

Essence and Representation as Moments of Mediation in the Hegelian System: a Comparison between the Logic and the Psychology of the Subjective Spirit

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this contribution is to point out the parallelism between the three moments of the Hegelian Logic (Being, Essence and Concept) and the three moments of his Encyclopedia Psychology (intuition, representation and thought), focusing especially on the role of mediation enacted by the second moments, Essence and representation. In line with the general Hegelian assumption of the identity between logic and reality, the complex functioning of the movement of the Essence can be regarded, in fact, as the foundation of the movement of representation. Thanks to the same dual constitution they share, Essence and representation both offer a mediation within themselves and between their respective extremes: representation splits itself in itself and stands as a middle ground between the immediacy of intuition and the rational synthesis of thought; in a similar way Essence is characterized by constant internal oppositions and possesses both elements of Being and of Concept. The paper will therefore explore at first the doctrine of the Essence as reported in the *Science of Logic*. In this section three important aspects will be highlighted: the internalization movement of the *Erinnerung*, which appears in the transition from Being to Essence; the primary dynamic of the Essence in its specific working, that is reflection; and lastly the peculiar “median role” that Essence embodies in its linking of Being and Concept together. In the second part of the paper the form of representation in the psychology of the Subjective Spirit will be analyzed in order to retrace these same elements observed in the Logic and present them as representation’s own mechanism of mediation. The main focus will be the articulation of the section of imagination and phantasy, in which the element of the symbol is contained. In conclusion the circular character of the mediation inside the totality of the system will be briefly addressed alongside the importance of the negative moment of difference that Essence and representation enact in the development of the dialectics.

KEYWORDS: Logic; Subjective Spirit; Essence; Representation; Mediation

In order to explain the relationship between the Logic and the other parts of the Hegelian system, it would be wise to specify first and foremost what place the Logic occupies in general inside Hegel’s philosophy. For introductory purposes I will therefore recall to mind the image that Hegel sometimes utilizes to describe the Logic and its working: he speaks of a “kingdom” or a “realm of shadows” (SL 21.42), an expression whose significance must be clarified. The Logic, in fact, is indeed a kingdom, because of the grandiosity of its structure and pervasiveness. It is the base and the living soul of the entire reality, subjective and objective, and it constitutes the conceptual body through which the Absolute and its truth are disclosed. This means that the categories of the Logic do not just describe the things as they appear but they also disclose the



inner structure of those same things.¹ The Logic is the foundation of all the rest of the system, which develops its different parts according to the speculative processes that are described in its three sections on Being, Essence and Concept. As a result, history, politics, religion, art and even psychology, the area that Hegel dedicates to the human forms of knowledge, follow the articulation of the Logic.² At the same time, however, the kingdom is inhabited by shadows, meaning that the abstract nature of concepts and ideas remains an empty shell if it doesn't fall into concreteness and experience. At the end of the *Science of Logic*, the absolute Idea must externalize itself into Nature, in order to be successively reconciled with it in the spiritual conception. In this necessity of interpenetration between thought and being we can recognize one of the main elements of the Hegelian philosophy, the core of the dialectical movement: mediation. The truth cannot linger in the abstraction of pure logic, it must be mediated through nature and objectivity to reach its completeness, that is Spirit. What then does *Vermittlung* mean inside Hegel's system in general? What does really happen when an immediate determination gets mediated? It is not an easy question to answer, since the concept of mediation can be regarded from many different angles.³ In this study, however, we will focus especially on the aspect of 'relational duality'. That is to say that Hegel conceives mediation as the process of relating opposite determinations in order to get a concrete identity out of them, and by concrete identity he means an identity that contains difference. When an immediate category of thought or an immediate state of things get mediated, their simple abstract unity is split by a negative moment that introduces difference and opposition, or better yet specifies the two conflicting sides of that initial 'unaware' identity. The latter is, in fact, still abstract, because it doesn't recognize the inner duality that is presupposed in its unity. The mediation, therefore, and especially the negative moment of *Zersplitterung* that it entails, is what brings the immediate determination of the beginning to its fulfillment, that is concrete actuality, the *wirkliche Existenz*.

¹ HOULGATE, S. **The Opening of Hegel's Logic**, West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2006, p. 132.

² This will in no way be seen as a reduction of the Logic to the psychological sphere or to mere epistemology. The Logic stays put in its ontological value and only from this assumption it is possible to retrace its categories in the psychology as well. On the other hand, the Logic is not meant as an '*a priori*' scheme that must be applied to the subjective Spirit's activities or to reality in general, but as the description of their inner functioning as they develop themselves spontaneously in the concrete *Wirklichkeit*.

