeat'[798] – that is, not how to break out of habit as such, but how to break out of a bad habit.

Habit has many valences: bodily, for instance as ritualised acts of gender performance in a public realm; linguistic, as habituated grammar and language rules; as well as textual, as modes of writing and reading texts. These are the main sites of meaning production in Butler and Hegel, but for Butler repetition and ritual are immediately and explicitly regulated and normative. Not only is there no neutral ground to start from, the doing and undoing – what Hegel terms the speculative unfolding of philosophy and the world – is not teleological or progressive. Though, as was described in previous chapters, Hegel complicates teleology in the *Logic* and replaces teleological progression first with "life" and then with "absolute method," there nonetheless undoubtedly remains throughout his work the idea that every new development, even if not "substantial," is more advanced and progressive. This assumption is challenged by Butler, according to whom there is alteration and undoing without this entailing inherent progression. And while progress is possible, it is so only as a political project and as such needs to be actively worked towards – it will not happen on its own. Progress is contested, not something inherent to either philosophy or language as they account for the human body.

To summarise, while Butler's explanation of how bodies (come to) matter can be read alongside the anthropology of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* – where to account for the human body and soul is to account not for nature but for second nature – Hegel does not adequately conceptualise the scenes of constraint in which doing becomes possible and those cases where it is impossible or foreclosed. What is interesting, however, about Hegel are his remarks on language, which always go beyond language to make a claim about ontology or philosophical method. In both Hegel and Butler, performativity is explained through the example of language. Performativity, for both thinkers, is ontological, linguistic and textual: that is, it is an account of language and ontological activity, as well as a strategy of writing.

[798] Ibid, 202.

Not only performativity but the concept of gender too, as coined by Money and rewritten by Butler, is inherently tied to language. While Butler borrows from speech act theory and Hegel's speculative proposition in order to outline her concept of gender performativity, Money suggests that the establishment of a masculine or feminine gender role and identity resembles the ability and process of language learning.[799] Money writes:

> Gender role may be likened to a native language. Once ingrained, a person's native language may fall into disuse and be supplanted by another, but it is never entirely eradicated. So also, a gender role may be changed, or resembling native bilingualism may be ambiguous, but it may also become so deeply ingrained that not even flagrant contradictions of body functioning and morphology may displace it.[800]

Money acknowledges that neither language nor masculinity and femininity develop in a social vacuum.[801] According to Money, just as languages vary by dialect, accent and individual usage, '[s]o also, gender comportment varies not only individually, but also geographically, regionally and locally, according to cultural stereotypes of what constitutes masculinity and femininity.'[802]

While Money can account for variance, he remains unwilling throughout his work to challenge the gender binary as pre-given social grammar. Languages may vary but certain grammatical structures and rules are, according to Money, universal and beyond question. It becomes evident in Money's work that the social and cultural aspects of life can be just as static as "nature." Not much is gained in the move from biology to culture if both remain predetermined, uncontested fields. According to Money, the potential of masculine/feminine role dimorphism is, just like the ability to acquire a human language, 'phylogenetically given, whereas the actuality is ontogenetically given.'[803] This actuality is open to change – variable according to geopolitical location, cultural stereotypes and dialect – but the reality of the frame, of

[799] See Money, *Gendermaps*, 21, 36, 103.
[800] Ibid., 21.
[801] Ibid., 103.
[802] Ibid.
[803] Ibid., 36.

sex dimorphism, is unquestionable in Money's static understanding of biology and culture.

Money would agree with Butler's claim that '[l]earning the rules that govern intelligible speech is an inculcation into normalised language, where the price of not conforming is the loss of intelligibility itself.'[804] However, for Money this means making the body conform to the normative rules of intelligible speech in order to avoid loss of intelligibility. Thus, the task opened up by the concept of gender is to help children and their caretakers to conform to the rules as best as possible and to stay out of gender trouble. What Money does not acknowledge is that 'neither grammar nor style are politically neutral.'[805] This means that Butler's insight that one can practice styles, but that the styles that become available are not entirely a matter of choice,[806] remains undertheorised by Money.

This point, though in a different context, is also raised by Irigaray in her chapter '*La Mystérique*' in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, where it is explained that the mystic is not entirely free to choose her style but subverts and reinvents the language and idiom available to her. While Money would not necessarily disagree that one's choices regarding language and style are limited, the question of subversion is completely absent from his work. And so, gender remains in Money's theory and praxis a straightforwardly propositional sentence and ontology, failing to be superseded by a speculative one. As Butler argues:

> It would be a mistake to think that received grammar is the best vehicle for expressing radical views, given the constraints that grammar imposes upon thought, indeed, upon the thinkable itself. But formulations that twist grammar or that implicitly call into question the subject-verb requirements of propositional sense are clearly irritating for some. They produce more work for their readers, and sometimes their readers are offended by such demands.[807]

[804] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, "Preface (1990)," xix.
[805] Ibid.
[806] Ibid.
[807] Ibid, "Preface (1990)," xix-xx.

Money's theoretical work and practice actively tries to diminish the "work" of having to be confronted with formulations and bodies that twist grammar and social norms. What Butler calls "excitable speech," linguistic meaning that is fluid, provisional and not fixed, as exemplified in Irigaray or the speech of the mystic, is the site of a problem for Money. It is their interest in excitable speech and speculative grammar that is, despite their differences, a point of convergence between Hegel, Irigaray and Butler. The problem with Hegel is that power remains untheorised, with performativity accounting for a transparent ontological and linguistic doing and undoing free of constraint. On the other hand, Irigaray's analysis is, according to Butler, problematic for a different reason. Despite her experiments with grammar and speech, there remains, as was outlined in the previous chapter, something static in Irigaray.

