

## § 78

The *opposition* between a self-standing immediacy of content or knowing and a mediation that is equally self-standing but incompatible with the former must be set aside, for one thing because it is a mere *presupposition* and an arbitrary *assurance*. Similarly, all other presuppositions or prejudices must be surrendered at the entry to science, whether they be taken from representation or from thought. For it is in science that all such determinations must first be examined and the status of them and their oppositions recognized.

*Scepticism*, as a negative science applied to all forms of knowing, would present itself as an introduction in which the vacuousness [*Nichtigkeit*] of such presuppositions would be exposed. But this path would be not only unpleasant but also superfluous since the dialectical element is itself an essential moment of the affirmative science, as will be noted in a moment. Moreover, scepticism would have to find the finite forms in a merely empirical and unscientific way and take them up as a given. The demand for such a consummate scepticism is the same as the demand that science ought to be preceded by *doubting everything*, i.e. by the complete *absence of any presupposition*. This demand is actually fulfilled in the resolve to *engage in pure thinking* and through the freedom that abstracts from everything and grasps its pure abstraction, the simplicity of thinking.

## MORE DETAILED CONCEPTION AND DIVISION OF THE LOGIC

## § 79

In terms of form, the logical domain has three sides: ( $\alpha$ ) *the abstract* side or that of the *understanding*, ( $\beta$ ) *the dialectical* or *negatively rational* side, ( $\gamma$ ) *the speculative* or *positively rational* side.

These three sides do not constitute three *parts* of logic, but are *moments of every properly logical content* [*Momente jedes Logisch-Reellen*], that is to say, of every concept or everything true in general. They can all be brought under the first moment, i.e. *that of the understanding*, and thus separated and kept apart, but in this way they are not considered in their truth. – Like the division, the

statement made here about the determinations of the logical is at this point only anticipatory and historical.

## § 80

(α) Thinking as *understanding* does not budge beyond the firm determinateness [of what is entertained] and its distinctness over against others. A limited abstraction of this sort counts for it as self-standing and [as having] being [*als für sich bestehend und seiend*].

*Addition.* When one speaks of thinking in general or more specifically of comprehending [*Begreifen*], one often tends to have in mind only the activity of the understanding. Now, admittedly, thinking is at first a thinking by way of understanding. However, it does not stand still with this, and the concept [*Begriff*] is not a mere determination of the understanding. – The understanding's activity generally consists in imparting the form of universality to its contents. More precisely, the universal posited by the understanding is an abstract universal which, as such, is maintained in opposition to the particular and by that very fact is determined at the same time to be itself a particular in turn. By relating to its objects by separating and abstracting [them], the understanding is the opposite of immediate intuition and sensation which as such deal with the concrete throughout and do not budge beyond it.

Those oft-repeated reproaches that generally tend to be made against thinking refer to this opposition between the understanding and sensation, reproaches that come down to saying that thinking is rigid and one-sided and, as a consequence, leads to pernicious and destructive results. Insofar as those reproaches are justified in terms of their contents, the response to them has to be first that it is not thinking in general, and more specifically rational thought, that is subject to them, but only the thinking of the understanding. Furthermore, the thinking that is performed merely by the understanding must above all be accorded its rights and its merits. These consist in the fact that neither in the theoretical nor in the practical field is it possible to arrive at any firmness and determinateness without the understanding. First, as far as knowing is concerned, it starts by apprehending the objects on hand in terms of their determinate differences. Thus, in the contemplation of nature, for instance, matters, forces, genera, etc. are distinguished and fixed as such [*für sich*] in this their isolation. Thinking proceeds here as understanding, and its principle is identity, the simple relation to itself. This identity then also conditions the further progression from one determination to another in knowing. Thus notably in mathematics magnitude is *the* determination along which one proceeds while leaving all others out. Accordingly, in geometry one compares figures with each other by emphasizing what is identical between them. In other domains of knowing, too, such as in jurisprudence, one proceeds in accordance with identity at first. Here, inferring one determination from another is nothing but a progression in accordance with the principle of identity. – In the practical sphere no less than in the theoretical sphere, the understanding is indispensable.

