

Foundations of Practical Identity

Eirik Christopher Gundersen

Thesis for the Degree Cand. Philol.

Department of Philosophy

Faculty of Arts

University of Oslo

Fall 2004

Foundations of Practical Identity.

Acknowledgements	3
Abbreviations of Hegel's Works	4
Introduction	5
I. PRACTICAL IDENTITY	10
I.1. Korsgaard's Founding of Practical Identity	10
I.1.1. Reflective Endorsement	12
I.1.2. The Kantian Appeal to Autonomy	14
I.1.3. Extending the Domain of Reflectivity	22
I.2. Korsgaard and Hegel.....	24
I.2.1. On the Transcendental Account of Intersubjectivity	31
I.2.2. Transition from Korsgaard to Hegel	39
II. PHILOSOPHY OF CONSCIOUSNESS	45
II.1. Subject and Object.....	45
II.2. The Encyclopaedia On Reflectivity.....	52
II.2.1. Reflectivity and I-consciousness	55
II.2.2. Reason and Thought	58
II.2.3. Extending the Domain of Reason.....	68
III. OBJECTIVE SPIRIT.....	70
III.1. Transition from Philosophy of Consciousness to Practical Philosophy.....	70
III.2. Reason and the Will	71
III.3. From Subjectivity to Intersubjectivity.....	77
III.3.1. Recognition	80
III.3.2. When the Other Comes to Count	88
III.4. Intersubjectivity and the Evaluative Self	94
Conclusion: The Hegelian Endorsement of Autonomy	98
Bibliography.....	101

Acknowledgements

Several people have contributed to making this thesis better than I could have done if I was solely on my own. First and foremost I wish to thank my supervisor, Professor Christel Fricke. Her critical comments and clarity have been invaluable contributions to my sometimes not so clear thoughts.

Odin Lysaker, a Justified True Believer, has given me much help. He read and criticized two earlier drafts of this thesis, and came with helpful contributions both on substantial and formal issues. I am deeply grateful for his help, and most importantly for our friendship.

Others have also helped the project, and my relation to philosophy in general. I would express my gratitude to Terje Sparby, the other Hegelian at the department and another Justified True Believer, for helpful discussions and for leading me to useful secondary literature on Hegel. Others include Einar Bøhn, Kristian Urstad and Jim Westin, most of all in virtue of their time as Justified True Believers. I would also like to thank Professor Arne Johan Vetlesen for inspiring lectures. The lectures have contributed immensely to my understanding of philosophy in general and social philosophy in particular.

Andrea. I love you.

This thesis is dedicated to my grandparents.

Oslo, November 2004.

Eirik C. Gundersen.

Abbreviations of Hegel's Works

TW - *Werke in zwanzig Bänden* (Theorie Werkausgabe), edited by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp 1970

References: When neither of the below mentioned works are cited, the TW is referred to by means of volume- and page numbers, e.g. TW 10:430.

Enc. I - Encyclopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1830) - Erster Teil, Die Wissenschaft der Logik, TW 8.

English translation: *The Encyclopaedia Logic. Part I of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, transl. by. Geraets, Suchting, and Harris, Indianapolis, Hackett 1991.

Cited by paragraph (§) number, e.g. *Enc. I*, § 96. Hegel's published remarks are indicated when the letter "R" is suffixed to the paragraph. The *Zusätze* are indicated with the suffix "Z".

Enc. III - Encyclopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse - Dritter Teil, Die Philosophie des Geistes, TW 10.

English translation: *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind. Part three of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Science (1830)*, transl. by Wallace and Miller, Oxford, Oxford U. P. 1971

References: See under *Enc. I*

ETW - *Early Theological Writings*, transl. by Knox and Kroner, Philadelphia: Pennsylvania U. P. 1986. Referred to by means of page number.

PhG - Phänomenologie des Geistes, TW 3. Referred to by means of page numbers.

PhS - The Phenomenology of Spirit, transl. by A. V. Miller, Oxford, Oxford U. P. 1977.

Referred to be means of Miller's added paragraphs (§) and page numbers.

PR - Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts, TW 7

English translation: *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, transl. by H. B. Nisbet, Cambridge, Cambridge U P. 1991.

References: See under *Enc. I*

SL - Hegel's Science of Logic, transl. by A. V. Miller, New York, Humanity Books 1998.

Referred to by means of page numbers.

WL - Wissenschaft der Logik, TW 5 and 6. Referred to by means of volume- and page numbers, e.g. *WL II*, p. 253.

Introduction

I will in this thesis deal the following questions: What is it that motivates us to do actions that are morally right? And what is the relevant difference between morality and that which otherwise motivates us? What I seek is on other words a way of grasping normativity in general as related to motivations, and a way to determine the difference between normativity in general and morality in particular.

These issues will in this thesis be related to the *person*, to the individual who often finds herself in dilemmas of conflicting motivations. I will in this thesis argue that it is the person who in virtue of her own self-conception or practical identity determines *what it is* that motivates her, and also *why* she is motivated to do certain actions.¹ If the person for example finds herself in a dilemma, then questions of *what kind* of a dilemma it is, and *why* it is a dilemma, will be answered by the self-conception of that agent. I will in other words claim that both difficulties related to these issues and the answer to the difficulties can be found through an analysis of the person.

There have of course been several other ways to answer the questions raised than the treatment I will give them. It has been suggested that the difference between morality and normativity in general is that between incentives related to truth and falsity respectively. For example, a moral claim is true if it refers to morality, as something that exists independently of human knowledge, but something we can find out. Answers of a different kind would be that some external force, most commonly God, told us the difference between morals and normativity in general. These positions has been subsumed these two positions under traditions called Realism and Voluntarism respectively.² Both of the traditions are, in lack of better terms, out of fashion. This is due to problems these theories are faced with if they are confronted with individual, social, and epistemological concerns.

Regarding the individual, the Voluntarism-tradition has the flaw of not making room for autonomy. It is a heteronymous tradition. What this means is that the difference between normativity and morality, the difference between what we do and what we *ought* to do, is decided by someone else. This is a problem regarding individual responsibility – we could act in accordance with some principle given to us from an external source, but still violate others. If the well-being of others is violated, were we still justified in doing what we did?

¹ The terms "self-conception" and "practical identity" are used interchangeably in this thesis.

² The distinction is taken from Korsgaard (1996). See section I.1.

Another issue regarding Voluntarism is that it is experienced as a wrong description of us as moral agents. We tend to believe that we are responsible, and that our responsibility is connected to the experience of ourselves being the authors of our actions.

Regarding Realism, a concern is that different societies have different norms. In other words, the difference between morality and normativity in general has different content depending on e.g. culture. The only thing in common between these cultures is that people everywhere tend to have some principles or modes of agency they regard as moral, while others are immoral or morally irrelevant. But if morality is something that we can *know* to be true, then why do these differences exist? If someone is right regarding their conception of morality, what criteria can they come up with that will make all the others wrong? Given Realism's appeal to true knowledge, it is in other words threatened by some difficult epistemological problems.

Whatever answers we want to give to the questions above, it is clear that any answers will have to include some conception of the individual or the person in order to explain the phenomenon without violating our experience of it. It would be for example unreasonable to speak of motivations without including the person. Hence, this thesis will concern two philosophers who each have tried to answer the questions above through the person. These two are Christine Korsgaard and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.

Christine Korsgaard seeks in her book, *The Sources of Normativity*, to answer the question of moral motivation and difference between morality and normativity by appealing to what she calls practical identity. Practical identity is roughly a description the person gives of herself that expresses what she holds to be valuable. It is therefore necessarily connected to the reasons an agent employs when she chooses a particular course of action, and it is accordingly connected to motivation. It would be, Korsgaard assumes, unreasonable to speak of reasons for action unless these reasons also generally provide the motivation for the action. Korsgaard's notion of practical identity is accordingly also connected to human beings' own sense of authorship regarding their actions.

Our practical identities are founded on the reflective structure of our own consciousness. This structure corresponds to human beings' ability to think about ourselves and think about the reasons we employ when we act in one way rather than another. She thus argues that to have a practical identity is a matter of a transcendental fact about human beings – it is involved every time we find ourselves acting in accordance with reasons. Our practical identity is therefore the seat of the reasons themselves, as well as what we employ when we endorse or reject some claims or courses of action.

The formerly mentioned philosophical positions of Realism and Voluntarism are in addition to another position discussed by Korsgaard herself in the *Sources of Normativity*. These positions are presented as specific positions corresponding to specific reasons that are connected to a particular practical identity. Thus different practical identities are sources of normativity. But she also holds that the concept of practical identity can be used constructively to determine the difference between morality and normativity in general in another way than the ways proposed e.g. by the traditions of Realism or Voluntarism.