³ O'Connor, for instance, recognizes four versions of the Hegelian mediation: "1) Elevation Thesis: mediation is the intellectual mechanism by which we proceed from contingency to necessity; 2) Transcendental Thesis: the process of knowledge cannot be coherently explained without reference to a non-immediate element (and that element is mediation); 3) Contentual Thesis: the possibility of content is determined by the form of judgement, and that must include mediation; 4) Genetic Thesis: since a necessary precondition of any fact is its historical production it is, in this sense, mediated". O'CONNOR, B. *The Concept of Mediation in Hegel and Adorno*. **Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain**, n.20, 1999, p. 84-85.

Mediation does not only occur between Logic and Nature, but also inside them both independently, it is a basic mechanism of reality in general. We will need to keep this in mind when we will analyze the Logic of the Essence and its respective manifestation in the psychology of the Subjective Spirit, where the *Vorstellung*, a human form of knowledge, works as the concrete equivalent of the logical Essence by enacting the same ‘median role’. In accordance to what we just mentioned about the Logic being the framework of all the rest of reality, we will point out how these two areas of the system share the same characteristics by analyzing at first the second section of the *Science of Logic*, the doctrine of the Essence, focusing especially on the categories of identity and difference, and thereafter the chapter on representation of the *Encyclopedia* psychology, targeting the structure of imagination and the emergence of the symbol. The main common trait will be found in their ‘median place’ respectively between Being and Concept and intuition and thought, which will present of course a correspondence as well. By constituting a moment of split and separation, or better yet reflection, which is already a mediation in itself, Essence and representation will also mediate the passage between their respective extremes of the dialectic and most importantly they will show themselves as necessary to the development of that same dialectic, exactly like, as we mentioned on a more general level, logic and thought require nature and experience. This is why at the end of this contribution we will also briefly remind how vital is the negative operation of the two middle moments, showing how the Concept cannot truly be itself without passing through Essence just like thought is condemned to abstraction without representation.

Let us begin with the Logic of the Essence and explain how this second moment of the development of the Hegelian Logic can be considered a mediation. Essence, in fact, will be here regarded as the place in which mediation appears in all its facets, since we can retrace its movement not only in the actions of internal self-referring and self-negating, but also in the binding of the two other parts of the Logic, which are therefore both contained in the middle ground constituted by Essence. The duplicity of the latter will emerge as the main reason why we can call it a moment of mediation. In order to describe this dynamic we will first show briefly how Being, the previous sphere, gets sublated into Essence. This passage is in fact extremely important for our comparative work, because it introduces the characteristics that are typical of the second moment of every dialectic and therefore present not only in the Logic but also in the rest of the system. At the beginning of the section on the Essence we read that “the truth of being is essence” and a bit further Hegel adds that “only inasmuch as knowledge recollects

itself into itself out of immediate being, does it find essence through this mediation” (SL 11.241). In other words, he states that the immediacy of the passing-over (*das Übergehen*) of the sphere of Being has been finally mediated, in that the movement is no longer a transition from a determination to another but an internalizing of that same determination in itself. The first connotation that we assign to Essence is therefore its character of *Erinnerung*: in Essence Being goes back to its internal core, it ceases to pass from A to B in an external way and finally finds itself in itself in what we may call an internal mediation. This concept is already quiet telling if we think about its meaning in a more ‘psychological’ kind of way. It may seem that the Logic of the Essence has nothing to do with our own recollection processes, but, in accordance with the aim of this study, we will show on the contrary how the dynamic of the interiorization that we witness here in the logical sphere corresponds to the one that Hegel describes in the psychology. To begin with, we could say that recollection has much to do with the past: Essence (as the German word *Wesen* seems to suggest) contains in itself the past that is Being, a ‘timelessly past’, that is that continuous ‘passing-over’ which makes the immediate categories of Being something always indeed ‘past’. The process of the *Erinnerung* therefore consists in recollecting this past by going back to the internality of those determinations that were merely passing from one to the other: Essence negates the immediate negations that occur externally between the quantitative and qualitative categories of Being and projects this negative movement inside itself.⁴ We could also say that Essence is the self-consciousness of the thing, for the movement is now immanent and assumes a typical self-conscious kind of status: the movement is, in other words, reflection, which we will enumerate in our inquiry as the second characteristic trait of Essence. As is well known, while the *Übergehen* is Being’s operation, the *Reflexion* belongs to Essence as its principal functioning. After dealing with the dialectic of essential and unessential, Hegel explains at the end of the chapter (the Shine) what reflection means, treating it as a category that in a certain sense encompasses the entire Logic of the Essence:

Essence is reflection, the movement of becoming and transition that remains within itself, wherein that which is distinguished is determined simply and solely as the negative in itself, as shine. – In the becoming of being, it is being which lies at the foundation of determinateness, and determinateness is reference to another. Reflective

⁴ BORDIGNON, M. *Erinnerung* between Being and Essence. In: Ricci, V., Sanguinetti, F. (Eds.). **Hegel on Recollection: Essays on the Concept of Erinnerung in Hegel’s System**, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013, p. 26-27. On the movement of the *Erinnerung* and the passage from Being to Essence in general: ROSSI LEIDI, T. **Hegels Begriff der Erinnerung**, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009; MAKER, W., Identity, Difference and the Logic of Otherness. In: GRIER, P. T. (Eds.). **Identity and Difference**, Albany: SUNY Press, 2007.

movement is by contrast the other as negation in itself, a negation which has being only as self-referring (SL 11.249).