Conclusion

This chapter began with the introduction of performativity as ontological concept, distinct from its meaning as speech act or performance. It was argued that what Butler develops, though she does not explicitly say this, is a notion of performativity as performative ontology. It was shown that Butler, in line with Hegel, argues that there is no foundation to being. Both thinkers propose a concept of being that is not static but is its own past and future acts. The emphasis on thinking ontology, and in particular gender ontology, is not on the individual that performs or does its gender. In this regard, the argument from the *Logic* that the performative deed (*Thätigkeit*) is the act of no one, and Butler's claim that there is no doer behind the deed, has to be taken seriously. This emphasis is what allows Butler to think the institutional and normative dimensions of gender. Thus, while Butler's claims about ontology work in relation to Hegel, they also elaborate and clarify the references to violence, resistance and freedom that seem to appear abruptly at the end of the *Logic*. After Butler, performativity has to be understood as social ontology. The implication of this is that claims about ontology are inherently political, even when presented as neutral claims about being. However, what will need to be further elaborated is Butler's relative neglect of history and with that of race and class. The claim that gender is trans-gender, in the sense that the concept of gender originates in elaborations of trans, intersex and non-binary bodies, needs to be set against this background. Bodies are also classified by race and class and have to be thought across the contexts that produced them as

such. Furthermore, the question of the relation between speculation, as epistemological proposition, and performativity, thought as social ontology will have to be addressed. This is because Butler, contrary to Hegel, and following Irigaray, does not collapse these too.

To begin with, ontology was split from language and linguistics in order to highlight the aspect of performativity as social ontology, which had not been elaborated in relation to Butler. However, in the final section, it became apparent that a clear separation of ontological claims from those of language is not possible and also not desirable. Both Butler and Hegel use the example of language to explain how performativity works. It turns out that language enacts, at the level of the text, what subjects perform at the level of the body. Or, in other words, the functioning of language is analogous to the explanation of how bodies (come to) matter. Performativity, for both thinkers, is ontological and linguistic: that is, an account of language and ontological activity, as well as a strategy of writing and reading texts. As such it is linked to the question of habit, which, for Butler, is a political question.

Concluding remarks – Staying in trouble

This thesis aims to explain and contextualise a philosophical concept of speculation. By looking in particular at the concept of the sexual relation in Hegel's *Science of Logic*, I argue that political concepts, through their exemplarity, bear an integral relation to speculative thought. The thesis demonstrates that the confrontation with speculation in philosophy is unavoidably political.[808] An attempt is made to analyse the history of speculation as philosophical concept alongside the history of the gynaecological speculum, and to look at the effects both have on thinking sex, gender and sexual difference. This focus brings the concept of performativity, as a speculative concept of being, to the fore. While speculation in philosophy is defined as an activity of theoretical reason, this thesis argues that, as ontological activity, speculation is performative. But what effects do these two concepts have beyond their strictly philosophical definition and use? To respond to this question, the thesis also illustrates how, on the one hand, the concepts of speculation and performativity are necessary for an explanation of social and political concepts such as "race", "sexual difference," and "gender," while on the other hand these very concepts exemplify the nature of speculative, performative thought.

Speculating on performances: Exemplarity

The emergence of a philosophical concept of speculation is traced to Kant's critical philosophy and its attempt at constructing a modern definition of philosophy as "scientific," in the sense of not overstepping the secure bounds of human knowledge by relying on a notion of God as final cause in the explanation of nature. The first chapter analyses the ambivalence inherent to speculative reason, its necessary use alongside its necessary limitation. On the one hand, the delimitation of speculation is, according to Kant, a criterion for converting metaphysics, and thus philosophy, into science. On the other hand, a positive and necessary use of speculative reason is

[808] Given this proposition, it would have been interesting to extend the scope of this analysis to examining financial speculation, to see whether and how philosophical speculation is integrated in financial speculation, and to consult the Marxist and Marxist feminist literature on this point. While the relation between theoretical reason, financial speculation and the speculum as gynaecological instrument was alluded to in chapter five (on Irigaray and the reinvention of the speculum in the context of slavery), a more detailed analysis would be required to do justice to this point.

identified in the systematization and ordering of cognitions, knowledge and empirical laws. The ability for speculation to make a system out of a mere aggregate of knowledge is identified by Kant as that which transforms knowledge into science. But how to philosophically justify a positive and scientific use of speculative reason? Natural history, Kant argues, is confronted with a similar epistemological problem. Here, the harmony between natural and logical forms first emerges as a theoretical issue. Are the latter a merely artificial scheme of classification arbitrarily imposed onto nature?

Natural history, according to Kant, has so far been unable to ground its logical categories as empirical concepts of nature. In the essay 'On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy', the concept of "race" (*Rasse*) and, subsequently, in the third *Critique*, the concept of the "living being" are said to resolve the philosophical problem of justifying an order of reason. While the ability of speculative reason to order and to systematise remains uncertain in the first *Critique*, the example of "race" demonstrates that certain concepts and categories of reason, even though they are not simple facts of nature, are also not "merely" logical, abstracted from any connection to experience. With reference to these concepts, Kant attempts to redefine the relation between the logical and the empirical and, in so doing, to justify the use of speculative reason for scientific purposes.

Chapter two looked at the sudden appearance of social and political concepts and categories in Hegel's *Science of Logic*, a text which redefines the nature of speculative reason after Kant. While the example of the sexual relation in the 'Chemism' chapter might seem accidental or insignificant at first, this thesis argues that speculative reason in fact relies upon social and political categories, which in turn exemplify its nature and functioning. Because these concepts are contested and more visibly open to change than others, they are especially suited to exemplify the temporal and performative nature of speculative reason that Hegel attempts to uncover. The performative aspect of speculative reason is examined with particular reference to Hegel and Butler.