The relevant difference between morality and other values is connected to the difference between practical identity as a universal feature of human reflectivity, and practical identity directed at other, socially derived obligations. In other words, as a reflective human being, one should be committed to the well-being of others in general, while socially derived obligations often are directed at a particular group of others or a singular other insofar as they concern others. I will argue that a fundamental problem with Korsgaard's thesis is that she emphasises structural similarities between these two types of practical identities to the point that the conceptual difference between morality as universal obligations and e.g. role obligations as more particular obligations disappears. An eventual conflict between the two becomes intractable because the agent will be deprived of reasons for acting one way rather than another.

The works of Hegel involve a different approach to the problem than the one we find in Korsgaard's works, and he is therefore introduced to answer both the general question of this thesis, and also to answer the problems in Korsgaard's theory. Hegel's point of departure is similar to that of Korsgaard in that it from the outset involves something similar to Korsgaard's notion of reflectivity, as well as it also focuses on the relation between the subject or agent and otherness. Although there is an initial common ground between the two, the progression of Hegel's argument will give us a different structural account of the notion of practical identity. Whereas Korsgaard starts with an account of the self that is abstracted from interaction, and then extends the domain of reflectivity, Hegel places the agent within different scenarios of interaction from the beginning of his analysis. We might say that there is a different emphasis in the two accounts, an emphasis corresponding to the following questions and answers: Korsgaard may be understood as asking the questions: What is it that makes us extend the scope of our motivations? Or in other words, what makes us, as individuals, into moral beings? Her answer is twofold. First, it is because we as reflective individuals can think in terms of reasons, and thus induce that others have similar concerns, that we indirectly include others in virtue of what they have in common with us – that they are

autonomous, reflective beings. Secondly, the reasons we employ are *public*, and we can know the intentions of others by the way they state their reasons. But reasons are also according to Korsgaard related to experience; they presuppose a community in which some things are reasons and other things are not. Is it then the individual or the community that provides the difference between morality and normativity in general? If this is left undecided, then how can the theory make conceptual room for a relevant difference between morality and normativity in general?

The Hegelian questions and answer could be stated in the following way: What is it that enables us to cooperate with and have an unrestrained, and even caring relationship with others and otherness in general? And can these abilities explain the relevant difference between morality and normativity in general? Hegel's answer proceeds by placing the individual within a social framework, or at least an interaction with externality in order to examine two things: What kind of abilities must be included in order to give us a feasible description of the acting human being? And what types of self-conceptions can provide answers to the questions raised. In other words, whereas Korsgaard constructs her arguments based on structural features of human agency and motivations, Hegel includes substantial content in the description. The structural analysis provided by Korsgaard is then supplied by the claim that the difference between the ethical agent and other agents is due to content inherent in the self-conception of these agents. But this content is not simply tantamount to the individual's internalisation of the norms accepted in a particular society, although the particular way in which a person's self-conception is expressed and understood by the individual certainly reflects the society in which one is raised. The Hegelian claim is that an individual's capability to become a moral being also involves presenting the human being as irreducibly ethical, that others, both in general and particular have an indispensable role in the self-realization and actualisation of the subject's inherent disposition as a moral creature. Hegel's description of the individual is thus an ontological account of the disposition of human beings, a disposition that may become transparent for us as humans through interaction, which means that both parts are indispensable. Difference between morality and normativity in general is thus made explicit by experience and by the fact that different self-conceptions can be seen as providing reasons for different courses of action. This will in turn exhibit the difference between the particularity of certain concerns that only belong to the individual, and those that correspond to universal and ethical concerns. The concerns will point to an explicit self-conception of the ethical agent, a self-conception that also allows the self to be more properly described as a social agent.

The first chapter of this thesis is a presentation of Korsgaard. I will there explain the reasons why she introduces her notion of practical identity, and I will also discuss weaknesses with her theory. The last main section of the chapter, part I.2. is a transition from Korsgaard's account to Hegel, where I shall explain why Korsgaard's project needs a different approach.

The next two chapters is a presentation of some Hegelian arguments in an ongoing discussion with Korsgaard's theory. I have structured the Hegelian part of the thesis according to the subject matter, and not in accordance with how Hegel himself constructed his arguments. One reason for this is that I believe that this way of presenting Hegel makes it easier to see the relevant difference between the two approaches I discuss, so that it will be evident which contributions are Korsgaard's and which are based on Hegel's works. This way of presenting Hegelian issues is also a way of presenting the continuity within Hegel's system, to exhibit parts of his theoretical philosophy in connection to his ethics. Although this thesis is better described as Hegelian than as a presentation of Hegel's philosophy as such, I have attempted to reconstruct Hegel in a way that makes him relevant to the discussion as well as presenting a fair interpretation of his philosophy.

The first chapter on Hegel, chapter II, is a presentation of the Hegelian counterpart to Korsgaard's notion of reflectivity. Contrary to Korsgaard's account, I here argue for a view on consciousness and rationality that involves both form and content. The argument is intended to establish how Korsgaard's conception of autonomy has similarities with Hegel's conception of freedom, and that the latter account better explains what Korsgaard has in mind. The last section of the chapter, section II.2.3., presents the Hegelian equivalent to public reasons, and this does in turn lead to chapter III, which concerns agency and the difference between morality and normativity in general. This chapter will in other words employ the theoretical determinations made in the prior chapter in a practical manner. The first of these issues that is introduced in this chapter is the extension of Reason into its practical aspect, namely as the will. The will involves human beings as agents, which mainly features our activity of *manifesting* or *expressing* ourselves in the world. I will through Hegel argue that since will is thought and Reason manifested; the self is dependent on correspondence with its environment in a very strong degree. This also corresponds to what I will argue is an ontological feature of human agency: The need for recognition. The difference between morality and normativity in general is then explained by the degree in which a singular agent conforms to the ideal of *mutual* recognition, which is when the other comes to count.

I. PRACTICAL IDENTITY

I.1. Korsgaard's Founding of Practical Identity

Christine Korsgaard's book, *The Sources of Normativity*, concerns the issue of how normativity can be established and treated philosophically. As such her theory will be implied in every event described as normative. But what she in particular is interested in is "the normativity of ethics".³ This is not an unimportant qualification, and Korsgaard uses most of the space of her lessons to talk about morality.⁴ This amounts to, according to Korsgaard, attempts to answer what she calls "the normative question". Thus, an attempt to answer the "normative question" will hopefully also answer what it is that motivates us to be moral beings and gives us a grasp of relevant differences between morality and normativity in general.

To start with, there are three questions an analysis of this kind must answer: i) What do concepts that are frequently laden with normative connotations mean, or what do they contain? ii) To what do the concepts apply? iii) And, how did we get into possession of these concepts?⁵ In short, the philosopher needs a theory of moral concepts to answer the normative question. The assumption that the analysis needs in order to get started is that normativity in general (normally, or frequently) provides people with motives to do certain actions.⁶ This means that the actions that spring out of e.g. moral considerations must be supplied by reference to normativity in order to be explained properly. The concept of normativity is of course more general than a theory of *moral* concepts, but it is in the context of a theory of moral concepts Korsgaard uses this description.

Korsgaard continues with a list of facts regarding experience of moral concepts. In short, these concern the motivational force of normative claims or experiences. Regarding the

³ Korsgaard (1996), p. 10.

⁴ I will make a distinction between "morality" and "ethics" later in the thesis: The term "morality" and similar terms such as "right", "moral obligation", "duty", etc., will be used in a restricted sense, corresponding to the use of Scanlon when he says that "what we owe to each other" are "principles no one similarly motivated could reasonably reject" (See e.g. Scanlon (2000), pp. 6-7, 171 ff., and 189). This means that e.g. moral principles are more abstract and narrower in the sense that they include fewer aspects of human life as relevant than that which will be discussed as the "good" or "ethical", etc. The "good", "ethics" and the "ethical" will refer to a wide conception of normativity (cf. Scanlon (2000), p. 392 n. 25), and the concepts are in this sense similar to the ancient Greek conception of them. "Right", on the other hand, will not imply the German *Recht*, or (positive) law, but is used in distinction from the "good" so that one can conceptually separate actions that may be morally right, but not necessarily ethically good. An example of this might be punishment.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. p. 11. Although this points to the controversy in internal and external reasons, as Korsgaard points out, I will not enter that discussion. I will present some arguments regarding Korsgaard's notion of "public reasons", but these arguments are not aimed at the controversy in analytic philosophy regarding internal and external reasons. Any similarity in vocabulary is thus not intended to reflect any of the positions within that debate.

experiential status of this force, the theory of moral concepts needs to meet criteria of *explanatory adequacy* given by experience of normativity. And since our experience of normativity deals with prescriptive phenomena, the second criterion concerns the *normative* or *justificatory adequacy* of the force of normativity, i.e., it must answer the question on whether *we* in fact *ought* to do that which we take to be morally relevant, whether we are justified in acting according to the prescriptions of morality.