Reflection, the determinate one to be exact, is therefore that immanent movement of self-negating and self-referring that makes Essence a relation of itself with itself and not a “transition into the opposite” (SL 11.259). This ‘posing itself through the difference from itself’ is what we will observe in the relations of the ‘essentialities of reflection’: identity is itself through the difference that it contains and vice versa. Through the internalization movement of the *Erinnerung* and the self-distinguishing that is also self-positing one of the *Reflexion*, Essence is a moment of mediation. We could say that reflection is the embodiment of the concept of mediation itself, because it carries out that *Zersplitterung* of the immediacy that we mentioned in the general definition of mediation.⁵ Moreover Essence displays already what will be the concrete mediation of the Concept, as Hegel anticipates at the beginning of the book:

Since it is the repelling of itself from itself or indifference towards itself, negative self-reference, it thereby posits itself over against itself and is infinite being-for-itself only in so far as in thus differentiating itself from itself it is in unity with itself (SL 11.242).

The passage may sound abstruse but the meaning can be summed up in the formula ‘being-in-and-for-itself’ that characterizes the dialectic of the Concept. Essence, therefore, reveals the secret of immediate Being, that is the mediate conceptual soul that constitutes the latter’s truth. In doing so, Essence, as we have seen, poses itself against itself, and this means that it generates a duality: all of its categories contain couples of determinations related to each other. This duality is of course the reason why Essence can enact the mediation in the first place, but it is also the space, however, in which things go somehow astray. The determinations or essentialities of reflection, in fact, appear at the same time as excluding each other: the self-reference that they obtain by mediating (reflecting) themselves in the others assume a self-subsistence that opposes them as independent and ‘diverse’. This is what Hegel calls external reflection: it is the comparison operated by a third from an externality that keeps the determinations of the duality separated and not in relation to each other anymore. It is also the relapse into the Logic of Being, since that external character that we assigned to the movement of the *Übergehen* is to a certain

⁵ GÜNTHER, G. *Grundzüge einer neuen Theorie des Denkens in Hegels Logik*, Hamburg: Meinar, 1978, p. 136.

extent here at hand again. External reflection creates an instability in its searching for a stability, as Michael Quante has clearly explained:

Because external reflection holds these apart as different aspects or perspectives, it destabilizes what is supposed to be preserved, since both only achieve stability thanks to their internal relation to one another: «this keeping of likeness and unlikeness apart, is their destruction» (SL 11.269, 12 ff./364). There is a double failure in the strategy of avoiding contradiction via the epistemic self-interpretation of reflection as external. First, it destroys the determinations of reflection that were supposed to be preserved, those for which their relation to one another is essential and which «have no meaning outside» this relation (SL 11.269, 16/364). Second, the contradiction is only deflected into reflection itself, which simultaneously holds these aspects apart and relates them.⁶

Right because external reflection contradicts itself, however, it ends up relating its determinacies again, turning back into an immanent reflection that will once more find a new exteriority in the next passage. This constant back-and-forth of the Essence denotes its perpetual instability, as we called it, and reveals its logic as a space of division and conflict. Essence is indeed the realm of duality, a duality that cannot be completely reconciliated until the Concept arises: the entire development of the Essence is a struggle between ‘internal essence’ (Concept) and *Erscheinung* (Being) that will only find resolution in ‘actuality’, that is when the Concept, by thinking speculatively and therefore holding the contradiction – internal and external reflection – together, makes its entrance. The secret of Being that we mentioned, the internal core that was supposed to be ‘behind’ it, appears as something separated, but in truth it is actually identic with its same immediacy. Although Essence has triggered the mediation, it is not yet ‘aware’ of it, its ‘in-and-for-itself’ is not yet ‘for-itself’. Jean Hyppolite says that this division between ‘internal essence’ and *Erscheinung* is what generates the “ontological mirage” of old metaphysics and, borrowing a figure from the Phenomenology, he interestingly calls Essence and its alienating nature “ontology’s unhappy consciousness”.⁷ This entire treatment of reflection leads us to the third and last characteristic: Essence is not only the place in which mediation as ‘positing itself in itself through the other’ appears, but also a ‘median area’, a middle ground, between Being and Concept, in that it mediates between the immediate beginning and the concrete ending of the Logic. The dual categories of Essence, in fact, even if not yet conciliated, manifest the binding of the *Erscheinung* of Being with the ‘internal essence’ of Concept.

