

Hegel's Ontological Grasp of Judgement and the Original Dividing of Identity into Difference

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All good Hegelians know that the true relation the philosopher discovers between identity and difference must not be expressed as a disjunctive statement, forcing a Kierkegaardian decision between the two terms. Neither is their relation a static one. Although what Hegel calls speculative thought can be represented and understood through such handy mantras as “the identity of identity and difference”, the real relationship between identity and difference is one of movement, specifically, the epic movement of the concept. Indeed, the Hegelian concept recounts the journey from an initial position of immediate, inchoate identity, through the unsettling, conflicted experience of difference, then back home, where the trials are remembered and celebrated as formative of an enriched, mediated identity. This paper deals with the first crucial move in this process, the moment of “setting out” Hegel refers to as judgement, or *Urteil*. As if by happy coincidence, the German word itself expresses this “original dividing” (*Ur-teilen*) of the concept,¹ that allows it to move from its initial, nuclear identity to its moment of self-differentiation. Without the first step of judgement’s original dividing, the movement of the concept cannot take place and the speculative or systematic articulation of identity and difference that characterizes Hegel’s notion of science (systematic philosophy), is impossible.

The question of judgement in the Hegelian articulation of identity and difference gains even deeper resonance when we reflect that *Urteil* also refers to the fundamental linguistic act of predication, according to a tradition in grammar and logic that is easily identified in Aristotle and Kant before reappearing in Hegel. This means that for our speculative philosopher, the original dividing that engenders conceptual movement and makes truth, or the identity of identity and difference, possible is also a linguistic form, the form of the predicative proposition.² So the question of identity and difference, through judgement, is inescapably related to language.

This might lead us to conclude that, for Hegel, the first movement of speculative thought is *reflected* in language or that there is some degree of correspondence between forms of thought and forms of language, leading us to observe that certain forms of thought can be adequately expressed or reflected in language. However, it seems to me Hegel goes much further. He also asks us to accept that the movement of the concept is not purely formal or “logical”, as the term is generally understood, but rather *ontological*, in that it involves existing or being. In other words, according to Hegel’s logic, the original division or the first move from identity to difference, articulated as an act of predication, must also be taken as a move to determinate being, a move to existence, as expressed, *at first* only abstractly, in the copula “is”.³ If this is the case, if judgement’s act of predication is a logical move into being, then the truth of this movement is not merely its correspondence to the formal articulations of thought. Judgement must be more than a linguistic *representation* of the logical; it must be ontological.

To recapitulate, in Hegel’s notion of judgement, we have thought’s original dividing from identity into difference, which also must be a move into existence,

articulated in the linguistic form of predication in the proposition. I want to look at how this is possible and I want to do this by retracing the path of my own investigation into the origins of Hegel's ontological idea of judgement.

It was Jere Paul Surber, in his article "Hegel's Speculative Sentence", who put into words something that I had come to believe implicitly or accept without looking into further. Surber points out that Hegel, when referring to the logical form of *judgement*, i.e. predicative propositions within a scientific context, asks us to accept the term "subject" in both a grammatical sense, and as an expression of consciousness, of the self.⁴

Hegel's strange claim, as articulated by Surber, struck a chord of recognition because I had recently been confronted with the notion in two separate areas of inquiry. One area is directly related to why I had been reading Surber's insightful article in the first place: the question of scientific discourse in Hegel. I want to briefly summarize this first inquiry and then do the same with the second, where the question of "judgement" appears in a completely different context: how Hegel explains the early development of the individual mind. Revisiting these two areas of inquiry will help demonstrate the ontological nature of judgement and clarify the apparently audacious Hegelian claim that the subject of a scientific proposition must also be grasped as a self.

When I first read Surber's article, I had been working on a piece about Hegel's idea of objective truth and how this could be captured in scientific language.⁵ The problem, as I saw it, was how Hegel's notion of systematic philosophy or science could claim objective truth when the discourse making up that system does not rely on a type of truth that depends on the adequate correspondence or reflection between language and empirically observed "reality". In other words, for the discourse of Hegelian science to

be objectively true, it must itself claim to be true objectivity and not simply the accurate reflection of detached reality.⁶

To summarize this intuition in still another way, scientific language in Hegel must somehow be the existing middle term of being and thought, and not simply the representation of one or the other. This sort of representation, for Hegel, is always tainted with the hues of subjective idealism. Objective scientific language must somehow do more than represent truth, it must *be* truth as objectively there. It must be the *actual* mediation of being and thought, and not just the formal adequation between the two. This implies a type of discourse where the sign is not separate from the signified, where the word is the thing, a being that is also a thought.⁷