Further, the success of any attempt to answer the normative question depends on three criteria according to Korsgaard. First, the answer must succeed in addressing someone to whom the normative question is important. Someone whose first person experience places her in a position wherein the normative question has relevance.⁷ The second criterion is ‘transparency’: “If a theory’s explanation of how morality motivates us essentially depends on the fact that the source or nature of our motives is concealed from us, or that we often act blindly or from habit, then it lacks transparency.”⁸ Finally, Korsgaard states that any attempt to answer the normative question must appeal fundamentally to our own sense of who we are, or, as she says, to our identity. To further emphasize the gravity of this last criterion, Korsgaard says that “[if] moral claims are ever worth dying for, then violating them must be, in a similar way, worse than death.”⁹ And this would follow from a strong interconnection between morality and identity, that morality is explicitly part of an agent’s identity.

These are the questions and criteria Korsgaard wants to explore in her lectures, and she isolates four theoretical traditions that in different ways have attempted to answer the normative question: Voluntarism, Realism, Reflective Endorsement, and the Kantian Appeal to Autonomy. To make a long story short, voluntarism claims that obligation derives from commands by someone who has authority over the agent. The normatively right thing to do is accordingly to act in accordance with the command. Realists hold that moral claims can be true or false, or in other words that one can refer to moral entities when we use moral claims, and that these claims can be true or false. The normativity is provided by the truth. Reflective endorsement is the view that morality, and consequently normativity, is grounded in human nature. Apart from the fact that morality is normative if it in some way benefits us, this position seems to be directly connected to the third criterion listed above. The Kantian appeal to autonomy hold that the source of normativity is the agent’s own will, “in particular in the

⁷ I believe that this way entering a discussion of normative misses one crucial point, namely the explanation of why the agent finds something to be of moral relevance in the first place. The introduction of practical identity as a foundation of normativity in general and morality in particular is an attempt to provide an explanation of this, as we shall see.

⁸ Ibid. p. 17.

⁹ Ibid. p. 18.

fact that the laws of morality are the laws of the agent's own will and that what it claims are ones she is prepared to make on herself."¹⁰ Korsgaard adds that this tradition is the logical consequence of the view on normativity represented in the Reflective Endorsement-tradition.¹¹

It is obvious that "reflective endorsement" and the "appeal to autonomy" share some fundamental characteristics, and it is these two positions that I will continue to comment. Korsgaard places herself in the latter position, and she does also state that the appeal to autonomy is the logical consequence of the philosophy of the exponents for reflective endorsements (i.e. Hume, Mill, and Bernard Williams. I have added Charles Taylor to this position as well).

I.1.1. Reflective Endorsement

It might be argued that reflective endorsement is a position that is coherent with an attempt to emphasize *our point of view* as human beings. The names listed above should give credence to this claim. Empirical examples (e.g. Hume and Mill) such as sentiments or pleasure exhibit some characteristically human affairs, at least insofar as their description is connected to fundamentally social concerns. The term 'reflective' is significant in this position, because it expresses reflection's primacy in endorsing certain actions. If e.g. an action turned out to be in conflict with central moral concerns as the agent herself conceived morality, she could not reasonably be endorsing it. Hence, if our sentiment is the faculty that tells us that a transgression has been made or that a morally sublime event has occurred, then the normativity of these sentiments rests upon the reasons for these sentiments.

But this does not mean that reflection essentially has to be an explicit part of our normative considerations. The incentive to act in a certain way could be provided by e.g. sentiments alone, but they will in turn have to be consistent with what we perceive to be our over-all good:

Strictly speaking, we do not disapprove of the action because it is vicious; instead, it is vicious because we disapprove it. Since morality is grounded in human sentiments, the normative question cannot be whether its dictates are true. Instead, it is whether we have

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 19.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 51.

reason to be glad to have such sentiments, and to allow ourselves to be governed by them. The question is whether morality is a good thing for us.¹²

The tradition, although at the moment mainly described as sentimentalist, does also include a strong emphasis on reflection. Charles Taylor could be placed in the same tradition, because he sees the capacity for *strong evaluation* as something that partly defines human nature. Strong evaluation denotes a human being's capacity to make choices based on primarily qualitative considerations. Evaluation of this kind is connected to what we as individuals value, i.e. substantial conceptions of normative significance that are valued *in themselves*, and not because they can be subsumed under a more comprehensive concept, such as quantity, where we separate between less and more.¹³ Thus, morality is not a question of truth or falsity in Taylor's account either; it is a matter of human beings' ability to differentiate between values, and morality is one of these. In Taylor's account, normativity is thus inherent in different values, values that may be in conflict with each other and that may be incommensurable, but that still is open to evaluation because the values are connected to our capacities as evaluative beings. Taylor's status as a reflective endorsement-theorist is due to the fact that values in themselves can be accorded different import,¹⁴ and this is due to both the single individual, and the society (or community) that gives the context and interpretive horizon in which something is valued.¹⁵ This means that the import attached to different values in society in general may be of a kind that e.g. only endorses individuals' capabilities to e.g. make quantitative distinctions (such as reducing different, otherwise incommensurable values to correspond to one standard, e.g. their monetary value). Thus, Taylor holds that such a climate is in danger of alienating people from one of their important capabilities as humans (i.e. strong evaluation), and the theory thus points to normativity as embedded in a practice that is good for us.

Because this position emphasizes interpretation, something that signifies the primacy of human consciousness in cognising phenomena of moral importance, Taylor's position could be described as roughly idealist. What this means, is loosely understood that subjects have a primary status in the theory, so in regard to normativity and value, we are responsible for ascribing a certain value to certain phenomena. Hence, given that we have the capacity to

¹² Ibid. p. 50.

¹³ By saying this, I do not mean that quantity is a more fundamental or comprehensive concept than e.g. quality. This is just an example related to Taylor's own discussion.

¹⁴ Taylor (1985a), p. 48: "By 'import' I mean a way in which something can be relevant or of importance to the desires or purposes or aspirations or feelings of a subject; or otherwise put, a property of something whereby it is a matter of non-indifference to a subject."

¹⁵ Cf. Taylor (1985b), p. 39.

comprehend *that* certain phenomena have value, we can also comprehend *why* they have value, because it is connected to our own agency. One could say that the reason why something has value depends upon the identity of the human being in question; it corresponds to the way the person is constituted.¹⁶

Korsgaard points out that this shows how the endorsement theorist conceives the problem of normativity. Our constitution as human beings is essentially good for us, and to be alienated from it is potentially disastrous. Moreover, the connection between morality and human nature offers an explanation of a possible solution to the fact that different normative claims exist, and may be in conflict.

Human beings are subject to practical claims from various sources – our own interests, the interests of others, morality itself. The normative question is answered by showing that the points of views from which these different interests arise are congruent, that meeting the claims made from one point of view will not necessarily mean violating those from another.¹⁷

The various claims are all, one way or another, related to human nature, and if human nature is consistent beyond cultural contingencies etc., then it should in principle be possible to solve moral conflicts by appeal to what is essentially good for us. And even if this seems to be an enormous problem, given the strikingly metaphysical connotations of the word “human nature”, that almost invites objections from pragmatists and constructivists, one could read e.g. human rights as an attempt to establish a few guidelines that are connected to the human good as such.¹⁸

I.1.2. The Kantian Appeal to Autonomy

It is obviously true that there are similarities between the reflective endorsement theories and Kant’s moral philosophy. I will first present a brief, critical summary of what Korsgaard holds this tradition to consist in, and questions regarding how Kantian her “Appeal to Autonomy” is will be part of the discussion. Given that we primarily are concerned with

¹⁶ Cf. e.g. Taylor (1985a), p. 47.

¹⁷ Korsgaard (1996), pp. 60-61.

¹⁸ Although questions concerning the political state is beyond this thesis, it is evident that reflective endorsement as a meta-ethical tradition is consistent with different way of viewing political society. If a political theory, whether communitarian or liberal, is founded on the claim that certain rights have their justification in the fact that they are good for us as humans, then concerns such as human rights belong to this tradition.

Korsgaard's own reconstruction of Kant, the emphasis will not be on Kant's own texts, although comments will have to be made regarding the Korsgaard's Kantianism. Especially concerning the headline for the tradition, namely "Appeal to Autonomy."

The common ground between the Kantian Appeal to Autonomy and the former tradition is that they share the assumption that normativity is connected to the self-conception of *humanity* in particular. That is, the reasons we act in accordance with are our own. The two traditions are thus committed to the view that there may be differences between how the world is and how we cognise and understand it. This is exemplified by Korsgaard's own comment concerning an action's viciousness, namely that an action is vicious because we disapprove of it.¹⁹ As I said in the previous section, appeals that lean heavily on specifically human ways of cognising the world, ways that consequently are responsible for the way we divide the world into descriptive and normative phenomena, give human consciousness and rationality a primary role. Thus, both of these traditions contain some sort of separation between subject and object; there will be an epistemological gap between us as cognising beings and the world due to the fact that we cannot rely on the world to be represented in us as it is, because we are partly responsible for our own cognition of the world.