⁶ QUANTE, M. The Logic of Essence as Internal Reflection. In: Moyar, D. (Eds.). **The Oxford Handbook of Hegel**, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, p. 259.

⁷ HYPOLITE, J. **Logic and Existence**. Trans by L. Lawlor and A. Sen, New York: State University of New York Press, 1997, p. 64.

Essence in general, moreover, possesses implicitly the conceptual soul of the Logic of the Concept, for it contains that immanent reflection which will constitute the concrete mediation, and at the same time it is still tempted by the exteriority and separation of the Logic of Being:

However, in accordance with the elemental unity which is immanent in the concept as basis, and hence in accordance with the inseparability of the concept's determinations, such determinations, even as differentiated (the concept is posited in their difference), must also stand at least in reference to each another. There results a sphere of mediation, the concept as a system of reflected determinations, that is, of being as it passes over into the in-itselfness of the concept – a concept which is in this way not yet posited for itself as such but is also fettered by an immediate being still external to it. This sphere is the doctrine of essence that stands between the doctrine of being and of the concept (SL 21.46).

This means that Essence, by holding inside itself both the previous and the next moment, creates a link between the two, without which the former could specify itself no more than the latter. Essence corresponds in conclusion to the fundamental dialectical level of the determinate negation, the critical break inside the immediacy of the first identity, which, by conjuring a split, a difference, allows the final synthesis to appear in its concreteness, that is in its mediate nature. We will return later to the importance of this 'median role' of the Essence, which is now revealed as a binding between immediacy and concrete mediation, but before that, we will propose a short text analysis of the essentialities of reflection in order to show how the characteristics that we just discussed actually work in the Logic.

In the first section, identity, we immediately recognize the movement of interiorization that we defined as *Erinnerung*:

Essence is simple immediacy as sublated immediacy. Its negativity is its being; it is equal to itself in its absolute negativity by virtue of which otherness and reference to other have as such simply disappeared into pure self-equality. Essence is therefore simple self-identity (SL 11.260).

Identity is not related to another, but to itself inside itself. This internal self-referring is what lead us to the functioning of reflection, that is the duplication of itself in which the determination negates itself in order to refer to itself, constituting a mediated knowledge: "The concept of identity, a simple negativity that refers itself to itself, is not the product of external reflection but derives from being itself" (SL 11.261). In that identity is simple negativity that duplicates itself, it also contains difference, the absolute difference that doesn't introduce anything else, but confirms the self-relation of mediated identity:

Difference is the negativity that reflection possesses in itself, the nothing which is said in identity discourse, the essential moment of identity itself which, as the negativity of itself, at the same time determines itself and is differentiated from difference (SL 11.265).

This is the secret and the core of the Hegelian dialectic: the reflection or mediation that posits a determination in itself through the other of itself. Identity is identity because it is different from difference, but this means of course that it includes this being-different-from-difference in itself. At the same time difference, the second essentiality of reflection, is also itself because it includes the other of itself, that is identity:

Difference in itself is the difference that refers itself to itself; thus it is the negativity of itself, the difference not from another but of itself from itself; it is not itself but its other. What is different from difference, however, is identity. Difference is, therefore, itself and identity. The two together constitute difference; difference is the whole and its moment (SL 11.266).

Identity and difference are therefore in an immanent relation to each other, which is however broken by the emergence of that other self-referring of the two determinations that is generated by external reflection. Identity as self-relation of itself through difference and difference as self-relation of itself through identity become two independent ‘wholes’. We find ourselves in the section of difference that is called ‘diversity’, where we witness the birth of that unresolved division that plagues the entire Logic of the Essence. Identity and difference are, in fact, now ‘diverse’ and they turn into the second duality of the sequence, ‘likeness and unlikeness’. However, as we have seen with external reflection in general, the latter contradicts itself and in keeping likeness and unlikeness separated it ends up relating them in a new internal reflection. This is the delicate mechanism of instability that we showed before through Quante’s words and that Hegel describes here like this:

Because of this separation from each other, they sublimate themselves. Precisely that which should save them from contradiction and dissolution, namely that something is like another in one respect but unlike in another – precisely this keeping of likeness and unlikeness apart, is their destruction. For both are determinations of difference; they are references to each other, each intended to be what the other is not; the like is not the unlike, and the unlike is not the like; both have this connecting reference essentially, and have no meaning outside it; as determinations of difference, each is what it is as different from its other (SL 11.269).

We jump now in the ‘opposition’ (the last form of difference), where the immanent reflection of ‘likeness’ becomes the ‘positive’ and the one of ‘unlikeness’ the ‘negative’. The instability between internal reflection and external reflection, this middle status that embodies elements both of Being and of Concept, will keep presenting itself even after the ‘contradiction’, the last essentiality, will go back to its ‘ground’ at the end of the first section of the Logic of the Essence. It will be resolved, as we said, only when the Concept will clarify the self-determination of Essence as self-determined, that is only when the duality will be truly conciliated by conceptual thinking.