Performing the speculative

Chapters two and four attempted a close reading of the final chapters of Hegel's *Science of Logic* with a view to uncovering an ontological concept of speculation. Hegel opens his *Logic* with the statement: '*Being, pure being* – without further determination'[809], suggesting that the concept of "being," if not further developed, remains a merely empty category. It was argued that the *Logic* returns in the end to its beginning in order to propose a concept of determinate being. However, since the entire book aims to explain and to demonstrate the non-empirical development of speculative reason, also defined by Hegel as conceptual form, this definition cannot rely on any empirical content to further determine the opening, the category of "being." Instead, a concept of the dynamic *activity* (*Thätikeit*) of form is proposed as the new and determinate but still non-empirical concept of "being." This is a speculative ontological concept. Speculative reason, according to Hegel, is not only a requirement for knowledge and cognition but should equally be understood as ontological *Thätigkeit*, as an activity or a doing.

In chapter four I propose that, as ontological activity, the concept is performative. While this term is not itself available to Hegel, it best describes his intention to define speculation as both an epistemological and ontological activity. In other words, while philosophical speculation is the activity of pure or theoretical reason, as ontological activity, speculation is performative. The concept of performativity, accordingly, names and defines speculation as ontological form, despite not being spoken or written by Hegel himself.

Material reliance and effects

Throughout this thesis, an attempt is made to define both the material dependence and the effects of speculative thought. This thesis demonstrates that Kant already complicates the definition of speculative reason as strictly non-empirical. By referring

[809] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. di Giovanni, p.59. This opening, however, is preceded by two prefaces and two introductions – one to the book as a whole and one to the 'Doctrine of Being', entitled: 'With what must the beginning of science be made?' It could, therefore, be questioned whether 'Being, pure being' is actually a beginning, or whether a text can have several beginnings.

to the speculative concepts of race and the living being, Kant attempts to show that the relation between the logical and the empirical might not be strictly oppositional, and that it therefore needs to be rethought. While Hegel thinks this relation further, he thinks it purely conceptually by defining an ontological concept of speculative reason. Irigaray and Butler, it is argued, offer an alternative response by demonstrating that those political concepts used by Kant and Hegel as examples are not coincidental, but are rather intrinsic to theoretical reasoning as such.

Speculative reason, given its temporal and performative nature, needs to be contextualised through those examples that illustrate its functioning. While Kant's account of speculation has to be read in the context of methodological debates in natural history and the emerging discourse of anthropology, Hegel's example of the sexual relation becomes intelligible only against the background of the philosophy of nature and the history of gynaecology. The concepts of race and sexual difference, used by Kant and Hegel to illustrate the legitimate use of speculative reason, were at this point in time being redefined – medically, anthropologically, culturally but also philosophically – as scientific terms. While Kant and Hegel do not acknowledge the extent of the reliance of speculative reason on these concepts, instead presenting the example as secondary, Irigaray points to the material dependence of speculative reason, highlighting the construction in philosophy of a universal and abstract concept of "woman" that functions as support structure and condition of possibility for theoretical reason. By introducing the concept of specula(riza)tion, Irigaray intends to render those support structures visible through theoretical work. It is in this context that Irigaray points to the connection between the gynaecological speculum and theoretical speculation, suggesting that their link is not merely etymological. Chapter three points to the disciplinary foundation of gynaecology in Germany; and chapter five gives a (selective) account of the long and complex history of the gynaecological speculum. In so doing it is possible to carry Irigaray's critique of Kantian and Hegelian speculation further – to do what Irigaray proposes but ultimately does not do; namely, to visualise and historicise speculative reason.

Irigaray demonstrates that the sexual relation, which seems accidental in Hegel's *Logic*, is in fact intrinsic to philosophical thought in general. Critiquing the philosophical canon on social and political grounds, her analysis is, however,

weakened by her unwillingness to locate her own findings historically. For instance, she rightly points out that both philosophy and modern medicine construct abstract and universal categories of woman: in the case of philosophy, as an outside that is equally a condition of possibility; and in medicine as the subject of gynaecology and reproductive health care. However, in both philosophical and medical discourses, the categories of woman, femininity and embodiment are more complex than this. Both construct a differential notion of womanhood and sexuality, especially through race and class. I illustrate this by looking to the founding moment of gynaecology in the United States, where it developed under conditions of slavery. These experimental surgeries, which transformed gynaecology in the United States and then worldwide through the rapid advancement of caesarean sectioning, obstetrical fistulae repair and ovariotomy were performed first on enslaved women in the American South and, later, at the first women's hospital in New York, on poor immigrant women, most of them Irish Catholic. These medical advancements thus depended upon female bodies that were othered, not just by virtue of their (presumed) sex, but by their enslaved status, their race, and their class. This complexity is lost in Irigaray's work.

Sexual difference and/or gender?

Irigaray, by uncovering the situated nature of theoretical reason and its support structures, points to a European philosophical and cultural symptom – the default gendering of seemingly neutral concepts as male. However, as already indicated, her argument reduces the complexity of that which it reveals. I therefore suggest that her thesis is most useful when read as part of a broader attempt, on behalf of the women's liberation and feminist movements, to reclaim both the speculum and speculation as theoretical and practical tools. As such, Irigaray's work remains important, despite the necessary critique of her concept of sexual difference, which does not account for how race, class and sexuality are intrinsic to its construction. Moreover, as Butler points out, Irigaray's framework fails to question the givenness and ostensibly natural necessity of the gender binary; this framework must therefore be rethought in light of such contemporary, "queer" critiques.