Such a discourse is therefore necessarily ontological. It is thought that is really objective or existing and true. To put flesh on these theoretical bones, we can find examples of this type of discourse in the contents of the system itself. This is because the various contents of the *Encyclopedia* should be grasped as objectively true discourse, in the sense I have just been presenting. Religion is a content of Science in that religious doctrine is language that is the true, existing middle term between thought and being. Art is a content of Science insofar as it is considered existing, objective, true discourse. The same applies to the State, in that laws and constitutions are the objectively true content of science, and history, as the object or content of science, is essentially historiography.

In this way, the discourse of science itself, i.e. the *Encyclopedia*, can be seen as the discourse whose actual content is true, objective, existing discourse. Science is true and objective because its content is so.

Within such a system of science, language is necessarily ontological. It is *logos*, understood as the existing middle term between being and thought.⁸ This emphasis on the “middle term” also reveals the inadequacy of the form of judgement, of simple predication, when it comes to embracing real content and explains why Hegel’s logic comes to put forward the syllogism as the most appropriate form of scientific discourse.⁹ Whereas the bilateral form of judgement (A is B) seems to leave little room for intermediary content, the syllogism holds a middle term, the space of the particular, even essential content of science, as we can already find in Aristotelian logic.¹⁰

Regardless of the syllogistic form science, as a system, takes on (Universal, Particular, Singular), we still must, even as Hegelian philosophers, express the speculative truth that forms the system in the common language of predication, in judgements or propositions. The question is how to grasp this grammatical form, within the context of science, in an ontological way, as discourse that is both thought and being. This leads us back to the original remark of Surber’s, which refers to the passage on philosophical language in the Preface to the *Phenomenology*. Hegel asks us to accept “subject” simultaneously in both a grammatical and psychological sense. The grammatical subject of the proposition is also the “self” of the proposition. How is this possible? Does Hegel rely on the convenient homonym *Subjekt* as sophistic equivocation, in order to advance what appears to be a highly tendentious notion of language?

I now want to briefly look at the second area of investigation where Hegel’s ontological notion of judgement occurs.

Whereas the first encounter with the homonymous nature of “subject”, in the context of judgement, arises from an enquiry into the logic of the predicative proposition

and leads to the area of subjective consciousness, the second encounter runs in the opposite direction. It begins with the question of subjective consciousness, more specifically, with its actual development within the human individual. I had been working on Hegel's theory of mental illness, as it is related to his diagnosis of the Early Romantic poet Novalis, who had suffered and eventually died of a condition Hegel qualifies as "*Gemüt*".¹¹ The word is generally translated as "soul" or "heart" and as such can be taken as simply describing the overly sentimental bent of the romantic mind. I discovered, however, that Hegel uses the word as a technical term describing a very specific mental illness, within the framework of a sophisticated theory of psychopathology.

Hegel's theory of "*Gemüt*" is found in the *Philosophy of Spirit* section of the *Encyclopedia*,¹² where the philosopher explains the genesis of the individual conscious mind (Subjective Spirit), from the first articulations of the natural soul (*Seele*), in the section entitled "Anthropology", through the elaboration of the conscious individual, in "Psychology". In parentheses, it is remarkable that Hegel uncovers what he considers to be the normal psychological structure of the individual mind through the analysis of a psychopathological condition, in the same way modern, Freudian psychoanalysis arrives at a description of normal mental structures through the study of mental illness. Of course, in both cases, the relation between pathological states and normal psychological structures is reciprocal. The illness helps us understand what is normal and what is normal helps us understand the nature of illness.

This is the context in which Hegel presents the normal development of the individual psyche. It is the possibility of pathological regression¹³ that allows us to grasp

what constitutes a healthy development. In order to show this, he goes back to the very beginnings of the individual, as the fetus within the womb.