Action essentially requires character, and a person [*Mensch*] of character is a human being who understands and, as such, eyes determinate purposes and firmly pursues them. Someone who wants to do something great must know, as Goethe says, how to limit himself. By contrast, someone who wants everything in fact wants nothing and accomplishes nothing. There are a lot of interesting things in the world: Spanish poetry, chemistry, politics, music. All of that is very interesting, and one cannot blame anybody who takes an interest in them. However, if as an individual one wants to achieve something in a particular situation, one must stick to something determinate and not split up one's power in various directions. Similarly, in every profession the point is to pursue it with understanding. Thus, a judge, for instance, must adhere to the law, pass judgment in accordance with it, avoid being distracted by this and that, refuse to accept any excuses, and act without looking right or left. – Furthermore, the understanding generally represents an essential aspect of education [*Bildung*]. An educated person is not satisfied with nebulous and vague things; instead, he grasps the objects in their firm determinacy, whereas the uneducated vacillate back and forth with uncertainty, and it often takes a great deal of effort to reach an agreement with such a person about the topic of the discussion and bring him to keep his eyes unerringly on the specific point dealt with.

Now furthermore, and following our earlier examination, since the logical sphere in general is to be construed not merely as a subjective activity, but instead as absolutely universal and therefore at the same time as objective, this is to be applied to the understanding as the first form of the logical as well. The understanding is thus to be regarded as analogous to what one calls the *loving kindness* [*Güte*] of God, insofar as we understand by this that finite things *are*, that they have a standing. Thus, for instance, in nature one recognizes the loving kindness of God in that the diverse classes and genera of both animals and plants have been endowed with everything they need in order to preserve themselves and flourish. It is the same with human beings, too, with individuals and entire peoples, who also partly find what is necessary for their continued existence and development as something immediately on hand (such as, for instance, the climate, composition, and products of the land) and partly possess it in the form of disposition and talent. Construed in this way, the understanding shows itself in every domain of the objective [*gegenständlich*] world, and it belongs essentially to the perfection of an object that the principle of the understanding receive its due in it. Thus, for instance, the state is imperfect if a specific differentiation of estates and professions has not yet emerged in it, and if the political and governmental functions that differ in accordance with the concept have not yet been formed into specific organs in the same way as is the case in the developed animal organism with its different functions of sensation, movement, digestion, etc. – From the discussion so far we learn, furthermore, that even in such domains and spheres of activity that, according to the ordinary representation of things, seem to be furthest removed from the understanding, the latter must nonetheless not be absent, and that to the extent that this is the case, it must be regarded as a defect. This is notably true of art, religion, and philosophy. Thus, for instance, in art the understanding is

evident in the way that the forms of the beautiful, differing conceptually as they do, are also maintained and exhibited in terms of this difference of theirs. The same is true of individual works of art. Thus it is characteristic of the beauty and perfection of a drama that the characters of the different personae are portrayed in their purity and determinacy, and also that the several goals and interests that are at play are presented clearly and decisively. – Next, insofar as the domain of the religious is concerned, the advantage of Greek over Nordic mythology, for example (apart from the diversity otherwise of content and conception), consists essentially in that in the former the figures of the individual gods are developed to the point of having a sculpted determinacy [*plastische Bestimmtheit*], whereas in the latter they merge together in the fog of a murky indeterminacy. – Finally, given what has been discussed up to this point, the fact that philosophy also cannot dispense with the understanding scarcely needs any particular mention. To do philosophy, it is above all required that each thought be grasped in its full precision and that one is not content with vagueness and indeterminacy.