In the case of Charles Taylor, the large space given to this priority of subjective or interpretive aspects of normativity and agency is due to his explicit commitment to the experiential aspects of human agency. And among these aspects is the feeling of responsibility for one's action. Responsibility is in this context derived from an agent's sense of authorship for an action, which connects responsibility to autonomy. This argument is similar to Korsgaard's own argument for autonomy, as we shall see.

Korsgaard's theory is indebted to the works of Immanuel Kant, although modified in some areas. An important part of Kant's notion of morality is that it is universal. Korsgaard's points in relation to the above discussion are that autonomy is our source of obligation and thus normativity, and that we as human agents have *moral* obligations, by which she means obligations to humanity as such.²⁰ Korsgaard says that "...it will be no part of my argument ... to suggest either that *all* obligations are moral, or that obligations can never conflict".²¹ It is therefore fair to assume that morality is a special branch within normativity, and that morality is characterized by its generality in contrast to other phenomena that may be valued as particulars. We do for example quite frequently act in accordance with some value or

¹⁹ Korsgaard (1996), p. 50.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 91.

²¹ Ibid.

tradition that we believe gives us an obligation, but one that we would not claim others to be obligated by. So while morality is universalistic, normativity as such can be both universalistic and particularistic.

Korsgaard begins her argument with self-consciousness, which, as she says, indicates that human beings are *reflective*, and that we accordingly can think *about* things, including ourselves. Further, and true to the fundamentally practical emphasis of her lectures, she states that as reflective beings we need *reasons* in order to act. She combines reasons with reflection by saying that “the word ‘reason’ refers to a kind of reflective success”.²² This reflection, or the reflective structure of human consciousness is also for Korsgaard (as she says in a strikingly Hegelian manner) what explains *freedom*. Korsgaard is herself committed to Kant’s claim that “we cannot conceive of a reason which *consciously responds to a bidding from the outside* with respect to its judgments.”²³ So Korsgaard starts her own theory with freedom, which, we could say, is a fundamental characteristic of human reflectivity. It is therefore fair to assume that reasons for acting, reasons that are in some way compelling, are compelling because it is ourselves who are the authors of these reasons. This does at least seem to be the consequence of the connection between reflectivity and autonomy.

Freedom is in Korsgaard’s argument, like in Taylor’s, first and foremost established by the experience of our own sense of responsibility and authorship regarding the values and rules we act upon. For instance, she says, in discussing determinism and freedom, that “if predictions can warn us when our self-control is about to fail, then they are far more likely to increase that self-control than to diminish it”.²⁴ Without entering the discussion on free will and determinism, it is anyway obvious that Korsgaard treats this as a practical issue, and not a metaphysical one. She uses the term ‘autonomy’ correctly in this practical regard, because it suggests that what we act upon are incentives that are related to our own consciousness, and thus not phenomena that are alien to us, but part of our own willing and thinking. Hence, when we act autonomously, it is because we give ourselves reasons.

But on the other hand, the connection of freedom and reflectivity is also a transcendental determination of what it is like to be a thinking being. When we think about ourselves and what reasons we are to employ in order to execute a certain course of action, the idea is that our reflectivity – our ability to think on ourselves and think in terms of reasons – is connected to reasons that in *some* way is totally independent of any external causation. We could

²² Ibid. p. 93.

²³ Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 448; quoted from Korsgaard (1996), p. 94. My emphasis.

²⁴ Korsgaard (1996), p. 95.

rephrase this, and say that pure thought, which is pure insofar as it operates totally independent of empirical experience, in itself is the *possibility* of freedom, but it will not be *actually* free until it *can act* in accordance with the structures of pure reason and pure reason alone. And pure reason takes the form of the pure will, the ability to will *universally*, or to sanction only that which is universally valid in the form of a law or a universal reason. There is in other words no room for particularism: It is the lawgiving form and not the content of the maxim that ensures the universality and the morality of the maxim (i.e. that which is willed in the form of law).²⁵ Because the substantial content of reasons always have some particular element, it will be their pure structure that makes them universal, and we will consequently have a distinction between form and content. And this distinction is related to our autonomy. It is the form of the law and not the content, which in some sense will be derived from experience, which is related to our autonomy.

The next move that Korsgaard makes is to state that the universalization-criterion of the categorical imperative, i.e. to act only on maxims you can will to be laws, is distinct from the Moral Law, which according to Korsgaard is the law that tells us “to act only on maxims that all rational beings could agree to act on together in a workable cooperative system”,²⁶ i.e. the Kingdom of Ends. She explains the difference between the Moral Law and the categorical imperative with the claim that the latter expresses the law of the free will (compare the above account of pure reason and form) while no such connection has been established regarding the former. Thus, she opens up for introducing *content* in the Moral Law, while the categorical imperative is connected to reflectivity and freedom. The consequence of this is that it is possible to claim that one can be bound by the categorical imperative, and not be bound by the Moral Law.²⁷ What is needed is once again the perspective of the agent, who must connect herself to the Kingdom of Ends. In other words, to be a Citizen of the Kingdom of Ends is a matter of identity. But even though the categorical imperative may be binding upon moral maxims, given that these are constructed out of the agent’s own self-conception, it is perfectly contingent whether the rules of agency constructed by the agent are consistent with the Moral Law. To solve this, Korsgaard proposes another argument:

1. That which gives us reasons for acting is called practical identity.
2. Human beings are reflective animals who need reasons to act and live.

²⁵ Cf. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 5:29 (AK). p. 26.

²⁶ Korsgaard (1996), p. 99.

²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 100.

3. There is a necessary connection between being human and having a practical identity.
4. Unless people are committed to some conception of their practical identity, they have no reasons at all.
5. To remove practical identity is tantamount to removing our humanity, where “being human” is understood as being reflective.
6. Thus, the reason for conforming to one’s practical identity is not due to the particular content of one’s practical identity, but to one’s humanity.
7. Consequently, if one values one’s humanity, one *should* therefore treat one’s humanity as a practical, normative form of identity.²⁸

Korsgaard continues by saying that according to the Enlightenment, to value oneself as a human being was to have a moral identity. As a moral identity, this identity is certainly consistent with her focus on universality. The final step thus involves the law that one should *value* the humanity of others in the same way that one values one’s own humanity. It thus corresponds to the content of the Moral Law, that tells us to act in accordance with maxims that is consistent with a workable cooperative system.

But the focus is here on the lone individual, who values *her own* humanity, which means that one does not thereby *necessarily* respect the humanity of others. And besides, even though we may grant that the argument gives us *reasons* to value one’s humanity (for that is what it is supposed to show), the definition of humanity in the argument is a very narrow one, one that Korsgaard herself extends when she continues her treatment of the substantial content of practical identity.

Apart from the close inter-relation of morality and reflectivity that her argument suggests, there is also the not uncommon objection that theory of the type Korsgaard advocates is too focused on the individual, so that they for example exclude deep affiliation with others.²⁹ And based on what we have seen so far, objections of this type are not completely unjustified. One of the main goals of Korsgaard’s argument is that it enables her to claim that an agent can see herself as a Citizen of the Kingdom of Ends, and thus act in accordance with the Moral Law on entirely autonomous grounds. This means that the content of the Moral Law, i.e. to respect and value humanity as a practical principle, is derived a priori; that one can be a moral being without having to include others or otherness in the *argument*. While we may grant that Korsgaard’s conception of autonomy is fundamentally different from Kant’s, they do share

²⁸ This is a reconstruction of the argument that Korsgaard gives in Korsgaard (1996), pp. 120-121.

²⁹ Korsgaard (1996), p. 126.

some similarities in method. Practical identity as moral identity is based on the structure and not the content of that structure: The argument that Korsgaard proposes for practical identity as a moral identity is at the moment made without any inclusion of experience, which makes the structure something conceived in itself and abstracted from all content. And it is perfectly possible to have other forms of practical identities as well, who accordingly only contingently will be consistent with the Moral Law. But that which must be kept in mind is that the identity Korsgaard establishes is one *source of normativity*, because the reasons for acting morally are supposed to be inherent in the argument presented above.

Korsgaard is herself aware of the fact that different practical identities give rise to norms that frequently may be in conflict with morality. This is then supposed to explain the relevant difference between morality and normativity in general. One can have a practical identity that in virtue of its content is in conflict with morality – her example is the identity of an assassin. The other, more important possibility is *an identity that by its own nature is consistent with morality*, but that occasionally comes into conflict with morality, such as personal relationships.³⁰ The first thing that needs to be stated is that this sentence suggests that we have *different* and sometimes competing identities. And given that practical identity as moral identity had its source of normativity in our abstractly conceived humanity, it would seem reasonable to assume that other practical identities are separated from the moral one in virtue of *different sources of normativity*.