Initially, the fetus exists within the mother as an undetermined entity, a pure potentiality. Here, the mother acts as the soul of the fetus, its entelechy or realization, to use an Aristotelian analogy. Actually, Hegel uses the term “genius”¹⁴ to describe the mother’s initial relation to the fetus within. The mother is the “genius” of the fetus means that the mother determines its destiny.¹⁵ What is striking is that this determination is brought about by what Hegel calls *judgement*, a relationship that is not “real” but “magical”¹⁶ and where the mother’s nature must be understood in terms of a grammatical subject determining its predicate. The mother’s natural soul is “in this judgement, subject in general, her object is her substance, which is at the same time her predicate.”¹⁷ In other words, the mother is “subject” in both the grammatical and psychical acceptations of the term. In the normal relation between the mother and the fetus, we witness “the psychical judgement of the substance, in which the feminine nature can, in itself, break itself in two...”¹⁸

Through this act of judgement, this original dividing, the mother passes on to the fetus the natural qualities of the individual, or its soul, i.e. the talents, predispositions, natural determinations that will later be developed, or not, through education and the rise to individual consciousness and understanding. According to Hegel’s “genetics” the mother passes on to the baby all that is natural. The child’s development will be a progressive freeing from the determination of the maternal-natural, at first through habituation, where the child begins to determine and appropriate “his” nature through the self-mastery of his body, in order to fashion a second nature in the form of learned

habits.¹⁹ The father's role in the child's formation seems confined to making possible the child's schooling and entry into civil society and the rational world of the State.²⁰

It is important to understand the dialectical nature of judgement, in the anthropological context. As the child becomes conscious and rational, it is precisely its conscious understanding which now takes on the role of the determining "genius", the role that was originally that of the mother/subject determining her fetus.²¹ In other words, it is now conscious understanding that determines the inner soul (passed on from the mother) through judgement. Now, conscious understanding is the subject that determines, as its predicate, the natural soul of the individual, its talents and predispositions but also the bottomless well of memories and representations that make up its "subconscious" mind.²²

This is where the possibility of mental illness arises. A regression may occur where the determining genius, the subject of judgement, slips from conscious understanding and reverts back to the unconscious soul of the individual. Indeed, Hegel's theory of mental illness displays a pattern similar to that of Freud's oedipal complex, in that the determining "genius" rejects the father and falls once again into the hands of what was originally the mother, the unconscious, natural soul.

The concept of judgement as ontological is clearly central to this theory of the psyche and its attendant pathology, and I also hope to have given some indication of how *Urteil* is fundamental to the ontological nature of objective discourse, as the existing copula between being and thought. Immersed as I was in these two areas of inquiry, it is easy to see why Surber's statement about the homonymous nature of "subject" in the Hegelian idea of judgement struck a chord of recognition within me, which awoke me,

one might say, from my dogmatic slumber. I began wondering how Hegel came up with the idea, where it came from and what might justify it.

As often occurs in such circumstances, whether through some unconscious memory or pure serendipity, I just “happened” to be leafing through a book I hadn’t looked at in a long time, when I came across the answer to at least part of my questioning. I had been re-reading Jacques Rivelaygue’s brilliant *Leçons de métaphysique allemande*²³ and quite fortuitously came across his commentary on a short text by Hölderlin entitled “Judgement and Being” (*Urteil und Sein*), within a chapter on Hegel’s early development. In Rivelaygue, I found the following sentence: “The move from a subject-predicate relation (of judgement) to a subject-object relation happens because Hölderlin is thinking within a Fichtean framework, where the two relations are identical; in the first principle (I = I, I am I) the subject and the predicate correspond to the I-subject and the I-object.”²⁴ In other words, in Fichte’s foundational principle, *Ich bin Ich*, we have an act of predication that is identical to the relation between the self-positing subject and itself as posited object.

Perhaps we can say that Hegel, through Hölderlin, was inspired by Fichte’s principle in coming to his own understanding about judgement as ontological. According to the Fichtean paradigm, the proposition “I am I” is immediately ontological, in that the proposition (*Satz*) is understood as a self-positing (*ein Sichsetzen*) into existence. Indeed this is the point of Hölderlin’s short text,²⁵ to show that, as we find stated in its first paragraph, “being is judgement”, and as such cannot be expressed as a statement of identity. Being involves difference or rather, self-differentiation.

In the Hölderlin text, we can therefore see that the judgement form, exemplified by *Ich bin Ich*, expresses the self-positing of the subject, through the copula “is”, into objective existence, into being. This self-positing must also be understood as a self-differentiating, grasped as the original dividing or separating of the identical self into otherness. Indeed, it is Hölderlin who first uses the etymological device of writing the hyphenated “*Ur-theilung*” to express judgement as this original division, a device which clearly impressed Hegel. It is only through this original dividing that identity can differentiate itself and recognize itself in its otherness, or, as Hölderlin writes, where “I recognize myself as myself in the opposite.”²⁶ Further, Hölderlin sees that it is only through this self-othering that the “I” can be what it is, a subject.