As outlined in chapter six, Butler claims that the concept of "gender" is a better conceptual tool to critically engage the philosophical canon than that of sexual

difference. Butler's central criticism is that Irigaray does not critically reflect on her own concepts and their limitations. For instance, Irigaray does not sufficiently address the complexity, and problematic nature, of the history of the concept of sexual difference – even if posited as a question rather than a fact. If this remains unacknowledged, Butler argues, then sexual difference will remain a static framework that continues to be enforced via harmful and reactionary norms. While Irigaray claims that sexual difference is the most important question of our time, Butler contends that this concept is ill fit to address what is most urgent in feminist philosophy today: that is, questions of queerness, race, trans experience, as well as their interrelation.

However, as I outline in chapter six, the concept of gender, due to its history and origin, is problematic in its own way – and one not fully accounted for by Butler. Though introduced in order to designate the social dimension of human sexed bodily life, the term "gender" was not invented by feminists. Rather, the concept emerged in U.S. clinical studies of intersexuality and transsexuality in the 1950s and 60s. The child psychologist and sexologist John Money, who treated "intersex" babies, was the first to make use of the grammatical category of gender as a clinical and diagnostic tool. Though the phenomenon of intersex, according to Money, demonstrates that the unitary definition of sex as either male or female has to be abandoned, his treatment protocol does not in fact question the male-female binary, but instead outlines how to implement it both surgically and psychologically in cases of ambiguously gendered bodies. Money acknowledges the malleability of sexual difference and anatomy, and thus challenges the paradigm of the *Naturphilosophen*, who understood sex difference to be naturally binary, and so construe this binary as a basis for a gendered distribution of labour. And yet, Money's concept of gender forms part of a clinical protocol that keeps the normalizing functions of the nineteenth century sexual difference framework intact, as well as preserving the emphasis on heterosexual reproduction and population control. Even though sexual dimorphism is no longer tenable as a universal description of human nature and biology, the role of Money's gender is to implement the promise of nineteenth century sexual difference and sex dimorphism by contemporary technological, surgical and psychological means.

In chapter six, I argue that Butler's gender performativity marks a radical intervention in the use and understanding of gender as invented by Money, transforming a highly

problematic clinical-behaviourist term into a critical concept and tool for feminist praxis – though with its own attendant problems. This thesis explains that it is Butler's notion of performativity that allows her to break with Money and to introduce a radically new understanding of gender. Yet, the precise meaning of performativity remains unclear. Though Butler attends to what language can do, a purely linguistic concept of performativity is not sufficient as explanation of gender performativity. The latter necessitates a more explicitly ontological account. While Butler does not propose it in these terms, I argue that her concept of performativity is best understood as a performative ontology.

Towards a performative ontology

Even though Butler is critical of ontology and seeks to demonstrate that ontological markers, such as gender, are not fixed but are – politically – contested, a new definition of ontology nonetheless emerges out of her work. In Butler, as in Hegel, the concept of performativity names an anti-essentialist concept of being that is inherently relational and temporal. This concept of being, it is argued, can be understood through Hegel's speculative proposition. Defined as such, ontology is not entirely distinct from claims about language and epistemology. Rather, speculation refers to a specific activity that, if ontological, is performative.

In line with Hegel's logical definition of determinate being, Butler's concept of performativity describes a doing and undoing that is not the wilful act of an already-determined subject. If read through Hegel, it becomes possible to avoid some of the problems Butler's position faces, such as the criticism (repeatedly addressed to her) that her account of gender performativity is a voluntarism. However, while Hegel, through his use of examples, hints at the inherently social and political nature of speculation, it is Butler who first proposes the thought of a social, ontological doing and undoing. Performativity in Butler explains how ontological claims, which are always to some extent political, come to manifest on, in, or even *as* the body. Since ontology is understood to be always already a political project, gender is defined not as a merely descriptive but rather as a critical category.

While Butler transforms "gender," this thesis argues that the origin of the concept still matters for its current use. This is because the term, as employed in English now, originally formed part of a medical protocol established to make intersex and trans bodies conform to normative gender and body standards. Thus, "gender" essentially concerns intersex and trans bodies. This should be acknowledged in feminist theory, which ought to critically foreground the experience of trans, intersex and non-binary bodies in its analysis of gender. As already acknowledged by Money, the categories trans, intersex and non-binary bodies trouble the assumed naturalness of binary sexual difference. However, if understood through the concepts of speculation and performativity, gender is no longer a solution to this "problem" but rather offers the means to think intersex and trans differently. While non-binary bodies and identities do not pose a problem, either medically or culturally; to some (including some feminists) they pose a threat. As a consequence, these subjects often do not receive vital health care services, social and cultural recognition, and basic respect. A return to the "origins" of gender is required in order to challenge current negative or limiting perceptions of trans, intersex and non-binary experience. This thesis therefore proposes to reclaim the concept's origin for feminist theory. Moreover, I argue that if gender is thought as speculative and performative, then a predetermined and fixed gender ontology is no longer possible.

Concluding reflection on method

Speculation is defined by Kant and Hegel as a question of relation. To explain the legitimate use of speculative reason, Kant and Hegel employ social and political categories. These, they suggest, best exemplify the difficult relation between empirical and purely conceptual forms of thought. This explanation of philosophical speculation raises methodological questions about the relation between philosophy and those disciplines that also explain and develop social and political categories alongside it.

In view of this, a different approach to close reading is proposed in this thesis. Philosophical texts are interpreted alongside other disciplinary modes of inquiry, in particular historical and feminist modes of analyses. For example, while a close textual analysis of the final chapters of Hegel's *Science of Logic* is undertaken, some examples used here, such as the sexual relation in the 'Chemism' chapter, demand a

different mode of inquiry. This example, as well as the emergence of the concepts of violence, resistance and freedom in the final chapters of the *Logic*, appear abruptly but are crucial to the argument. The reader, accordingly, cannot simply remain within the framework of the *Logic*. If, then, to read the *Logic* means to step outside it, what exactly does it mean to approach a text "on its own terms"?