For Korsgaard, conflicts between obligations generated by the Moral Law and e.g. personal relationships are particularly difficult because both obligations are *unconditional*. Now, this claim represents something of a challenge regarding how it should be understood. It is sufficient to note that reasons proposed with regard to the Moral Law are of the kind that immediately connects them to the presented notion of freedom: Insofar as reasons are in accordance with the Moral Law, they must be formulated as universal laws and hence correspond to our reflective, autonomous nature, and they must include the formal demand regarding humanity. To take the step out into morality will mean that we should respect the non-contingent nature of others, which is their autonomy. In other words, they should be respected as *humans*, as autonomous, reflective beings. And this could be shown to be unconditional, e.g. on account of the value attached to *one's own* humanity: “In so far as the importance of having a practical identity comes from the value of humanity, it does not make sense to identify oneself in ways that are inconsistent with humanity.”³¹ The demand for

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

consistency is directly related to our own nature, which makes the demand unconditional. This should also mean, by force of comparison, that other “contingent” identities must be ascribed the same non-contingent status if they can have the same unconditional role, and that personal relationships therefore *necessarily* are sources of intractable conflicts with morality insofar as we could find ourselves confronted with reasons from both sources at the same time.

While the assertion that morality often gets into conflict with personal relationships etc. was sound, the result of treating them as structurally similar proved rather counter-intuitive: Korsgaard states that “Personal relationships, ... as a form of practical identity, are independent *sources* of obligation, like moral obligations in their *structure* but not completely subsumed under them”.³² What she means by this, is that personal relationships are similar to morality in that they involve reciprocal commitments that fundamentally involves taking one another’s views and interests into account, which makes it similar to Korsgaard’s interpretation of the Kingdom of Ends, but only smaller in scale. The lovers constitute a Kingdom of Two between themselves. Thus, the relationship will in fact be *constitutive* of one’s practical identity.³³ And this means that one can have membership in several Kingdoms, so to speak, and that these in turn give rise to conflicting obligations.

But it is not exactly the same thing to be a member of the Kingdom of Ends and the Kingdom of Two, at least not structurally. There will still be fundamental differences between the pure reflectivity involved in the former version of practical identity, and the emphasis on social interaction in the latter.³⁴ And to claim that they are structurally similar does not only include the specific similarities between the different Kingdoms, but also the foundations of the argument. As we shall see in the next section, Korsgaard will attempt to claim a structural similarity between interaction and reflectivity to defend her claim regarding the structural similarities of the different types of practical identities.

I have attempted to present Korsgaard in a Kantian way and also tried to open up the possibility of having the Moral Law provide content to the categorical imperative. But the reason why Korsgaard can see such strong resemblance between the different Kingdoms is that she interprets the Kingdom of Ends as a “workable cooperative system”. Given that Kant

³² Ibid. p. 128. My emphasis on “structure”.

³³ Ibid. p. 127.

³⁴ Although the emphasis here primarily is on rationality and interaction, there is nothing in this that suggests that emotions are excluded from Korsgaard’s account. Emotions are a central part of reasons, especially regarding the connection between reasons and motivation. The reason for excluding an explicit treatment of emotions is that it would introduce too many issues, but I still hold emotions to play a role in our agency, although a tacit one in this thesis. On Korsgaard’s inclusion of emotions, see e.g. Korsgaard (1996), p. 151 n. 26.

held his different formulations of the categorical imperative to be consistent with each other, I believe that this statement involves pulling Kant too far in the direction of contractualism. What I mean by this statement is that the metaphor of a social contract is part of the determinations of morality, and that it thus works as a silent practical category that nevertheless needs to be assumed *by the individual* as a moral agent. The formulation has so strong empirical connotations that it depends too much upon experientially derived knowledge to fit well with the attempt to derive it transcendently, at least given the comparison with personal relationships. If the two are similar, then it is in virtue of their pure structure, and not of their content.

Korsgaard's argument, as reconstructed above, does not really give the agent sufficient content to be comparable to the amount of information one has to deal with in order to establish a Kingdom of Two. The content of her argument is highly abstract; it concerns humanity as such, and some very few characteristics in accordance with her understanding of the relevant aspects of humanity (i.e. reflectivity and reasons). And the content cannot be much more specific than this if one wants to keep the notion of morality as universalistic. There will of course be specified maxims that are consistent with this abstract condition, but the richness of the concerns involved in constituting personal relationships and the identity involved therein are products of experience and interaction, and cannot solely be derived from reflection. This means that even though one often may find a structure within relationships that agrees with Korsgaard's description, the structure will still reveal an instability and changeable nature that the abstract and universal content derived from the Moral Law lacks. And this will make the law-like character of personal relationships more problematic. This being said, I am of course aware of the fact that Korsgaard speaks of the practical identities of the agents who have relationships, and not the relationships themselves. It is the comparison of the different practical identities a person might have that allows structural similarities to be found. What I argue is that these structural similarities are weaker than Korsgaard claims them to be, or at least that one of the two candidates for practical identity needs to be reformulated if one is to claim that they share a structural similarity. This objection is attempted answered by Korsgaard when she seeks to extend the domain of reasons and reflectivity.

I.1.3. Extending the Domain of Reflectivity

Korsgaard does attempt to explain why we should be committed to valuing the humanity of others if we value our own humanity. She proceeds with this argument by dwelling on the main aspect of practical identity, namely its capacity for giving human beings reasons to act. Reasons are in the history of philosophy often conceived as private, and they thus correspond to a view on the individual as a closed unit, who mainly takes her own interest into account. This view is indebted to epistemology, to the view that the agent has a privileged access to her own desires and ends. The practical consequence of this view is that insofar as it is the agent's own desires that are expressed in action, it necessarily expresses the intentions and desires of *that* particular agent, and only contingently the interests of others. This view is often supplied with the claim that there are no genuinely benevolent actions, because the actions can always be reduced to the subject's own private reasons. On such an account, and on the account offered by Korsgaard this far, what is lacking is *intersubjectivity*, an account of how individuals and society are based on and constructed by reciprocal, communal inter-relations.

Korsgaard's attempt to answer this challenge is to claim that reasons are public, and not private.³⁵ This public character is created by the reciprocal sharing of reasons by individuals, and this corresponds to our fundamentally *social nature*. This is obviously in conflict with the theories that state that consciousness is private and that the reasons derived from our own reflectivity are of the same nature, and therefore only arbitrarily will correspond to the reasons of others. That is, with the possible exception of Kant's version of a pure will, which in practical respects will be corresponding to the will of others insofar as they are rational beings, but who does not take them into account as *persons*,³⁶ and does not involve any consideration of "public reasons" (the meaning of this term will be explained shortly). Because subjectivist accounts of reasons often fail in attempts to deduce any intersubjectivity without severely limiting our conception of what e.g. deep social interaction consists in, Korsgaard draws upon Wittgenstein, and his account of the impossibility of a private language.

A private language refers to something impossible to communicate. The examples that leaps to mind given the present discussion would be some phenomena located in the

³⁵ Korsgaard (1996), p. 135.

³⁶ Readers of Hegel are undoubtedly aware of the fact that he uses the term *Persön* in a restricted sense in his *Philosophy of Right*. The *Persön* is the subject who self-consciously sees herself as bearer of abstract rights (see *PR*, § 35 Z). I use the term in the contemporary sense in this chapter, where "person" denotes a determinate individual with all the characteristics we usually ascribe our fellow human beings.

consciousness of a particular individual; Korsgaard's example is a sensation that one cannot describe in other ways than through giving it a name that does not exist in any language. So one gives the sensation a name that allows one to refer to it whenever it is experienced, a name that is limited to one's own knowledge, something that will make the sensation utterly incommunicable.

Wittgenstein argued that there couldn't be any such language. One way to understand this argument goes like this: meaning is relational because it is a *normative* notion: to say X means Y is to say that one ought to take X for Y; and this requires two, a legislator to lay it down that one must take X for Y, and a citizen to obey. And the relation between these two is not merely causal because the citizen can disobey: there must be a possibility of misunderstanding or mistake. Since it is a relation, in which one gives a law to another, it takes two to make a meaning.³⁷

In the same way, Korsgaard claims that it takes two to make a reason. Reasons share the same characteristics as language does, because reasons are normative or prescriptive in a similar manner. The two parts are, as in Korsgaard's arguments for practical identity, the two sides of the reflective self, or self-consciousness. There is the lawgiving reflective self, and the acting self. It is not entirely clear how Korsgaard sees the separation of these two sides of the self, but they constitute the relation involved in the construction of reasons. As normative relation, the connection between the two sides of reflective consciousness will not be of a causal nature: The acting self may in different circumstances disobey or misinterpret the reflective, law-giving part of the self. Thus, I take this self-relation to exhibit the degree of transparency one's own practical identity shows, so that if an agent seeks to act in one way rather than another, one might in such circumstances act in ways that is in conflict with reasons one normally acted in accordance with. One e.g. fails to see them as relevant reasons, but would normally have seen them as relevant.³⁸

In order to extend the scope of reasons, Korsgaard will also have to give external reasons (i.e. reasons given to the agent by other agents, and not by the reflective self) the same status as the reasons one imposes on oneself. One part of this argument involves the attempt to show that egoism, in this context the refusal to take the demands of others into consideration, is absurd. "In hearing your words as *words*, I acknowledge that you are *someone*. In acknowledging that I can hear them, I acknowledge that I am *someone*."³⁹ This means that the

³⁷ Ibid. p. 137.