To put it another way, Hölderlin sees that Fichte’s foundational principle, I=I, cannot express an identity without contradicting itself. This is because, for the “I” to be an “I” it must be a self-conscious subject and for it to be self-conscious it must be able to take itself as the *object* of its reflection. If we say the formula expresses a pure identity, then we negate the meaning of the term “I” because we negate any possibility of making oneself the object of one’s reflection, which is a necessary condition for consciousness and selfhood. So, although Fichte does not himself recognize it, I=I *actually* expresses the *difference* in identity through a proposition that is an original dividing (judgement), and it does so because the subject of the proposition is a self-positing self that posits itself as an object.²⁷

Jacques Rivelaygue betrays his Heideggerian inspiration when he interprets judgement’s interplay between identity and difference as a “tension”, rather than as a self-differentiating. This enables him to attribute to Hölderlin a Heideggerian notion of

“being” involving the unreconciled contradiction or Heraclitean tension between the opposites of identity and difference, which might also be expressed as the tension in being’s veiling-unveiling. However, it seems to me the “being” Hölderlin is referring to has more in common with what we later find in Hegel, where being only differentiates itself from nothing through determinative propositions, i.e. through judgements that predicate a subject through the copula. This is why the *Science of Logic* introduces *pure being, in itself*,²⁸ in a written phrase that is *not* a judgement nor a proposition, where the subject (being) does not posit itself, and where there is no copula: “Being, pure being, without any further determination”. Such unpredicated being can be “nothing more nor less than nothingness”.²⁹ In fact, it is *identical* to nothingness. For being to *be*, it must differentiate itself from this identity, because, as Hölderlin puts it, contradicting the absolute pretensions of Fichte’s foundational principle, “identity is not absolute being”.³⁰ Being involves difference.

For being to really be, for existence to come into being, the concept “in itself” must come out of its identity into difference, through an original division that is judgement. This notion of judgement is ontological: “being is judgement” and is nothing without it. Or, to say it another way, without judgement, there can be no subject-object difference and therefore, no predicated determination and no actual being.

If Hegel’s inspiration for his ontological grasp of judgement was indeed Hölderlin’s text and its Fichtean framework, then it seems reasonable to expect to find some reference to it or trace of it in Hegel’s writings or letters, particularly since the text was apparently penned in 1795,³¹ a period when both philosophers were very much in contact, although Hegel was still in Berne and Hölderlin had not yet left Jena for

Frankfurt, where the two would be together in 1797. Such a trace can be found in a letter to Hegel from January 26, 1795, where Hölderlin shares his preoccupation with Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, and particularly with the problem of identity and difference, implicit in any notion of an Absolute I, which Hölderlin identifies with Spinoza's substance.³² In fact, Hölderlin's letter summarizes the same points he makes in his text "Judgement and Being", stating explicitly that identity without difference cannot include being because it is, in fact, nothing.

"[Fichte's] absolute I (= Spinoza's substance) contains all reality; it is everything and outside it there is nothing. For this absolute I there is therefore no object, for otherwise all reality would not be in it; but a consciousness without object is inconceivable, and if I am myself that object, I am as such limited... and am not absolute. Therefore, in this absolute I, no consciousness is conceivable; as absolute I, I have no consciousness and to the extent that I have no consciousness, I am (for myself) nothing; therefore the absolute I is (for me) equivalent to Nothingness."³³

As an indication of the influence of these ideas on Hegel's contemporary thought, we might refer to his manuscript fragment that begins with the words, "*Glauben ist die Art...*" (Faith is the way...) dated in early 1798. This text is barely understandable without reference to Hölderlin's text, "Judgement and Being".³⁴

So it seems fair to accept that Hegel derived his notion of judgement as ontological from Hölderlin. Besides the dialectical heartbeat, already apparent in the self-differentiation Hölderlin ascribes to being, and which Hegel will later transplant into his idea of the concept, it is the Fichtean tone of the whole inquiry that is at the core of the matter, in spite of the fact that, for the former Tübingen schoolmates, Fichte does not recognize the difference at the heart of his own principle of identity. Nonetheless, both Hölderlin and Hegel are inspired by the statement of Fichte's first principle, in their grasp

of judgement as an act of predication where the subject of the sentence is a self-positing self, where *der Satz* (proposition) is a *Setzen* (positing). What else do these origins tell us about Hegel's ontological grasp of judgement?