A reading of the final chapters of the *Logic* makes evident that Hegel's philosophical argument loses some of its depth and power if read "strictly" on its own terms. It therefore becomes necessary to negotiate the relation between philosophy and its disciplinary others – for instance gynaecology, anthropology and natural history – in order to understand the reception of philosophical concepts in other disciplines, and vice versa. Against this backdrop, the relation between the empirical and the purely conceptual, as first raised by Kant, emerges once more. This question still requires a response, especially when attempting to explain social and political categories such as race, sex, gender, trans and intersex.

What does this mean for our reading of Kant and Hegel? While we find theoretical tools in their texts, it is also necessary to understand the cultural and scientific debates that their conceptualisations are responding to. It should be evident that even though philosophy deals with concepts and thoughts, this does not mean that these can be read outside of their historical and cultural contexts. This moreover requires acknowledging the political stakes of philosophical concepts. Such a reading does not limit philosophy but, in complicating and even "troubling" its history, opens it up to a new life. Thus, the philosophical concepts of speculation and performativity, as first outlined by Kant and Hegel, and as reworked and redefined by Irigaray and Butler, are still relevant and applicable today. A speculative and performative ontology offers crucial theoretical tools for thinking trans, intersex and nonbinary experience – some of the most urgent concerns of contemporary feminist philosophy and political theory.

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Appendices

Appendix I
Helen King: *Midwifery, Obstetrics and the Rise of Gynaecology*

Why did gynaecology as a separate discipline become necessary?
Difference between men + women is so great that women require their own medical field

Timeline
16th century: women's medical treatment is already separated from men's
1840s: the word gynaecology appears in dictionaries
end of 19th century: institutionalisation through journals, specialist hospital departments and subject diplomas (first university courses devoted to the speciality)

Revisist attempt to place the origin of gynaecology:

heightened interest in the diseases of women in the second half of the 16th century
→ stressing difference of women from men; this difference had implications for their effective medical treatment
→ this claim was first made in 5BC Greece in the texts of the Hippocratic corpus

King: the origin of gynaecology should not be understood in a narrowly institutional sense

two sex model:
existed from Antiquity (was not invented in the 18th century as Thomas Laqueur claims)

The concept of gynaecology:
a medical approach focused on female difference was invented in the Hippocratic 'Dieases of Women'; but, there was no 'gynaecologists'

Yet there is a change in the 18th century (but not from a one sex to a two sex model):
interest of 16th and early 17th century writers in menstruation and fertility and in the 18th century a focus on difficult childbirth

obstetrix (Lat.) = midwife
calling midwifery 'obstetric medicine' was one way of taking women out of the picture → creating a midwifery that was gendered male
obstetrics was developed as the name of the field as practised + transformed into a science by men

second half of 17th - 19th century:
midwifery was constructed as a subject that lacked a respectable past; as such, and contratry to Laqueur, midwifery is central in the construction of medical history

Appendix II
History of gender and modern medicine

The European Witch Hunt (15th - 19th century)

1484: publication of Malleus Maleficarum
1580 -1630: most intense phase

1440/50: invention of the printing press

1500 - 1599:
state + church become interlinked/more powerful
↕
rise of the universities/professions

16th + 17th century:
communities are breaking up due to the enclosures
migration
rise of individual private property / wage work
→ social control moved away from the village into the domain of the authorities (state, church, etc.)
→ magic + miracles became the sole domain of God / the church

1600-1699:
mercantile capitalism
more land in Africa and the Americas is colonised
cities are growing

supression of female healers

prior to this period health was the domain of peasant women healers

witches were attacked for being pragmatic/empirical, i.e. for knowledge gained through cause-effect experimentation (today's definition of modern science)

authorities did not want to leave the control over reproduction in the hands of peasant women

medical education is increasingly denied to women

medicine becomes profession requiring university training
↓
universities, with few exceptions, bar women

<u>one outcome of the witch trials:</u>
view of women's gender + sexuality changed from being seen as powerful to powerless

doctor's professionalism
(everything else is denounced)

Late 17th and 18th century:
shift in western Europe from early modern monarchical states to modern democratic policies
↕
in this shift science negotiated the positions of women and non-Europeans in the new social orders

herbal remedies developed by peasant women healers, such as ergot, still used

the decline of midwifery undermined traditional knowledge of contraception (as late as 1600, women in parts of Europe had access to around 200 contraceptives + abortificients)

≈ 1634: invention of forceps
late 1700s: physicians gained access to forceps
many years passed until forceps are proper use

end of 17th century:
various intellectual currents that made up the scentific revolution:
Baconianism, Cartesian mechanism, empiricist epistemology, Newtonian synthesis

17th + 18th century:
male practitioners make inroads into the last preserve of female healing
→ midwifery (remains in the hands of women until the 19th century)

oxytoctic found in rye grain fungus → tool midwifes used for centuries to speed labour through intensification of contractions

downgrading midwives:
confine midwifery to poor women

physicians come into cultural authority as representing science (especially once they begin to supervise child birth)

science conceives of the categories of 'male' and 'female' as dichotomous but complementary
→ ovaries + testicles are now linguistically distinguished
→ organs that had not been distinguished by a name of their own, e.g. vagina, were given one
→ structures thought common to both, e.g. the skeleton, nervous system are differentiated to correspond to the cultural male + female

18th century:
William Hunter (English physician) outlined the physical changes in a woman's body during the nine months of pregnancy

until 1759:
no detailed female skeleton in anatomy books to illustrate its difference from the male

+ forceps:
this knowledge aided William Smellie's retooling of the forceps

<u>Natural history:</u>
was one of the premier sciences of the 18th century; also popular → natural history books were widely read

<u>samed:</u>
for purpos of extracting reproductive knowledge

<u>othered:</u>
based on class + construction of race (medical treatment, e.g. use of anesthesia)