³⁸ This is a problematic statement. I will comment on Korsgaard's account of reasons and the dual structure of the self – the legislative and the acting self – in section I.2.1.

³⁹ Ibid. p. 143.

other as a provider of reasons – a *someone* – is taken into account, and the egoist, who will refuse to make this comparison and identification with the other, will in this respect be a “practical solipsist”. And this is an absurdity, because one can “no more take the reasons of another to be mere pressure than ... take the language of another to be mere noise”.⁴⁰

The second part of the argument extends the last point into the claim that the relationship to oneself and the relationship one has to others only are separated by a matter of degree. If one accepts the account given on the reflectivity of consciousness, one will accept that one’s access to one’s own consciousness is similar to the access one has to the consciousness of others. As stated, it is a matter of degree, and not of kind. And as a result, we can see that whether we in fact do obey the demands of others will either depend on our interpretation (i.e. regarding whether we in fact act in accordance with their demand, as they understand them), or on whether these demands are consistent with our practical identity. Ultimately, the most important concern will be whether any demand will conform to the value attached to our own humanity, and concerning us, the humanity of others.

I.2. Korsgaard and Hegel

Christine Korsgaard tells us that morality and relationships (i.e. those we perceive as significant or value – significant others) are both sources of obligation, both targets for our positive normative evaluations, and thus corresponding to what we as persons value. And our practical identities, the common notion for both of these values, are constructed through our participation in social interaction, but at the same time the content relevant to us as moral beings is *deducible* from our own reflectivity: In virtue of our reflective (self-conscious) capacity to see ourselves as ‘Citizens of the Kingdom of Ends’, both our capacity to be members of the community of rational beings and our relations to significant others are tied together with our practical identities, meaning that the relations are sources of value, and thus content to our otherwise formal obligations. What separates the two is according to Korsgaard the generality of the reasons for action that an obligation towards e.g. a lover expresses if compared to a maxim in accordance with the structure of the categorical imperative and content of the Moral Law. While the beloved is a *particular* to whom the acting subject ascribes particular value, a moral maxim is a rule that governs agency, and it is as such

⁴⁰ Ibid.

general or *universal*. There is, in other words, no room for particularity in this sense within a genuinely moral agent.

Korsgaard's account does accordingly endeavour to explain both normativity as a general facet of our agency, and morality as a special branch of normativity. An important factor in her lectures is the fact that both of these ways of conduct is firmly situated in individuals' consciousnesses. But it is not clear what kind of a status she ascribes the Citizen of the Kingdom of Ends. Insofar as this is a relation, it is a self-relation. The agent relates to herself as a rational being, and reflecting upon whether an action may be allowed if universalised and given the same ontological status as scientific laws will provide the moral status of that action, or the moral status of the principle according to which that action will be executed (i.e. the maxim). This means that it will be the rule or principle (the maxim) that determines the moral status of a certain action, not the object or content of that action. But this is mostly Korsgaard's way of answering the charges that often has been raised against Kant's categorical imperative, namely the objection that the categorical imperative only amounts to the demand of being consistent.⁴¹ This objection criticizes the view of the categorical imperative as provider of morality, and the objection points to the claim that content needs to be included in a theory of morality if the categorical imperatives is to be valid as a moral rule. Korsgaard's answer consists in, as we have seen, to introduce a type of contractual concern regarding humanity into the reflection of the individual. That is, the prime reason in the practical identity of the moral agent is that the maxims she acts upon should be consistent with a workable cooperative environment.

We have, in other words, two competing and very different ways of ascribing normative value, or two sources of normativity, and together they imply two different levels: The first is normativity built into the (1) the universal disposition we all have as rational beings, where we can conceive ourselves as Citizens of the Kingdom of Ends, and where our maxims concern all rational beings, at the very least. (2) But we also have practical identities of a more contingent, experientially derived character, such as personal relationships, and they imply singular significant others. What is implied by (1) and (2), i.e. all rational beings or singular others, are *targets*, or what we may call the domain of normative relevance, while (1) and (2) are the sources of normativity.

According to Korsgaard, (1) and (2) correspond to two sides of the acting subject's identity, respectively the identity of being human among other humans and being e.g. a lover.

⁴¹ Cf. Williams (1997), p. 122. This refers to Fichte's criticism of the categorical imperative, but it has been constantly repeated in different versions.

And because both have the moment of obligation, as well as being valued due to their relatedness to the agents' identity (either as lover, a role, or Citizen of the Kingdom of Ends), the agent is initially described as a *possibly* amoral agent, because the strength of the bond in a relationship may obligate the agent to act in accordance with the assumed well-being of the beloved, rather than according to moral obligations.⁴² There is "no general reason why the laws of the Kingdom of Ends should have more force than the laws of a Kingdom of Two. I believe this is why personal relationships can be the source of some particularly intractable conflicts with morality."⁴³ If we, on the other hand, held separate the two *sources* of normativity, but claimed that they were both related to *the* identity of the human being, then this would give us two very different sets of reasons for acting in one way rather than another. I will argue that as long as the two sources of normativity are seen as two sources connected to one practical identity, as opposed to two sources with two identities then we will have a smaller conflict regarding what to decide. The *individual* self will in this case relate to two different sets of reasons. Practical identity as a holistic concept that includes several different concerns will accordingly be the ground that enables us to compare the different claims. This makes the issue, depending on context, a hard decision and one where one might take the wrong choice, but where a choice nevertheless will be an option.

Axel Honneth, through the young Hegel, gives a different account of the status of personal relationships, one that seems to place the different obligations within a unitary conception of the individual.

Although this means that love will always have an element of moral particularism to it, Hegel was nonetheless right to discern within it the structural core of all ethical life. For it is only this symbiotically nourished bond, which emerges through mutually desired demarcation, that produces the degree of *basic individual self-confidence* indispensable for autonomous participation in public life.⁴⁴

Both of these accounts can be treated within Korsgaard's notion of practical identity. In Korsgaard's argument, personal relationships are separate sources of normativity that differ from morality on substantial and not structural grounds.. Although Korsgaard claims that personal relationships are generally consistent with morality, there seems to be a tension in

⁴² This is where I start to employ the distinction between the right and the good previously noted.

⁴³ Korsgaard (1996), p. 128.

⁴⁴ Honneth (1995), p. 107. My emphasis.

her view on this matter.⁴⁵ In the young Hegel, on the other hand, it seems that personal relationships and moral agency goes hand in hand, because deep relationships with others is seen as a condition for moral agency. There is no similarity between Honneth's reconstruction of the young Hegel and the Kantian part of Korsgaard's analysis. It is more similar to what Korsgaard might share with the Reflective Endorsement tradition, in that normativity is connected to what one reflectively regards as one's own good, which frequently are values that include other people.⁴⁶

The structural similarities that are supposed to explain the different types of normativity combined with the strong emphasis on the vital importance of these different self-descriptions give us a picture of the agent as a person that will be fundamentally unable to appeal to any instance in deciding whether one course of action is better than another (unless the choice is between e.g. right and wrong, and cognised by the agent as right and wrong). The type reasons generated from both traditions seems both worth dying for. I shall make this clearer:

At the moment, we might be inclined to say that an agent's practical identity simultaneously is directed toward what the agent perceives as good (for herself and the significant others), and towards what is perceived as morally right. There are three possible implications of this, two of which can lead to conflict, and possibly immoral (and not simply amoral) agency: (i) The agent may decide as a Citizen of the Kingdom of Ends, where we presently may agree with Korsgaard and Kant that we act morally or in the *right* way; (ii) there is the possibility of a perceived amalgam of the right and the good; (iii) the good may overrule the right, e.g. a decision based on the obligations derived from the Kingdom of Two. Because all of these ways of conduct draw upon the agent's practical identity, the content inherent in the notions of the good and the right may in fact, as Korsgaard allows, restrict themselves to a Kingdom narrower than the universal Kingdom of Ends. An agent can accordingly form a coherent conception of herself as a good agent in a right course of action, even if this means excluding or perhaps violating the rights of others, and thus effectively and righteously (from the perspective of the agent) deny the extension of Kant's categorical imperative. We could, for example, say this of someone who maintained that e.g. race, ethnicity or gender defined the extension of the notion of a Kingdom of Ends. This would mean that this person denied the humanity of a particular group of others by seeing some description as essential beyond all other characteristics of a human being. The third case is

⁴⁵ Korsgaard does also have formulations that points to a unitary conception of practical identity. For example: "the conception of one's identity in question here... is better understood as a description under which you find your life worth living and your actions to be worth undertaking." Korsgaard (1996), p. 101.