To answer this, I believe we must take seriously the "absolute" claims that are apparent in both Fichte's discovery of *Ich bin Ich* as the foundation of science and Hölderlin's reading of Fichte, where what is at stake is explicitly the "absolute I, containing, as does Spinoza's substance, "all reality."³⁵ In other words, the context where Hegel himself discovers the ontological nature of judgement is not that of individual consciousness or Kant's transcendental subject, but the context of the absolute subject. It is in this context that the original division of judgement is at once an act of predication and an act of creation, where the original identity differentiates itself into being. Further, again referring back to Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehrer*, this positing is the foundation of systematic science. I think these elements are easily discernible in Hegel's own notion of *Wissenschaft*, which relies on an absolute subject,³⁶ also known as the Idea, that "freely lets itself go",³⁷ out of its absolute identity or "uniqueness"³⁸ to become the difference of nature and then reunites with itself through the process of spirit. Thus, in Hegel, the primordial and foundational judgement, the first act of self-differentiation, occurs in the *logos*³⁹ of the Idea, in the proposition "Ich bin Ich", not grasped as the expression of Fichtean identity but rather, as Hölderlin saw, as the positing of worldly difference through the copula. Identity and difference can now be recapitulated and reconciled in the syllogistic structure of Hegel's *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences*.⁴⁰

If it is indeed the *logos* of the Idea that provides the source for Hegel's ontological notion of judgement and if this *logos* is recapitulated in the discourse of systematic, objective *Wissenschaft*, then it is within the framework of this system that propositions or judgements should be seen in this light, as "speculative propositions",⁴¹ where the subject posits itself in its predicate as both identical and different. It is within this systematic framework that Hegel's notion of judgement can claim to make sense.⁴² This means that the contents of science, or the contents of the system as manifest in the *Encyclopedia*, can be seen as ontological discourse, as language that *is* both identity and difference or thought and being, *even though these contents are expressed in the common propositions or sentences (Sätze) of predication*. It also means that the still inchoate expressions of mind or spirit, as we saw with reference to the dialectic of identity and difference between mother-child, can be articulated *as* acts of predication.

Because it is ontological, we can say the systematic discourse of science is objective, that it is not subjective in the arbitrary sense and although I cannot go into it here, Hegel takes pains to distinguish the judgements and propositions of science, i.e. scientific discourse, from the arbitrary personal or "subjective" form of judgement, where it is the individual subject who determines the predication, rather than, ultimately, the absolute subjectivity of the Idea. In fact, the arbitrary, personal form of judgement can take the form of barbarous irony, which Hegel describes as a form of vanity that attacks and attempts to sunder the beautiful, Athenian unity of Science, evacuating, or rendering vain (*vereiteln*) its content.⁴³ It is striking that in portraying this vain personal judging Hegel has recourse to Fichte's founding principle of identity. However here, where the two personal pronouns face each other as images in a mirror, where my propositions are

mere iterations of myself, Fichte's principle is truly employed to express identity, solipsistic self-identity devoid of real, worldly difference.⁴⁴ As the subject of my personal judgements, I speak only in order to see *myself* reflected in my discourse, and nothing more.

It is this ambiguity or instability of the judgement form, its immediate or unmediated expression of both identity and difference, which ultimately means it is deficient and must be superseded in the syllogism, where both identity and difference are at home (*bei sich*). But that's another story.

NOTES

¹ In the *Science of Logic*: "Judgement is the division of the concept through itself." "It is thus the original dividing [*ursprüngliche Teilung*] of the original identity" (*Science of Logic, Werke in 20 Bänden*, vol. 6, edited by E. Moldenhauer and K.M. Michel, [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970], p.304). See also *Encyclopedia Logic* (EL) §166: "The etymological meaning of judgement in our language is deeper and expresses the unity of the concept as what is first, and its differentiation as the original dividing, what judgement is in truth."

² Ibid. pp. 301-301. See also Hegel's analysis of the speculative proposition in the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *Werke in 20 Bänden* vol.3, pp. 57-63. "Thus as well, in philosophical propositions, the identity of the subject and the predicate should not abolish the difference within, which the form of the proposition expresses, but rather their identity should present itself as a harmony"(Ibid. p.59).