Obstetrics

this practice eventually excluded women practitioners

19th century obstetrics

sex: key organising principle
Linnaeus, for example, based his botanical taxonomy on the sexuality of plants
Naturphilosophie

late 18th, early 19th:
emergence of scientific medicine
↕ coincides
shift in understanding of sex/gender
18th century: 'sex as we know it is invented' (Laqueur)
↓ Laqueur's one sex/two sex model is contested by historians rather:
1) introduction of a biopolitical vocabulary
2) emphasis on sexual dimorphism + complementarity

women as a group

Gynaecology

= midwifery + obstetrics + surgery

19th century medicine:
advances in the fields of surgery, anaesthesia, sanitation

"Nature"

battleground of gender shifted to:
nature/biolgocial sex
↓
epistemological status of nature as bedrock of distinctions
↓ existed before (see Elsa Dorlin) but now:
nature/social distinction becomes more distinct

Speculum

not fully established as a formal branch of medicine until the 1870s

gynaecology is at the forefront of the professionalisation in medicine

reproductive organs as a place open to/suitable for medical intervention

slavery
medicine
medical publishing

importance of medical journals
→ pioneering gynaecological surgeons were heavily involved in medical publishing

James Marion Sims

slavery: served medicine by providing subjects for experimentation

vesico-vaginal fistulas ↔ malnutrition, rickets mishaped pelvis, prolonged labour

<u>reproductive medicine:</u>
essential to the maintenance + success of southern slavery

unveiling of "nature"

visuality/visualising as a question of
=
how are scientific objects and orderly relationships revealed and made analysable

1855: Woman's Hospital → New York
first hospital dedicated to female disorders
→ supply of human material on which to experiment

Woman's Hospital: assumption of a connection between the biological processes/cycle in females & appearances of nervous disorders

Visibility
=
knowability
=
mastery

science as process of unveiling

Western medicine/"birth of the clinic" founded on visibility

Development of psychiatry
hysteria → from Latin hysterus or uterus: linked to female by way of her reproductive organs

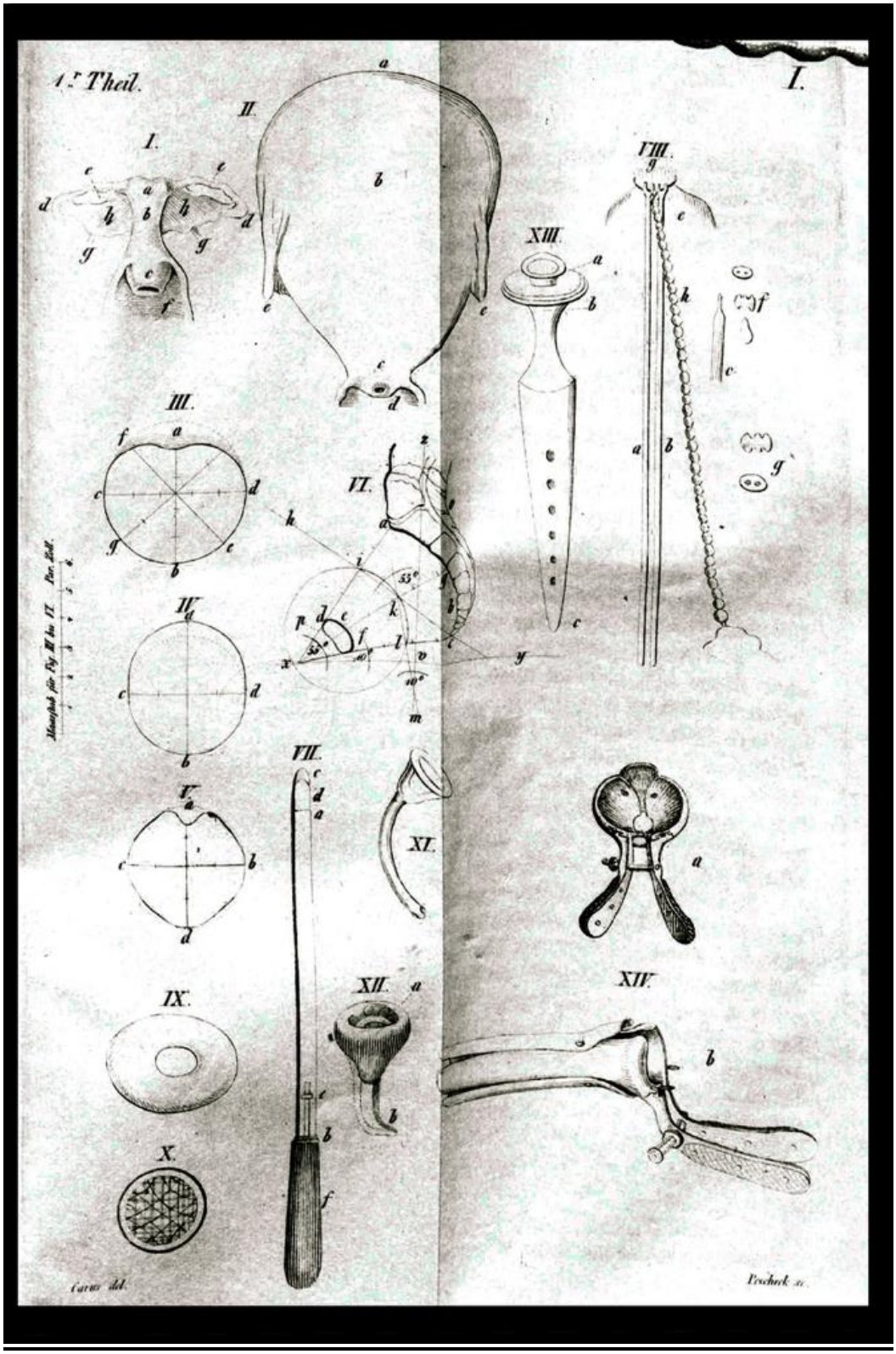
bodies are regarded as a microcosm of some larger cosmological order

scientific revolution alongside the revolution in understanding sex, gender, sexuality

In the eyes of European law "woman" is a universal:
all women, regardless of age, class, race are disenfranchised
↕
By the late 18th century, many natural historians were postulating a universal reproductive woman
reproductive politics: need to produce greater populations in both Europe and the colonies

by 19th century:
social role is less revelant to the understanding of sex/gender
sex is dimorphic
→ a question of anatomical fact

Appendix III
Carl Gustav Carus gynaecological timeline and tools



Zu S. 11 gehörig.