We can now deal with the third and last section of the encyclopedic Subjective Spirit, where Hegel offers his account on Psychology and the three forms of intelligence constituted by intuition, representation and thought. As we have anticipated, these three spheres will be shown as the equivalent of Being, Essence and Concept in the functioning of human knowledge, meaning that the Logic describes the essential structure of the latter. We wish to point out again that this will not be an attempt at reducing one sphere to the other: the parallelism aims to show a correspondence, and not a reduction, between the logical and ontological (in this case we could say also epistemological) planes of Hegel’s philosophy. The correspondence depends from the same structure that is at work, with the due differences, in both the Logic and the psychology. Following the line of what we said in the introduction, the aforementioned structure finds its conceptual body in the Logic as the universal original depiction of all its other manifestations, such as the one offered by the subjective Spirit. Nuzzo explains this by reminding how Hegel’s Logic, after Kant’s critique, cannot go back to mere empirical psychology, because it enacts now the foundational role that belonged to previous metaphysics. Therefore the Logic is the basis of psychology conceived as a part of the totality of the system:

Speculative logic is rather the systematic as well as methodological basis on which Hegel proposes a new idea of psychology as part of a philosophy of subjective spirit [...] While speculative logic articulates the formal dimension of objective thinking as ‘pure’ thought – before the creation of nature and a finite spirit – psychology establishes the material dimension of thought in the objectivity *stofflich* and factual of its intuitions, representations, and images.⁸

⁸ NUZZO, A. Dialectical Memory, Thinking and Recollecting. Logic and Psychology in Hegel. In: BRANCACCI, A.; GIGLIOTTI, G. (Eds.). *Mémoire et souvenir: Six Études sur Platon, Aristote, Hegel et Husserl*, Napoli: Bibliopolis, 2006, p. 97-98.

Düsing as well showed this affinity by pointing out how the speculative logic of Hegel's system set up the foundations of the subjective Spirit, which in result appears as the finite development of subjectivity that echoes the absolute one. He stresses out the more general parallelism between the three parts of the Logic and the three parts of the subjective Spirit as a whole, meaning that he finds in anthropology the immediacy of Being, in phenomenology the reflection of Essence and in psychology the concrete mediation of Concept.⁹ We will proceed instead by focusing on psychology only, in which the same affinity can be found again on the more particular level of the three moments of human intelligence and especially between Essence and representation.¹⁰ In the first lines of the chapter on representation, which will be our main focus, we can immediately recognize, in fact, the characteristics that we have just located in the Logic of the Essence. Hegel begins his treatment of the *Vorstellung* by saying that

representation is the recollected intuition and, as such, is the mean between intelligence's immediate finding-itself-determined and intelligence in its freedom, thinking. The representation is intelligence's own possession still with one-sided subjectivity, since this possession is not self-contained being, but still conditioned by immediacy (Enc §451).

Starting from the last connotation that we assigned to Essence, that is its 'median role' between Being and Concept, we can observe how representation is as well the middle ground, the mediation, between intuition and thought, 'immediate intelligence' and 'free intelligence', something that lies in the immediacy like the categories of Being and something that is free in the sense of the Concept. Hegel also explains this by defining representation as the link between the particularity of the intuitive material and the universality of thought, a moment therefore that elevates the first to the second but is still somehow latched to the former. Representation, as in the nature of every transitional second moment, shares indeed with both the previous and the next sphere common traits. The *Vorstellung* appears as something *sinnlich* and *begrifflich* at the same time: it enacts the internal mediation of reflection that we find in thought and it portrays its content with the spatiotemporal tools of intuition; it connects the sensuous form of

⁹ DÜSING, K. Endliche und absolute Subjektivität. In: Eley, L. (Eds.). **Hegels Theorie des subjektiven Geistes**, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1990, p. 48-49.

¹⁰ For the reconstruction of Hegel's psychology of the Subjective Spirit we relied on: DEVRIES, W. **Hegel's Theory of Mental Activity**, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988; FULDA, H. F. Anthropologie und Psychologie in Hegels "Philosophie des subjektiven Geistes". In: Schumacher, R., Scholz, O.R. (Eds.). **Idealismus als Theorie der Repräsentation?** Paderborn: Mentis, 2001.