³EL §166: "The copula 'is' comes from the nature of the concept, of being, in its alienation, identical with itself." The destiny or fulfillment of the copula is the moment of particularity, the existing and essential middle term of the Hegelian syllogism, where "[t]he determined and filled [or fulfilled] copula, which before was formed by the abstract *is*, but has subsequently been further constituted as the foundation in general, is now present" (*Werke in 20 Bänden* vol. 6, pp. 350-351). Andreas Graeser refuses to consider this fulfillment that is already present in judgement; he persists in seeing the judgement form as only a deficient iteration of identity, citing Hegel's EL §31. While, for Hegel, the propositional form of judgement is, *in itself* or on its own, incapable of

articulating speculative truth, i.e. it is not yet the syllogism, when it is grasped speculatively, it is seen to contain within itself the germ of speculative truth, of both identity and difference. In Hegel's words, "The etymological meaning of judgement in our language is deeper and expresses the unity of the concept as what is first, and its differentiation as the original dividing, what judgement is in truth" (EL§166). For Hegel, propositions are only speculative, or objectively true, within the system of science, which is syllogistic in form. Cf. Andreas Graeser, "Hegel über die Rede vom Absoluten. Teil 1: Urteil, Satz und spekulativer Gehalt", *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, 44, 1990, pp.175-193.

⁴ Jere Paul Surber, "Hegel's Speculative Sentence", *Hegel-Studien*, 10, 1975, pp.214-215. Surber's ground-breaking article is an exegesis of the above cited passage from the Preface to the *Phenomenology*. Graeser seems to understand the homonymous use of "Subjekt" as an unfortunate vagueness or ambiguity. In fact, for him, "das Subjekt ist kein Subjekt" ("Hölderlin über Urteil und Sein", *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, 38, 1991, p.117). This point of view seems untenable in light of subsequent passages we find in Hegel, where both meanings of "subject" are clearly present. For example, in EL §166, Hegel writes, "However, in that the copula 'is' states the predicate of the subject, this exterior, subjective subsumption is in its turn suppressed, and the judgement is taken as a determination of the *object* itself." For Graeser, the speculative sentence is not really speculative: "[...] the so-called speculative proposition is a proposition, and nothing more" ("Hegel über die Rede...", p.176). See also Surber's "The Problems of Language in German Idealism", in O.K. Wiegand et al, *Phenomenology on Kant, German Idealism, Hermeneutics and Logic* (Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000) pp. 305-336, where he refers to "the Idealists' reflections upon *Urteil and Satz* as fundamental to their understanding of the relations among logic, language and consciousness", on p.336. See, as well, Surber's "*Satz and Urteil in Kant and Fichte*" in *Proceedings of the North American Fichte Society*, 1995.

⁵ See my "Objective Language and Scientific Truth in Hegel" in the upcoming SUNY book on Hegel and Language.

⁶ In terms of classical truth theories, Hegel eschews truth by correspondence. Tom Rockmore: "... Hegel is rejecting any form of the correspondence view of truth..." *Cognition: An Introduction to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) p.3. One might then turn to the coherence theory of truth, but this is only completely effective with formal systems and their statements. Hegel's system makes statements about reality, and so the question arises as to how these statements can be true without being so by correspondence.

⁷ Surber points out how this idea of language as both being and thought is found in Schelling's idea of language as art, the incarnation of the absolute. Surber, "The Problems of Language...", pp. 322-3.

⁸ "The Logos, by tradition... signifies the identity of thinking and Being – or, in modern terms, of subjectivity and objectivity..." (Werner Marx, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by P.Heath [New York: Harper & Row, 1975] p. xxii).

⁹ Hegel, *Science of Logic, Werke in 20 Bänden* vol. 6, p.351. Here we find: "[The regained unity of the concept] is the fulfilled or content-full copula of judgement... Through this fulfillment of the copula, judgement has become the syllogism." This is

what Hegel means when he writes that the judgement form, or the proposition, is “unsuited to expressing what is concrete (and the truth is concrete) and speculative” (EL §31). To express truth, propositions must be part of a system. “The true form in which the truth exists can only be as the scientific system of itself” (*Phenomenology of Spirit, Werke in 20 Bänden* vol. 3, p.14).

¹⁰ P. Aubenque, *Le problème de l'être chez Aristote* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962) p.291.

¹¹ *Lessons on Esthetics, Werke in 20 Bänden* vol. 13, p.211. Also, *ibid.*, p.96. See my article “Hegel et la maladie psychique – le cas Novalis”, *Science et Esprit*, 56.2 (mai-août 2004) pp.189-202.