It also, however, tends to be said that the understanding must not go too far. This is correct, insofar as the point of view of the understanding [*das Verständige*] is not something ultimate but far more something finite instead, and, more specifically, something of the sort that, pushed to the extreme, turns over into its opposite. It is the way of youth to relish abstractions, whereas a person with the experience of life does not indulge in the abstract *either-or*, clinging instead to what is concrete.

## § 81

(β) The *dialectical* moment is the self-sublation of such finite determinations by themselves and their transition into their opposites.

1. The dialectical, when taken in isolation by the understanding, constitutes *scepticism*, particularly when displayed in scientific concepts. It contains mere negation as the result of the dialectical.
2. The dialectic is usually regarded as an extraneous art that arbitrarily generates confusion among certain concepts and a mere *semblance* of *contradictions* among them, such that not these determinations but instead this semblance is supposedly something null and void and, in contrast to it, what belongs to the understanding is supposedly what is true. Furthermore, the dialectic is often nothing more than a subjective seesaw system of back-and-forth rationalizing, where the basic content is missing and this paucity is concealed by the astuteness that generates such rationalizing. – In its distinctive determinateness, the dialectic is far more the proper, true nature of the determinations of the understanding, of things, and of the finite

in general. Reflexion is at first a process of going beyond the isolated determinacy, i.e. a relating of it, whereby it is brought into a relationship, despite its being maintained in its isolated validity. The dialectic is, by contrast, this *immanent* process of going beyond [such determinacy] wherein the one-sided and limited character of the determinations of the understanding presents itself as what it is, namely as their negation. Everything finite is this, the sublation of itself. Thus, the dialectical moment constitutes the moving soul of the scientific progression and is the principle through which alone *an immanent connection and necessity* enters into the content of science, just as in general the true, as opposed to an external, elevation above the finite resides in this principle.

*Addition 1. Properly construing and recognizing the dialectical dimension is of the highest importance. It is in general the principle of all movement, all life, and all actual activity.* The dialectical is equally the soul of all truly scientific knowing. In our ordinary consciousness, not stopping short at the abstract determinations of the understanding appears to be only fair, in keeping with the adage ‘Live and let live’, such that one thing is valid, but *so, too, is the other*. Looked at more closely, however, the finite is not limited merely from the outside but, by virtue of its own nature, sublates itself and changes into its opposite on account of itself. Thus, for example, it is said that human beings are mortal, and dying is then regarded as something that has its cause in extraneous circumstances only. According to this way of viewing the matter, a human being has two particular properties, that of being alive and *also* that of being mortal. *The true way to construe the matter, however, is that life as such carries within itself the germ of death and that, generally speaking, the finite contradicts itself in itself and for that reason sublates itself.* – Furthermore, the dialectic must not be confused with mere *sophistic* technique, the essence of which consists precisely in upholding one-sided and abstract determinations in isolation from one another, depending on the individual’s respective interests and particular situation. Thus, for example, in regard to action, it is essential that I exist and have the means to exist. But if I then lay emphasis exclusively on this side, this principle of my wellbeing, and derive from it the conclusion that I am therefore allowed to steal or betray my fatherland, this is sophistry. – Similarly in my actions my subjective freedom is an essential principle in the sense that I am engaged with insight and conviction in what I do. However, if I reason on the basis of this principle *alone*, then this is likewise sophistry and all principles of ethical life are thereby thrown overboard. – The dialectic differs essentially from such behaviour, for it aims precisely at contemplating things as they are in and for themselves, and from this emerges the finitude of the one-sided determinations of the understanding. – Incidentally, the dialectic is nothing new in philosophy. Among the ancients, Plato is called the inventor of the dialectic, and rightfully so, insofar as in the Platonic philosophy the dialectic occurs for the first time in its free, scientific and thus at the same time objective form. With Socrates, the dialectical