Chronologische Uebersicht

I. Periode.

Vom Beginn der Wissenschaft bis zur Erscheinung des ersten gedruckten Buches über gynäkologische Gegenstände.

vor Christi Geb.	Spuren gynäkologischer und insbesondere geburtshülflicher Heilregeln bei Indiern, Aegyptern, Juden und Chinesen.
715	Des Numa Gesetz, verstorbene Schwangere sogleich zu öffnen, um das Kind zu retten.
486	Hippokrates von Frauenkrankheiten und männlicher Geburtshülfe.
350	Aristoteles verbreitet über Zeugung, Schwangerschaft und Geburt bessere Kenntnisse.
nach Christi Geb.	
20	Celsus vervollkommnet die Kenntniß von Krankheiten der Geschlechtsorgane und operativer Geburtshülfe.
117	Moschion schreibt Gynaecia.
190	Galen über Frauenkrankheiten, Erzeugung und Geburt.
360	Oribasius sammelt ältere Schriften.
400	Rabbi Ascher erörtert im Buche Nidda die Rechte und Gebräuche der Frauen und erwähnt den Bauchschnitt an Lebenden.
543	Aetius v. Amida und
634	Paulus v. Aegina sammeln ältere gynäkologische Schriften.
900	Rhazes schreibt über Frauenkrankheiten.
1122	Albucasis schreibt über Geburtshülfe und erzählt den Fall einer Bauchschwangerschaft.
	Mehrere medicinische Schulen entstehen im Abendlande.
1282	Albert v. Bollstädt (Albertus Magnus) schreibt de secretis mulierum.
1491	Erster im Abendlande bekannt gewordner Fall eines glücklich ausgefallenen Gebärmutterschnittes an einer Lebenden.

II. Periode.

Vom ersten gedruckten gynäkologischen Werke bis zur Erfindung des wichtigsten Werkzeugs im Bereiche der operativen Gynäkologie.

1513	Euch. Rösslin schreibt den Rosegarten der schwangern Frawen und Hebammen.
1553	Jac. Rueff verfaßt ein ähnliches Buch.
1574	Faventinus de Victoriis schreibt de aegritudinibus infantum.
1566 bis 1597	Conr. Gesner, Casp. Wolf, Casp. Bauhin und Israel Spach sammeln gynäkologische Arbeiten unter dem Titel: Gynaeciorum s. de mulierum affectibus libri Graecorum etc.
1587	Gervais de la Touche dringt darauf, die schwereren geburtshülflichen Fälle männlicher Fürsorge zu übergeben in seinem Buche: La très-haute et très souveraine Science de l'art d'enfanter etc.
1598	S. Pineau schreibt über mehrere gynäkologische Gegenstände, Kennzeichen des jungfräulichen Zustandes u. s. w.
1603	Rod. a Castro schreibt de universa mulierum medicina.
	Fabr. ab Aquapendente fördert gleichzeitig die Physiologie der Zeugung.
1609	Louise Bourgois schreibt über Unfruchtbarkeit, Frauenkrankheiten, Geburten und Kinderkrankheiten.
1651	Harvey erleuchtet die Physiologie der Zeugung.
1654	D. Sennertus handelt im vierten Buche seiner Medicina practica von Frauen- und Kinderkrankheiten.
1668	F. Mauriceau giebt wichtige gynäkologische, insbesondre geburtshülfliche, Schriften heraus.
1672	R. d. Graaf beschreibt die Structur der Ovarien.
1693	H. Chamberlain verkauft sein Geheimniß schwere Geburten zu erleichtern.
1697 bis 1722	Joh. v. Hoorn, Deventer, de la Motte schreiben in Schweden, Holland und Frankreich insbesondre über Geburtshülfe.
1715	Fr. Hoffmann, praxis clinica morborum infantum.
1718	Strother unterscheidet zuerst das Puerperalfieber.

III. Periode.

Erfindung des wichtigsten Werkzeugs der operativen Gynäkologie bis auf Begründung einer naturgemäßern Behandlung der Geburt.

alfyn legt das erste unschädliche Werkzeug zur Ausziehung Kindeskopfs bei der Geburt, der Akademie der Wissenschaf- in Paris vor.

Entbindungsanstalt als Lehranstalt begründet zu Straß-

churig schreibt eine Parthenologia, Gynaekologia, Em- ologia u. s. w.

Albin vervollständigt die Anatomie des Fetus und Uterus uld erörtert den Mechanismus der Geburt.

vret vervollkommnet die Geburtszange und giebt wichtige äkologische, insbesondere geburtshülfliche Schriften heraus.

Mehrere Entbindungsanstalten als Lehranstalten werden in ttschland, England und Dänemark errichtet, denen späterhin andere sich anschließen.

mellie giebt wichtige geburtshülfliche Werke heraus.

Aulay lehrt die künstliche Frühgeburt.

Haller vervollkommnet die Kenntniß über Geschlechts- ctionen.

Rosen v. Rosenstein und G. Armstrong schreiben Nutzen über Kinderkrankheiten.