¹² *Encyclopedia* §404, *Werke in 20 Bänden* vol. 10, p.203-204. Recent work on madness and Hegel includes, Jon Mills, “Hegel on the Unconscious Abyss: Implications for Psychoanalysis”, *Owl of Minerva*, 28.1 (Fall 1996) pp. 59-75, the same author’s recent book on the same topic, *The Unconscious Abyss: Hegel’s Anticipation of Psychoanalysis* (Albany: SUNY, 2002), Kirk Pillow, “Habituating Madness and Phantasing Art in Hegel’s Encyclopedia”, *Owl of Minerva*, 28.2 (Spring 1997) pp. 183-215, J. Rozenberg, “Physiologie, embryologie et psychopathologie: une mise à l’épreuve de la conceptualité hégélienne”, *Archives de Philosophie*, 60.2 (avril-juin 1997) pp. 243-254. On Novalis and madness, see D.F. Krell’s *Contagion – Sexuality, Disease and Death in German Idealism and Romanticism* (Indianapolis University Press: 1998).

¹³ *Encyclopedia* §404. Here, Hegel describes mental illness as “a state where the development of the soul, already having achieved, in its later determination, consciousness and understanding, can once again fall.”

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ This is the original meaning of the Latin term “genius”, a spirit presiding at the birth of an individual, determining its destiny.

¹⁶ *Encyclopedia* §405.

¹⁷ *Encyclopedia* §404.

¹⁸ *Encyclopedia* §405.

¹⁹ *Encyclopedia* §410.

²⁰ Hegel says the adolescent seeks a male authority figure but he does not say this figure has to be his biological father. This seems to indicate the father’s role in the child’s genesis and upbringing is extra-natural. See *Encyclopedia* §397 addition. The movement from soul to consciousness can be seen as a struggle for liberation, as we find in Hans-Christian Lucas, “The Sovereign Ingratitude of Spirit Toward Nature”, *Owl of Minerva*, 23.2 (Spring 1992) pp. 131-150, or Lydia Moland, “Inheriting, Earning and Owning: The Source of Practical Identity in Hegel’s Anthropology”, *Owl of Minerva*, 34.2 (Spring/Summer 2003) pp. 139-170. In psychological terms, this liberation from nature should perhaps also be seen as a liberation from the maternal. In this way, the fall into madness is, in the proper sense of the word, hysteria. Other important commentaries on the Subjective Spirit section of the *Encyclopedia* include Allen Olsen, *Hegel and the Spirit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), Murray Greene, *Hegel on the Soul* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972) and I. Fetscher, *Hegels Lehre vom Menschen* (Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1970), and the thematic issue of *Hegel-Studien* vol.19, edited by Dieter Henrich, 1979, *Hegels Philosophische Psychologie*.

²¹ *Encyclopedia* §405, *Werke in 20 Bänden* vol.10, pp.125-126.

²² *Encyclopedia* §403, *Werke in 20 Bänden* vol.10, p.122.

²³ The late Jacques Rivelaygue taught at L'Université de Paris IV-Sorbonne. Some of his students edited his incomparable *leçons*.

²⁴ I am translating. Jacques Rivelaygue, *Leçons de métaphysique allemande* vol.1, (Paris: Grasset, 1990) pp. 191-192.

²⁵ It may have been written on the inside cover of Hölderlin's copy of the first edition of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*. Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke* t.4, edited by F. Beissner, (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1962) pp. 226-227. See also Beissner's commentary, pp. 391-392. For an English translation, see H.S. Harris, *Hegel's Development: Toward the Sunlight 1770-1801* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) pp.515-516.

²⁶ Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke* vol.4, pp.226.

²⁷ Hegel uses the expression I=I, in too many places to mention, to denote subjective or personal identity, a solipsistic self-reflection which cannot include real, worldly difference.

²⁸ EL §84. "[Undetermined] being is the concept only in itself."

²⁹ *Wissenschaft der Logik, Die Lehre von Sein* (1832), edited by H.-J. Gawoll (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1990) p.72.

³⁰ Hölderlin, p.227.

³¹ The text was published in 1961 by F. Beissner and was apparently written in early 1795. Andreas Graeser, "Hölderlin über Urteil und Sein", p.111.

³² Cf. Vincente Serrano-Marin, "Sobre Hölderlin y los comienzos del Idealismo alemán", *Anales del Seminario de Historia de la Filosofía* 10 (1993) pp. 173-194.

³³ My translation, from the Hoffmeister edition of Hegel's Correspondence. The round brackets are Hölderlin's.

³⁴ In this fragment, Hegel refers to the question of judgement and being, although he expresses it in terms of a reunion of differences: "Reunion and being have the same signification; in each proposition the binding word "is" expresses the reunion of subject and predicate – a being" (*Werke in 20 Bänden*, vol. 1, p.251). See notes by O. Depré in the French translation, Hegel, *Premiers écrits* (Paris: Vrin, 1997) p. 137. See also P. Kondylis, *Die Entstehung der Dialektik* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1979) p. 467.