the latter, that we find in images and symbols, with the conceptual content of the former, which is the logical truth of those images. The answer to this apparent enigma is of course already contained in the Logic, but the declination that the logical movement of Essence assumes in psychology engages new interesting elements, such as time and symbolic images. First of all, as it has been pointed out in the passage from Being to Essence, representation internalizes intuition in that same modality that Hegel calls *Erinnerung*. The immediacy of the sphere of intuition, where the material that is perceived by senses and feelings through space and time remains external, corresponds to the stage of Being, in which the externality of the *Übergehen* is not yet immanently split into conflicting moments (interior and exterior are not in explicit opposition). Just like intuition does not have perception of this duality, Being is also *abstrakte Gleichgültigkeit*. In representation, on the contrary, intelligence realizes how the intuitive material is not a mere object outside of itself, but something that is instead inside the subject, something that the subject itself posits. The first stage of representation is in fact ‘recollection’ (*Erinnerung*): the outside object of intuition gets abstracted from its spatiotemporal context and subsumed in an internal image. We therefore find ourselves in the same situation that we observed in the Logic of the Essence in the regards of the internal mediation of the ‘passing-over’: the manifold of intuitions that are externally related and constantly ‘past’, because sensible experience jumps from one intuition to the other without ‘going inside’ them, is finally recollected by representation, which offers a mediation inside itself, inside those same ‘past-over’ intuitions. The main difference here is that Essence was working with a past that is *zeitlos*, while representation is internalizing actual spatiotemporal determinacies. This difference however only shows how the Logic is the absolute framework of the system, that is the infinite and eternal point of reference of all the rest of the finite and time-related reality, including psychology.¹¹ Even if in this interiorization we witness already a passage from the particularity of the immediate intuitions to a more universal content, we are not yet in the realm of proper representation, since recollection is still too dependent from the intuitive data, exactly like the first step of Essence (the Shine) was still too compromised by the Logic of Being. As it happens in the case of the Logic, where true Essence shows itself at the emergence of reflection and in its dual essentialities, representation too reaches its full development when the duality arises. Both Essence and representation, in fact, are relational, in that they constantly put two sides into

¹¹ BORDIGNON. *Erinnerung* between Being and Essence, p. 49.

relation with each other, and in this relationality, which is the heart of concrete mediation, they reach towards the levels of Concept and thought. We will get to observe this better in our analysis of the imagination, where this split is displayed by the symbol. Meanwhile we can anticipate how representation, after having internalized intuition, is able to externalize this content again. In doing so it generates and links together two ‘different’ sides, just like Essence manifests dual categories, where the main movement of mediation appears. In being able to be itself in the other of itself, in fact, representation is a moment of reflection and therefore approaches thought:

The path of intelligence in representations is to make the immediacy inward, to posit itself intuitively within itself, just as it is to sublimate the subjectivity of the inwardness, and within inwardness itself to divest itself of it and to be within itself in its own externality (Enc §451).

The two related sides, moreover, are the equivalent of Essence’s ‘internal essence’ and *Er-scheinung*: the conceptual content of representation that belongs already to the universality of the thought is related to the sensuous form that is both the re-positing and the residue of the intuition. The mediation, as we said many times, happens between intuition and thought, Being and Concept. We have found the other two elements that we traced in the Logic of the Essence, internalization and reflection, but we have not yet shown how the latter works according to its ‘dialectic of instability’ here in the area of representational intelligence. The movement of internal reflection that splits Essence in two, in order to recognize itself in itself through the other, is never completely final because what Hegel calls external reflection makes its appearance and renews the opposition from an outside point of view. Representation too struggles between this unconciliated division and every attempt at unifying the two standpoints of content and form, significance and expression, particular intuition and concrete universal thought, turns up in an ‘external *Synthese*’:

But as representing begins from the intuition and the ready-found material of intuition, this activity is still burdened with this difference, and its concrete productions within it are still syntheses, which become the concrete immanence of the concept only in thinking (Enc §451).

The comparison of the external reflection that constitutes the relapse of Essence in the Logic of Being presents itself once more in the incapacity of representation of holding the two sides of

the difference in a concrete mediated unity. This incapacity derives from its still being corrupted by the limits of intuition and it is therefore representation's own relapse into the first moment of the dialectic. The *Vorstellung* in Hegel's philosophy in general, for instance as the form of religion, is known for not thinking contradictions speculatively, that is in their unity, for it is trapped in the intuitive *nebeneinander* and *nacheinander* of space and time. Malcolm Clark writes that

every stage of the Logic of Essence, which thinks the totality under a coupled category yet remains at that stage by regarding each moment of the category as simply self-identical, is thereby a manner of passing out into the space and time of illustration and *Vorstellung*. And conversely, we may say that each attitude of experience is, through its form of *Vorstellung*, a limitation of thought to one of the pseudo-totalities of Essence.¹²

Even if representation and Essence already contain the 'in-and-for-itself' of thought and Concept, they don't have yet their interpenetrated unity. Their relational character remains an external reflection that hasn't yet conciliated the two sides of the *Beziehung*. They will start to reach that point only in the last stages of 'causality' and, in the case of representation, 'memory', in which the 'sign-making intelligence' leads to language.¹³ Before that, however, the I must go through imagination and 'symbol-making intelligence', the part that we will closely analyze now in order to retrace the elements of interiorization, duality and external reflection that make representation the mediation between intuition and thought.