Stein verfaßt mehrere geburtshülfliche Werke und er- et mehrere Instrumente.

struc bereichert die Gynäkologie durch mehrere nützliche riften.

Hunter erläutert durch schöne Tafeln die Geschichte der Swangerschaft.

Ault versucht eine neue Operation (Synchondrotomie) in die Burtshülfe einzuführen.

e leitet die Aufmerksamkeit der Aerzte auf Beachtung der Lachen der häufigen Todesfälle neugeborner Kinder.

Sue schreibt zuerst etwas vollständiger über Geschichte der näkologie.

deloque, erfahrener Schriftsteller im Fache der Geburts- fe.

. Osiander tritt als gynäkologischer Schriftsteller auf, reist und lehrt späterhin besonders über Geburtshülfe, welche och unter seinen Händen sich mehr und mehr vom einfach turgemäßen entfernt, und ist besonders als Geschichtschreiber Gynäkologie zu schätzen.

. Mursinna schreibt über Frauen- u. Kinderkrankheiten. Außerdem sind Starke, Denmann, Zeller, Girtan- r u. A. geschätzte gynäkologische Schriftsteller. Größtes Ver- nst um Rückführung der Gynäkologie zu einer naturgemäßen handlung der Geburt erwirbt sich:

J. Boer.

IV. Periode.

Neuere Fortschritte zur immer vollkommnern Ausbildung der Gynäkologie.

1799 bis 1809 John Burns erläutert den Bau des schwangern Uterus und die Grundsätze der Geburtshülfe.

1799 S. Th. Sömmerring erläutert durch schöne Abbildungen den Bau der Frucht und des weiblichen Skelets.

1803 El. v. Siebold, ein um die Gynäkologie höchst verdienter Arzt, giebt ein Lehrb. d. Entbindungskunst heraus, dem späterhin ein Lehrb. der Frauenkrankh. folgt, leitet auch die wichtigste neuere Zeitschrift für Geburtshülfe.

1807 J. A. Schmidtmüller beleuchtet den neuern Stand der Geburtshülfe und verfaßt mehrere lehrreiche gynäkologische Schriften.

1807 J. Ch. G. Jörg giebt ein systematisches Handb. d. Geburtshülfe heraus, dem späterhin die Bearbeitungen der Frauen- und Kinderkrankheiten folgen. Wendet zugleich mit Scharfblick die vergleichende Physiologie zur Vervollkommnung der Gynäkologie an und schreibt auch über Geburtshülfe der Thiere.

1810 Oken erläutert die Entstehung der Nabelbrüche.

1812 Nägele bereichert die Kenntniß der Frauenkrankheiten.

1812 J. F. Meckel begründet eine richtigere Erkenntniß menschlicher Monstrositäten durch Zuziehung der Entwicklungsgeschichte.

1816 K. Wenzel macht sich um die Erkenntniß der Krankheiten des Uterus verdient.

1817 J. d'Outrepont leitet die Aufmerksamkeit der Geburtshelfer auf Selbstwendung und Wendung auf den Kopf.

1820 G. W. Stein macht den Unterschied einer Geburt des Menschen vom Gebären der Thiere bemerklich und liefert andere wichtige Beiträge.

1820 J. H. Wigand vervollständigt die Kenntniß von der Geburt des Menschen.

1820 W. J. Schmitt giebt seine schätzbaren obstetricischen Schriften heraus.

1820 Carus erster Versuch die gesammten Lehren der Gynäkologie zu einem systematischen Ganzen zu ordnen. 1828 in einer zweiten Auflage vervollständigt.

1821 J. Lejumeau de Kergaradec führt die Auscultation in die Lehre von der Schwangerschaft ein.

1821 Lachapelle giebt ihre vieles Interessante enthaltenden Bemerkungen über Geburtshülfe heraus.

1822 Geoffroi St. Hilaire schreibt über menschliche Mißgeburten.

1822 J. Wendt giebt eine ausführliche Darstellung der Kinderkrankheiten.

1822 Fr. Tiedemann legt die Nerven des Uterus ausführlicher dar und bereichert außerdem die Entwicklungsgeschichte des Fetus.

Außerdem entstanden mehrere Entbindungslehranstalten; Bakker unter den Holländern, Hogben, Merriman, Ramsbotham, Davis und Andere unter den Engländern; Capuron, Dufey, Gardien, Maygrier, Patrix, die Boivin und Andere unter den Franzosen; Assalini, Rizzo, Cenni unter den Italienern; Nolde, Mende, Busch, Gumbrecht, Ebermaier, Feiler, Casper, May, Choulant, Schweighäuser, Senff und Andere mehr unter den Deutschen bereichern die Gynäkologie durch ihre Arbeiten.

1826 F. L. Meißner stellt die Forschungen des neunzehnten Jahrhundets im Bereich der Gynäkologie zusammen und wiederholt diese Uebersicht der spätern Forschungen im J. 1833.

1826 Eine allgemeine deutsche Zeitschrift für Gynäkologie wird zu begründen versucht und von Ritgen (geschätztem gynäkologischen Schriftsteller) in Verein mit Mehrern redigirt. — Sie erscheint 1833 als neue Z. f. Gebk.

1828 Dupuytren, Recamier, Dubois und Andere führen den häufigern Gebrauch des Speculum ein und vervollständigen dadurch die Lehre von den Krankheiten des Uterus.

1828 In England erscheinen von Ashwell und Ryan neue Handbücher der Geburtshülfe.

1829 Velpeau in Paris macht in diesem und den folgenden Jahren mehrere interessante Schriften über Geburtshülfe und Lehre vom Baue des menschlichen Eies bekannt.

1834 H. F. Kilian giebt eine ausführliche Operationslehre für Geburtshelfer.

1835 J. Ch. G. Jörg schreibt ein Handbuch für Aerzte am Geburtsbette.