still has a predominantly subjective shape, namely that of *irony*, in keeping with the general character of his philosophizing. Socrates directed his dialectic against the ordinary consciousness in general and then against the Sophists in particular. In his conversations, he would assume the guise of someone who wanted to be instructed further about the matter under discussion. In this context he raised all sorts of questions and led those with whom he conversed to the opposite of what at first had seemed to them to be right. When, for instance, the Sophists called themselves teachers, Socrates would, through a series of questions, get the sophist Protagoras to admit that all learning is merely recollection. – In Plato's rigorous, scientific dialogues, by means of the dialectical treatment, he shows the finitude of all fixed determinations of the understanding in general. Thus, in the *Parmenides*, for instance, he derives the One from the Many and, in spite of this, shows how the Many is just this, namely to determine itself as the One. Plato treated the dialectic in this grand manner. – In more recent times, it was primarily Kant who brought back to memory the dialectic and reinstated it in its position of honour. He did this by elaborating the so-called antinomies of reason that we have already discussed (§ 48). In their case, in no way is it a matter of merely going back and forth between reasons and of a merely subjective activity. It is rather a matter of showing how each abstract determination of the understanding, taken merely in the way it presents itself, immediately turns over into its opposite. – Now however much the understanding is prone to resist the dialectic, the latter is by no means to be regarded as present only for the philosophical consciousness. Instead, what is in play here is already found in all other forms of consciousness and is found universally in experience. **Everything that surrounds us can be viewed as an example of the dialectic. We know that all finite things, instead of being something fixed and ultimate, are really changeable and perishable, and this is nothing but the dialectic of the finite. By virtue of this dialectic, the same thing (as in itself the other of itself) is driven beyond what it immediately is and turns over into its opposite.** Whereas earlier (§ 80) it was said the understanding should be regarded as what is contained in the representation of God's *goodness*, so now it should be noted in the same (objective) sense about the dialectic that its principle corresponds to the representation of God's *power*. We say that all things (i.e. everything finite as such) come to judgment, and with this we have a view of the dialectic as the universal, irresistible power which nothing, however secure and firm it may feel itself to be, can withstand. To be sure, the depth of the divine being, God's concept, is not yet exhausted by this determination. Still, it forms an essential moment in all religious consciousness. – Furthermore, the dialectic also establishes itself in all the particular domains and formations of the natural and the spiritual world as, for instance, in the movement of the celestial bodies. A planet stands now in this location, but it is in itself such as to be in a different location as well, and it brings its otherness into existence by undergoing movement. Similarly, the physical elements prove to be dialectical, and the metereological process is the manifestation of their dialectic. It is the same principle that forms the basis of all other processes in nature and through which nature is at the same time

driven beyond itself. As far as the occurrence of the dialectic in the spiritual world, and more specifically in the legal and the ethical domain is concerned, one need only be reminded of how, as follows from experience universally, the extremes of a state or an action tend to change into their opposite, a dialectic that proverbs acknowledge in multiple ways. Thus, for instance, it is said that *summum ius summa iniuria* ['utmost justice is the utmost injustice'] as a means of expressing that abstract justice, driven to the extreme, changes over into injustice. So, too, it is well known how in the area of politics the extremes of anarchy and despotism tend to provoke one another reciprocally. We find consciousness of the dialectic in the ethical domain, as far as its individual form is concerned, in the well-known proverbs: 'Pride goes before a fall', 'Too much wit outwits itself', etc. – Even feelings, bodily as well as mental, possess a dialectic of their own. It is well known how the extremes of pain and joy turn into one another; the heart filled with joy relieves itself through tears, and in some circumstances the most poignant melancholy tends to announce itself with a smile.