³⁵ Hölderlin, in the above-quoted letter to Hegel.

³⁶ In his article on "Hegel in Canada", John Burbidge rightly notes a reluctance among Canadian Hegel scholars to use "absolute" as a noun. *Owl of Minerva* 25.2 (Spring 1994) pp. 215-219. In fact, I would say there is a general reluctance among contemporary Hegel scholars to consider the "absolutist" dimensions of Hegel's thought. I believe it is impossible to understand Hegel's systematic claims without considering the Idea as an absolute subject. At the end of the *Encyclopedia*, in §577, Hegel refers to "the subjective activity of the Idea".

³⁷ The expression is found at the end of the EL §244: "The absolute freedom of the Idea is, however, that it... decides in the absolute truth of itself... to freely let itself go out of itself as nature." A similar expression is found at the end of the *Science of Logic*. In EL §219, Hegel calls this "letting itself go" the "judgement of the concept" that produces "objectivity as an independent totality... an inorganic nature it is faced with".

³⁸ *Science of Logic, Werke in 20 Bänden* vol.6, p.573.

³⁹ In both the biblical sense of *logos*, the creative Word at the beginning of Hegel's favorite Gospel, and as a reasoned discourse. In these rarified realms of the absolute subject, it is hard not to think of God. Indeed, it is difficult not to understand a proposition, where an absolute subject known as the Idea posits its essence as the existence of the predicate, as something akin to the ontological argument, which claims to express the singular case where an idea can do nothing other than posit itself as existing. Such an interpretation would certainly not be false. It would simply be, in Hegelian terms, a depiction or representation of a more complex, scientific or speculative truth. Such an interpretation would also explain why Hegel took pains to save the ontological argument from Kant's critique. After all, can anything be more radically opposed to Hegel's ontological notion of judgement than Kant's devastating refutation of the argument, saying that existence cannot be *predicated*?

⁴⁰ In EL §171. The copula is "filled" or is "*inhaltsvolle*" because it is the actual determination of both subject and predicate, or, it is the moment of particularity between the universal singular (subject) and the universal predicate. As determined particularity, we can say it fulfills its meaning, which is "to be". The copula thus becomes the middle term in the syllogism. We might say that Hegel reinterprets what every philosophy student knows on a purely formal level: the truth must not simply be asserted in a proposition; it must be expressed in a valid argument form, e.g. a syllogism.

⁴¹ Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *Werke in 20 Bänden* vol.3, p.61.

⁴² Not seeing the homonymous nature of "subject" in Hegel's notion of judgement leads Richard Dien Winfield to ask, "[E]ven if judgement relates only two terms, why should the independent conceptual factors resulting from individuality be specifically related as subject and predicate? The subject-predicate relation seems to be not just bipolar, but non-transitive." "From Concept to Judgement: Rethinking Hegel's Overcoming of Formal Logic", *Dialogue*, XL, 1, (Winter 2001) pp.53-74, p. 70. Winfield's answer to his own question implies that Hegel arbitrarily adopts the judgement form because it is an adequate reflection of a true state of affairs existing outside the language of science itself. I don't believe Hegel's idea of scientific language admits such arbitrariness. "Subject and predicate are appropriate qualifiers insofar as they capture the salient features that the immediate individual and the abstract universal possess in the relationship by which the copula joins them." Winfield, p.72.

⁴³ Fr. Schlegel is, for Hegel, the paradigm of this sort of judging. *Philosophy of Right*, §140 addition. Also, *Werke in 20 Bänden* vol.13, pp. 93-95 and *Werke in 20 Bänden* vol. 11, pp. 233-4. Hegel also associates non-speculative judgement with the calculative reasoning of the understanding, where it is again destructive of the organic whole. "Judging means putting to death, presenting *the individual* not *what matters (die Sache)*, as if the living were the individual, not the *truth*" (*Werke in 20 Bänden* vol.2, p.560). Graeser fails to see this distinction between personal judgement and speculative judgements within the system of science.

⁴⁴ *History of Philosophy*, *Werke in 20 Bänden* vol.20, pp. 415-16. *Encyclopedia* §424. See T.M. Knox's commentary to §35 in his translation of the *Philosophy of Right*: "Knowledge of the self in abstraction from all objects and determinate experiences is the knowledge that 'I am I'. Here the object known, the self, is identical with the knower, the abstract and infinite ego..." ([Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967] p.320).