⁴⁶ On this connection, see Korsgaard (1996), p. 89.

only separate from the last example in that the agent in that scenario acknowledges the particularity of her action, and with respect to the rightness of morality, sees the action as *wrong* (though not necessarily evil).

What we in other words are trying to get a clearer grasp on is the way in which one's obligations might be in conflict with each other. As stated, the obligations generated by one's status as both Citizen of the Kingdom of Ends and as e.g. a lover are unconditional. There are in other words particular concerns with normative force that disqualifies other concerns the agent might have. And there are two types of concerns that have this status, and if they collide, there is no way of telling which path the agent will choose, because there are no reasons the agent can appeal to that will have a higher place of priority in the agent's self-conception. Given Korsgaard's theory, it would seem that we would have to rule out the second (ii) possibility in the account, and problem of decision leads to an intractable conflict between (i) and (iii). The history of philosophy does of course provide answers on how to solve such conflicts, and a likely place to look for them would probably be utilitarianism. But a significant emphasis in Korsgaard's account is that the reasons she speaks of are necessarily connected to the practical identity of the agent, which in turn is supposed to explain what it is that essentially motivates the agent in question. In this context it is fair to claim that reasons that include the condition of acting in a way that promotes the over-all well-being of the related parts will be seen as empty abstractions for an agent whose motivations also includes the concern for the well-being of one's beloved. Phenomenologically there does not seem to be any reasons that really can compete with this. Yet Korsgaard proposes the reasons inherent in one's self-conception as a Citizen of the Kingdom of Ends as a reason that is supposed to have the same, or a similar motivational force. As we recall, this latter self-conception is motivated by the *sanction* or threat of denying one's own humanity if one commits immoral actions. I take the description of the conflict between these two as "intractable" to be evidence of the assumption that both of the concerns motivate agents in similar degree.

Hence, the problem lies not in the possibility of this type of conflict within the agent, but with Korsgaard's description of it. As stated earlier, the fact that Korsgaard describes this scenario as one where the agent is deprived of reasons for acting morally makes the conflict *necessarily* intractable. I believe that this is wrong. I believe that it is possible to claim that the practical identity of an agent will give the agent reasons, reasons that at least make the *relevant distinction* between the right and the good explicit for the agent, although this in itself might be insufficient in order to describe the eventual outcome of the considerations of the agent. I will return to this discussion later in the thesis.

There is also another way of reading what Korsgaard says regarding this conflict, and this reading depends on the assumption that one's role obligations and one's humanity constitute different identities. If these are identities that are held separate, then they correspond to different *sources* of normativity. These sources are the only thing that would enable us to conceptually distinguish them, because the self does not in itself entail this split. The consequence of this reading is that conflicts between different sources of normativity will be an uncommon event. Most of the time there will not be conflict, because this view suggests that there is a direct correspondence between one particular identity and its source of normativity. Hence, one will not make use of considerations or reasons from other practical identities that one might have, because they will essentially be incommensurable with the source in question. But if two sources of normativity comes into play simultaneously, then there is no way of deciding what reasons one should appeal to, for how do we compare and evaluate incommensurables?⁴⁷

On the other hand, Hegelians will deny both of these suggested distinctions, and claim a more constructive role for personal relationships and otherness in general. With Honneth's statement in mind, we might say that Hegel's philosophy, by placing personal relationships within *Sittlichkeit*, represents an attempt to sublimate the distinction between right and good we find maintained within Korsgaard's theory. For Hegel, there is no *systematic* discrepancy that by *necessity* will give rise to conflicts between the *role* as a member of a family or a citizen in a particular state and moral performance.⁴⁸ Conceived properly, it is the contextuality surrounding the person, the normativity embedded in the framework of a community or society, which makes moral performance, or the Moral Law, possible in the first place. Another way to put this would be to claim that the conditions for moral performance and the good only are attainable through experience. The individuality of a person is mediated through the social interactions of this person, and this is what constructs, in a manner of speaking, the person's disposition as a moral person.⁴⁹ One is an individual, where 'individual' implies autonomy, capacity for moral judgments, and responsibility, insofar as one is a member of some community or society.

⁴⁷ Charles Taylor could be taken into the account at this point, given that his notion of *strong evaluation* denotes human beings' capability to evaluate incommensurables based on their qualitative import. But this would also mean that he would have to unify the self, and his account would therefore also involve a redefining of the self compared to the particular reading of Korsgaard proposed in this paragraph. To discuss Taylor properly is beyond this thesis, so I take it to be sufficient to mention him as a relevant theorist.

⁴⁸ We have accordingly already a description of the self that seems to point in the direction of an individual that can separate between a self-conception as a human being and a particular role that generates reasons and values. At the moment though, Hegel is just presented as a philosopher with a one-sided focus on the roles.

⁴⁹ I use the term "person" in the same sense as previously described.

What separates Hegel from Korsgaard is that the three possible courses of action seem to be reduced to only one (ii). If we were to draw a distinction between the three implications above, we would say that the first and third possibilities presupposes a distinction thought to represent a conflict of motivations in the agent. It is this conflict that *expresses* the threat to morality that Korsgaard points out, and it thus also points to its solution. In accordance with our previous statement, the average person has (at least) two *targets* of normativity, both of which correspond to their own source. The first target is personal attachments, corresponding to a particularistic concern, while the second is morality, and it corresponds to a universalistic concern. What Hegel does, at least seemingly, is to collapse the distinction between particular and universal, or the distinction between the two targets of normativity, and he will thus effectively reduce the right to the good, given that the good is the primary concern and strongest motivation. What we have here is in other words an account that locates these different sources of normativity not within a dual or multiple conception of the self, but within a unitary self. Because Hegel's theory is supposed to provide content to morality (cf. his objections to the formalism of Kant's categorical imperative), and this is attainable within a society only, a society which in turn is responsible for the individuality of the moral person, the morality of this person is related to the particular context of the society. In other words, what an agent finds valuable is a result of the agent's interaction with the world, and the specific means the agent employs in order to differentiate and endorse different values (which includes other values), are means that are internalised through a particular upbringing and education in a particular society. Thus, the distinction between individual and the whole will be sublated; the individual *is qua individual* in virtue of the whole. This means that there will be no possibilities of being good except those provided in the society, and hence that the Hegelian counterpart to practical identity can be seen as a direct opposite to Kant's categorical imperative, because it will only contingently be true that agents act in accordance with it. In other words, what is good is described in this manner from a substantive point of view, meaning that the predicate "good" is something ascribed to objects and events from a place partially independent of the individual, namely the community or intersubjectivity.

That the categorical imperative is violated from such a perspective may only be determined as objectively true provided that there exists such values as those held by fascism or similar ideologies. But it could be that Hegel lack the means necessary to include the sort of conflict within the agent that is necessary in order to be able to distinguish between what is good for oneself and what is good for others. The conflict can also be described as a conflict between what is valuable for a certain group of people and what is morally right. The

Hegelian, to a seemingly greater extent than Korsgaard, seems vulnerable to the objection that what is good for a group may lead to actions that will violate the rights of others, provided that these others are seen as less significant than the people with whom the agent identifies.⁵⁰ This objection seems strengthened if we look at the strong interpretive sides of Hegel's philosophy, where interpretation essentially is understood holistic, i.e. each individual is interpreted and understood in relation to and in virtue of the whole.⁵¹

I.2.1. On the Transcendental Account of Intersubjectivity

We shall now take another look at the way the self has been described up until this point, and how the self and otherness might interrelate in Korsgaard's lectures. This section will start with a short discussion on whether Korsgaard's view on the self should be described as either transcendental or existential. And does her argument allow any combination of these two characterizations? This will in turn be attempted exhibited with a short discussion of her Kantian conception of autonomy. The third part of this section concerns the combination of the self and her notion of public reasons. At the end of this section I suggest an alternative reading of Korsgaard's notion of public reasons and their relation to the self.

Korsgaard's use of the term "reflective" points to the structure of our self-consciousness. In her own terms, the "reflective structure of the mind is a source of 'self-consciousness' because it forces us to have a conception of ourselves. As Kant argued, this is a fact about what it is like to be reflectively conscious".⁵² To put this in another way, one might say that when a person is reflectively engaged in determining whether e.g. one course of action is better or morally right compared to another possible course, the agent is self-relating. The two complementary parts of this reflectivity are self-consciousness and the content of consciousness. Formulated as a sentence from a first person point of view, the following would describe this self-relation: "I, because I am this particular person, would like to do x. "I" is the abstract instance, the moment that unites both contextual content and the description the person gives herself ("this particular person"). The "I" combined with a person's description of herself is what constitutes her practical identity, which is a self-conception that

⁵⁰ This objection is inspired by Arne Johan Vetlesen. See Vetlesen (1998), pp. 194-6. Michael Hardimon has noted a similar problem in his discussion of "role obligations". See Hardimon (1994b), pp. 343-44.