*Addition 2.* Scepticism must not be regarded merely as a doctrine of doubt. Rather, it is absolutely certain of the matter it is concerned with, namely the nothingness of all things finite. The person who is still doubting continues to harbour the hope that his doubt can be lifted and that one or the other of the determinate points between which he is vacillating will turn out to be firm and true. By contrast, scepticism proper is the complete despair of anything solid in understanding and the attitude that results from it is an unshakeable mind that rests in itself. This is the high-minded ancient scepticism as we find it presented notably in Sextus Empiricus and as it developed as a complement to the dogmatic systems of the Stoics and Epicureans during the later Roman period. We must not confuse this high-minded ancient scepticism with the modern scepticism already mentioned earlier (§ 39) that partly preceded and partly developed out of the Critical philosophy. This modern scepticism consists simply in denying the truth and certainty of the supersensory domain and in designating the sensory and what is on hand in immediate sensation as what we have to cling to.

Incidentally, if scepticism is often regarded even today as an irresistible enemy of all positive knowing [*Wissen*] whatsoever and thus also of philosophy, insofar as the latter deals with positive knowledge [*Erkenntnis*], then it needs to be said in response that it is in fact only the finite, abstract thinking of the understanding that has to fear scepticism and cannot withstand it, whereas philosophy, by contrast, contains the sceptical within itself as one of its moments, namely as the dialectical. But then philosophy does not rest with the merely negative result of the dialectical as is the case with scepticism. The latter misjudges its result by clinging to it as a mere (i.e. abstract) negation. Because the dialectic has the negative as a result, the negative is equally positive, precisely as a result, for it contains within itself that from which it results, containing the latter as something it has sublated, and is not without what it has sublated. This, however, is the fundamental determination of the third form of the logical, namely of the *speculative* or positively rational.

## § 82

(γ) The *speculative* or the *positively rational* grasps the unity of the determinations in their opposition, the *affirmative* that is contained in their dissolution and their passing over into something else.

1. The dialectic has a *positive* result, because it has a *determinate content* or because its result is in truth not an *empty, abstract nothing*, but instead the negation of *definite determinations* that are contained in the result precisely because it is not an *immediate nothing*, but a result instead. 2. Therefore, although it is something thought, even abstract, the rational is at the same time something *concrete*, because it is not a *simple, formal* unity, but a *unity of distinct determinations*. For this reason, philosophy does not deal at all with mere abstractions or formal thoughts, but exclusively with concrete thoughts. 3. The mere *logic of the understanding* is contained in the speculative logic and can instantly be extracted from it. Nothing more is needed for this than to remove the dialectical and the rational from it. In this way, it becomes what the *ordinary logic* is, namely a *historical record* of diverse, juxtaposed determinations of thought that in their finitude count as something infinite.

*Addition.* In terms of *content*, the rational is so far from being the possession merely of philosophy that it must be said instead that it is available to all human beings at whichever level of education and mental development they may find themselves. In this sense, human beings have, since ancient times, rightly been designated as rational beings [*Wesen*]. The general empirical manner in which the rational is known [*wissen*] is at first that of prejudice and presupposition and, according to our previous discussion (§ 45), the nature of the rational is generally to be something unconditioned which for that reason contains its determinateness within itself. In this sense, human beings know about the rational first and foremost insofar as they know of God and know him as determined by himself alone. Following that, a citizen's knowledge of his fatherland and its laws is similarly a knowledge of what is rational, insofar as this counts for him as something unconditioned and at the same time as something universal to which he has to submit his individual will. In the same sense, even the knowledge and volition of a child is already rational, insofar as it knows and embraces the will of its parents.

Furthermore, the *speculative* is nothing else than the rational (the positively rational, that is) insofar as it is *thought*. In ordinary life, the expression *speculation* tends to be used in a very vague and at the same time subordinate sense, as, for instance, when one speaks of speculations concerning marriage or commerce. What is understood by such 'speculation', then, is merely the fact that, on the one hand, one should go beyond what is immediately on hand and, on the other, what



forms the content of such speculations is initially merely something subjective but should not remain so but instead be realized or translated into objectivity.