Imagination, as we said already, is the place in which actual representation appears:

The imagination fashions for itself a content peculiar to it by reacting to the intuited object thinkingly, by bringing out what is universal in it, and giving it determinations that pertain to the I. In this way the imagination ceases to be merely formal recollection and becomes the recollection that affects the content, universalizes it, thus creating universal representations (Enc §451).

In other words imagination is the faculty that knows how to manipulate and rearrange the internal images of recollection in order to universalize them and later express them through the particularity of intuition. This is what happens in fantasy, the realm of 'symbolizing, allegorizing or creative imagination':

¹² CLARK, M. *Logic and System. A Study of the Transition from "Vorstellung" to Thought in the Philosophy of Hegel*, Dordrecht: Springer, 1971, p. 102.

¹³ MAGRÌ, E. Self-reference And Logical Memory in Hegel's Theory of the Concept. *Revista Eletrônica Estudos Hegelianos*, n. 15, Issue 8, 2011, p. 74-75.

The third stage in this sphere is the stage at which intelligence identifies its universal representations with the particularity of the image and so gives them a pictorial reality. This sensory reality has the double form of symbol and sign, so that this third stage comprises the symbolizing and the sign-making fantasy, the latter of which constitutes the transition to memory (Enc §455).

We see clearly here how imagination not only works with the *Erinnerung*, the internal recollection of previously external intuitions, but also how it enacts the movement of reflection by exteriorizing again this internal content with its symbol-making (and later on sign-making) fantasy. The symbol is in fact a double structure composed of a content/significance and a form/expression, in which the latter is usually a sensible image that has some kind of link to the concept that it carries. This structure replays therefore the binding of Being and Concept that we find in Essence by portraying the one of sensuous form and conceptual content that we find in representation in general. The symbol can be considered as the perfect example of how representation not only enacts a mediation inside itself, by generating a duality that is also a unity, but also stands as a ‘median connection’ between senses and ideas, intuition and thought. In the symbol intelligence manages to abstract from the manifold of the intuitive experience and find a common trait of the various determinations that can be elevated to universality:

For what enables the individual images to relate to one another consists precisely in what is common to them. This common element is either some particular aspect of the object raised to the form of universality, such as, for example, the red color in the rose, or the concrete universal, the genus, for example, the plant in the rose, but in each case a representation that comes about through the dissolution, proceeding from the intelligence, of the empirical connection of the manifold determinations of the object (Enc §456).

In saying that the strength of Jupiter is symbolized by the eagle, a strong animal, Hegel shows how the symbol is the root of the metaphor, of the allegoric and poetic processes that belong to art. However, being associated with art, which is known to be the sphere of senses, points out already to the inadequacy of the symbol at expressing completely the conceptual nature of the universal content. The symbol has still too much to do with intuition. An image that still involves sensibility, space and time at some degrees, does not correspond truly and entirely to a concept, whose form is conceptual as well and matches therefore with the content. The many times mentioned relapse in the Logic of Being of external reflection, that we traced in the return of the *Übergehen* at the level of Essence (the equivalent of the spatiotemporal

nebeneinander and *nacheinander* of intuition), is once again present in the separation between content and expression, that, although sharing a link (the strength in Jupiter and the eagle), are not concretely interpenetrated. The duality is kept divided by an external comparison that will only be overcome in the sign, which erases that arbitrary common trait that implied two separate sides, making the expression completely transparent to the content. We find ourselves now between imagination and memory, that is the last section of representation, where language and words transfer us into thought. We must not forget, however, as we will now stress out, that in order to fulfill itself the latter will be always in need of those images, sensible depictions and experience in general.¹⁴

We will conclude the discussion with a brief comment on a deeper meaning of the mediation enacted by Essence and representation as second moments of the dialectic. The latter, although its fame and recognition, has been severely misinterpreted through time: Hegel has been accused of being an enemy of reality and senses in favor of thought and ideas, as if the concept or the Absolute had simply erased the previous stages of appearance and sensible reality. However, as cliché as may sound, the meaning of the *Aufhebung* is *tollere et conservare*, to criticize and to ‘go back’ to recover and restore the sublated determinations. Not only that, but the determinations that have been sublated show themselves as the necessary moments that ensure that same sublation. We may say that necessity is here, as in the rest of the Hegelian philosophy, the magic word, because it describes the stringent character of the logic through which the entire movement of reality proceeds. The second moments of the dialectic are necessary to the synthesis of the third ones, their mediation is what makes the latter complete, concrete and indeed mediated. The Idea, as well as the Concept and the Absolute in general, have to contain the laceration constituted by the splitting of self-negation, otherwise they wouldn’t be whole, they would still linger in the immediacy of the first moment without having developed the process that defines what they are. The Spirit is indeed this process, this movement of mediation in which negation, by showing the parts at play, that is by making explicit the conflict and the duality that was dormant in immediacy, acts as the motor and the soul of the shifting. This is why Essence and representation with their separative nature are so important to the emergence of Concept and thought. In the Logic of the Essence we have seen the constant back-