What was remarked earlier about the idea holds likewise for this ordinary use of language concerning speculation, to which may be added the further remark that those who count themselves among the more educated also often speak of speculation as something *merely* subjective. They say, namely, that a certain construal of natural or spiritual conditions and circumstances may be very well and good when taken in a merely speculative manner, but that experience does not agree with it and nothing like it can be countenanced in actuality. Against this position it must be said that, as far as its true meaning is concerned, the speculative is neither provisionally nor even definitively something merely subjective. Instead, it is explicitly what contains those oppositions at which the understanding stops short (thus including the opposition of the subjective and the objective) and contains them as something sublated within itself and precisely by this means proves itself to be concrete and a totality. For this reason, a speculative content can also not be expressed in a one-sided sentence. If we say, for instance, 'the absolute is the unity of the subjective and the objective', this is, to be sure, correct but one-sided insofar as only the *unity* is expressed here and emphasis is placed on it alone, whereas in fact the subjective and the objective are indeed not only identical but also distinct.

As regards the significance of the speculative, it bears mentioning here that the same thing is to be understood by it as formerly used to be called the *mystical*, especially when referring to religious consciousness and its content. When one speaks of the mystical today, it is normally taken to be synonymous with the mysterious and the incomprehensible, and the mysterious and incomprehensible are then – depending on the respective educational background and mindset – regarded by some as something genuine and true, but by others as belonging to superstition and deception. In this regard, it should be noted first that the mystical is indeed something mysterious, but only for the understanding, simply because abstract identity is the principle of the understanding, whereas the mystical (taken as synonymous with the speculative) is the concrete unity of those determinations that count as true for the understanding only in their separation and opposition. So when those who recognize the mystical as the true are likewise happy to call it the absolutely mysterious and leave it at that, they express that, as far as they are concerned, thinking likewise has the significance solely of positing abstract identities, and that in order to attain to the truth one must renounce thinking or, as also tends to be said, that one must take reason captive. But as we have seen, the abstract thinking of the understanding is so far from being something firm and ultimate that, to the contrary, it turns out to be constantly sublating itself and changing over into its opposite, whereas the rational as such consists precisely in containing the opposites as ideal moments within itself. Thus, everything rational is to be called at the same time 'mystical', by which, however, nothing more or less is said than that it goes beyond the understanding and in no way that it is to be regarded generally as inaccessible to thinking and as incomprehensible.

## § 83

The Logic falls into three parts:

1. The doctrine of being.
2. The doctrine of essence.
3. The doctrine of the concept and the idea.

That is, into the doctrine of thought

1. In its *immediacy* – the concept-in-itself,
2. In its *reflection* and *mediation* – the *being-for-itself* and the *shining* [*Schein*] of the concept.
3. In its *having returned back into itself* and in its developed being-with-itself – the concept *in-and-for-itself*.

*Addition.* The division of the Logic here given, as well as the entire discussion of thinking up to this point, is to be regarded as a mere anticipation, and the justification or proof of it can only result from the completed treatment of thinking itself. For in philosophy, demonstrating [*beweisen*] is equivalent to showing how the object makes itself – through and out of itself – into what it is. – The relationship in which the above-mentioned three major stages of thought or of the logical idea stand to each other is generally to be construed in such a way that only the *concept* is what is true [*das Wahre*] and, more precisely, the truth of *being* and of *essence*, both of which, held fast for themselves in their isolation, are to be regarded at the same time as untrue: *being* because it is at first only what is *immediate*, and *essence* because it is at first only what is *mediated*. One might raise the question, then, why, if this is so, we begin with the untrue and not right away with the true. The answer to this is that the truth has to *prove* [*bewähren*] itself precisely to be the truth, and here, within the logical sphere, the proof consists in the concept demonstrating itself to be mediated through and with itself and thereby also as what is truly immediate. The aforementioned relationship of the three stages of the logical idea displays its concrete and real shape in the way that we know God (who is the truth) in his truth, i.e. as absolute spirit, only insofar as we recognize at the same time that the world created by him, i.e. nature and finite spirit, are, in their difference from God, untrue.