¹⁴ In her treatment of the symbol as central element of mediation and self-determination of the Spirit, which mirrors the interpretative orientation that we also propose, Magnus introduces her work by saying that “even at the point of its absolute realization, spirit needs the symbolic forms of art and religion”. MAGNUS, K. D. **Hegel and the Symbolic Mediation of Spirit**. Albany: SUNY Press, 2001, p. 27.

and-forth between internal and external reflection that keeps the entire sphere a divisive unconciliated ground. It is this very negativity, the mediation of the immediacy of Being, that gives body to the Concept. The latter, as we said, couldn't be itself without Essence, it couldn't act as the *Versöhnung* of opposite determination. In other words, the Concept couldn't solve the contradiction if no contradiction would arise in the first place. Again Malcolm Clark says:

Here it may simply be emphasized that the harmonious self-development of the Logic of the Notion becomes a mere play unless the attempt be made to understand it as a true *Aufhebung* of all the seriousness, toil and patience of Essence. Spirit is not merely *der Begriff*; it is also *eine Vorstellung*. If thinking remains empirical so far as it understands facts with a logic proper only to a lower level of human thought, no less does it remain empirical so far as a hard-won logic forgets the stages of thinking and experiencing through which it has passed.¹⁵

He therefore links this 'mediative' and 'median role' of Essence to the one of representation, mentioning the importance of the empirical side of the process as well. As we just reminded, in fact, the meaning of the sublation operated by thought is not to annihilate the sphere of experience, which is fundamental to thought itself as embodiment of its own constitution. This relation, which can be regarded as a full-fledged circularity, may be more difficult to trace in the Logic of the Essence (which contains however its own section of *Erscheinung*), since in the Logic as an autonomous discipline we still find ourselves in the 'kingdom of shadows', the abstract realm of concepts. The empirical side of the relation shows itself completely, however, at the more general level of the dialectical unity of Logic and Nature: the first must exteriorize itself in the objective world and the second must be informed in its turn from the logical framework. The circularity gets even more explicit in the case of representation and thought: here we can recognize not only the importance of the negative and splitting-wise mediation that representation places between intuition and thought, in the same way as Essence, as we have just discussed, does between Being and Concept, but also the need of sensible images like symbols for the thought to be really concrete (and not just an abstract set of categories and ideas). In representation we witness therefore the working of that circular motion between thought and empirical experience that art and religion offer to philosophy: especially religion is the place where philosophical ideas find their imaginative expression.¹⁶ When we say that representation

¹⁵ CLARK. *Logic and System*, p. 91

¹⁶ SAMONÀ, L. Dalla rappresentazione al concetto. *Religione e filosofia nelle Lezioni berlinesi di Hegel*. **TEORIA**, n. 7, 1987, p. 53-55.

mediates thought, in fact, we also mean that representation works as a *Beispiel*, an example, of thought's own structure, as if representation could be somehow the 'flesh' of the concept.¹⁷ This means that in the passage from representation to thought, the latter must first 'criticize' the sensitive character of representation that we traced in its relapse into intuition, in its external reflection, and then 'go back' to reconsider this sensitive material as an image, a metaphor in which it can fulfill itself.¹⁸ The 'recursivity' of the movement between representation and concept, that characterizes also the Logic as their frame of reference,¹⁹ could open ample discussions about many aspects of Hegel's philosophy, like the relationship between religion and philosophy. We will just add, in conclusion, that Essence and representation as middle stages between Being and intuition on one side and Concept and thought on the other, show how mediation and negativity are the core of the Hegelian dialectic, but also how the entire system is an eternal circular conciliation between logic and reality, thought and experience.

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¹⁷ In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* Hegel shows how religious representations can be 'examples' (*Beispiele*) of conceptual ideas, suggesting that the movement from representation to concept must also contemplate a turning back from concept to representation in order to rehabilitate the latter as a sensuous, but rational, expression of the former (PhR.I: §34).

¹⁸ CARAMELLI, E. **Lo spirito del ritorno. Studi su concetto e rappresentazione in Hegel**. Genova: il melangolo, 2016, p. 39.

¹⁹ For a general reading of the Logic as the space of recursivity and auto-referentiality see: CHIEREGHIN, F. **Rileggere la Scienza della logica di Hegel**. Roma: Carocci, 2012.

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