⁵¹ Cf. deVries (1988), p. 16. This is deVries' sense of "interpretation".

⁵² Korsgaard (1996), p. 100.

corresponds to the reflective structure of self-consciousness. Given motion and an empirical setting, these features of the person combined with the possible courses of action (also determined by the person's practical identity), will result in a singular and intelligible action. Given the separation of content and structure or form, where the latter is the reflective self or the 'I', it will not make sense to criticize Korsgaard on the basis of differentiating various identities that cannot be unified. They are all unified in virtue of self-consciousness, and the talk of "different identities" must therefore be a metaphor that denotes different concerns in the individual, not genuinely different selves.⁵³

The reflective structure of consciousness is self-consciousness inferred from human beings' ability to have mental content and make rational judgments. It is more correct to describe this self-consciousness as a structure that is exhibited or is logically necessary in virtue of the fact that we have a practical identity. In other words, it implies the individual's ability to think about itself and to have mental content. If interpreted in this way, Korsgaard can claim to present a transcendental argument. Thomas Nagel has in addition labelled Korsgaard's notion of practical identity existential, a description Korsgaard herself agrees with. Nagel also holds this existential aspect of Korsgaard's theory to be unKantian, something Korsgaard disagrees with.⁵⁴ If Korsgaard's argument for practical identity aims to exhibit the structures inherent in the way we think, i.e. that we think in terms of reasons, it is in virtue of this structure that practical identity is a transcendental concept. If this is true, then it is not existential, because this would imply that she elevated the concept of practical identity to an explicit *conception* for every rational being. In other words, some essential parts of the content would in addition to the structure be part of the ontology of human beings. As denoting the structure of our practical conception of ourselves, as the structure of what we value, our practical identity is something beyond what we can choose; it is rather the means we employ in order to choose.⁵⁵ To take this away would be to strip away our humanity understood as being reflective, and this obviously not plausible. But this explains why it is strange to call this determination of practical identity existential: If it is a structure, then we partially employ the content of this structure when we interact with the world, and this content is at the level of the 'given'. In Korsgaard's terms, it is the "description under which you find your life worth living"⁵⁶ that defines the practical identity as such, and that is accordingly the place we should examine if we want to make sense of our obligations to other people, and our

⁵³ This will of course depend on the way the 'I' is interpreted, as we have seen.

⁵⁴ Nagel (1996), p. 203. Cf. Korsgaard (1996), p. 237.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 120-121.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 101.

normative evaluations in general. But to include content as part of the structure that the concept of practical identity refers to is in any Kantian inspired theory a tantamount to including contingent facts. Nagel would therefore be right in claiming that the alleged existential aspect is unKantian. Recall that Korsgaard holds that the only non-contingent content of practical identity is the inherent humanity, and this does not include any further determinations regarding what this humanity consists in, except the descriptions she takes to be inherent in the term itself (reflective being with some practical identity). Thus, the existential claim that to remove practical identity will be tantamount to removing one's humanity is in fact tautological, even though Korsgaard seeks to lead us in the direction of our own substantial self-interpretations as persons.

If Korsgaard's argument is as formalistic as we have suggested, then it would seem that she gives experience an important role in the account of what reasons the practical identity of an agent contains. First, Korsgaard uses a transcendental argument to prove that practical identity is a necessary condition for human agency and it is consequently necessary for normativity as well.⁵⁷ But she also says that normativity is built right into the *role* a human being finds herself in.⁵⁸ This implies nothing except that practical identity is the necessary condition for having roles in general. And it is the description of these roles that in fact provides the normativity, which means that the roles are the *sources of normativity* insofar as we voluntarily endorse them. The prescriptive or normative part of practical identity will thus enter the scenario *through* the adoption of a particular practical identity, whether this is the practical identity the Citizen of the Kingdom of Ends, or e.g. a lover. *If* we could grant that the normativity ascribed to our own humanity was a part of the ontological description of practical identity, and that this worked roughly in the way Korsgaard claims, then she would have two very different levels of normativity in her theory, and accordingly she would have the means she needed in order to claim that there would be *reasons* given as part of a *metaphysical* description of practical identity (read: existentialism) that would enable any agent to at least have the *possibility* to separate between morality as ontologically founded in ourselves and *normativity* attached to subjective, contingent, and culturally variable phenomena and practices. I do not see that this is possible, given Korsgaard's claim regarding the "workable cooperative environment." With that formulation, she reduces both types of normativity, as content-laden, to experience. Hence it seems that two moments – empirical experience and a priori conditions – are interacting in this theory; that practical identity itself

⁵⁷ Korsgaard (1996), pp. 120-125.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p. 101.

is conditioned by experience, which in any case will explain the particular direction given by an agent's practical identity. But is it not true that we find a relevant difference between the types of normativity Korsgaard herself proposes? Does not the transcendental account give us the conceptual tools needed in order to separate universal and particular types of normativity?

It is important to remember that transcendental arguments by no means exclude experience from the theory. On the contrary, categories of a valid transcendental argument should be present in any experience. But this means that the categories involved in such an argument are unalterable with regard to their form. If there is any relevant difference between e.g. morality and inclination (personal relationships could be interpreted as founded on inclination, cf. Kant's infamous account of Marriage⁵⁹) one could accordingly separate between the two on a structural basis. Korsgaard would in that case have full access to the same means Kant had when he separated hypothetical from categorical imperatives. Personal relationships would in other words not be the problem for morality that it is in Korsgaard's theory. In those cases where there might be conflicts with morality, these conflicts would not be intractable, because any case where the agent acted on inclination rather than on duty would be a description of *akrasia*, or weakness of will. There would be reasons to do otherwise, and that fact captures the conflict within the agent when the agent has to choose between care and morality, as these are presented here. In Korsgaard's theory, on the other hand, a bigger problem arises, because she allows the possibility that the agent is deprived of good reasons for acting morally and not particularly. In other words, we can either distinguish moral performance from other types of agency in virtue of the universality of morals, which is derived from the specific *structure* of moral obligations, or we can claim that both moral obligations and other reasons are contained in our practical identity as different substantial reasons to act in one way or the other. The latter possibility is problematic as a "*Kantian Appeal to Autonomy*":

Kant's view, ... was that ... practical categories would undermine the autonomy of the will, since categories which are found in theoretical reason are simply the logical forms of judgment synthesized with a form of sensibility (time). Since the categories are thus dependent on experience, to argue for practical categories would make the will dependent on forms of experience and thus not autonomous. The will must be formal, on Kantian terms, if it is to retain its autonomy.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ *Metaphysics of Morals*, § 24, 6:277 (AK), pp. 61-2.

⁶⁰ Pinkard (1986), p. 214.

Given the Kantian framework of Korsgaard's lectures, she ends up with a very unclear notion of autonomy, because she seeks to keep Kant's point that autonomy consists of not having genuinely external or *other objects* interfering in individual decision-making, while simultaneously wanting to keep concerns of a posteriori status on the very same level. For Kant, this would be a contradiction. One especially problematic notion in Korsgaard's account is her notion of "public reasons".

Korsgaard's analysis raises some issues regarding how the reflective self's relation to otherness. It concerns the relation between practical identity and public reasons. I understand Korsgaard's discussion of public reasons to be an attempt to mediate between reasons that are strictly subjective – who only belong in a human being's private consciousness – and reasons that on the other hand are strictly external, or that do not have the individual's consciousness as its place of origin, and that accordingly remains alien and may be in conflict with individual autonomy. The public reasons are on the one hand directly related to a particular individual's practical identity, and insofar as they can be recognized as reasons, they must be of an intersubjective nature. They must be communicable, either through language or other forms of communication, and this includes the condition that the form that makes reasons what they are is recognizable by all human beings insofar as they can communicate with each other. But while all of the arguments can be traced back to human reflectivity, given that this is the faculty that explains *how* we have reasons, the individual's ability to extend the scope of her own reasons is indebted to the intersubjective, to the circumstances in which reasons are uttered and recognized as reasons. In other words, the intersubjective domain explains *what* reasons are, and the relation between these two levels does at least partially explain *why* we have reasons. But it does not seem that we can find any easy correspondence between human reflectivity and the *social nature* of humans that Korsgaard wants to include. If it is true that the difference between the practical identities of fellow human beings – corresponding to the reflective structure of consciousness – differs only in degree, and thus depends on how intimate one knows oneself and one's fellow humans, then this seems to shift the place of priority from the reflective self to intersubjectivity, the very place where contingency is located. This is after all the place that can explain the congruence of the content of different reflective self-consciousnesses.

As we have seen, the structure of the self in Korsgaard's account is seen as an analogy to the relationship an agent has to other people and their reasons. In fact, the essential aspect of reasons is their public nature. In this sense, reasons become somewhat external to the agent, or in other words, they are partially independent of the self. The *structural features* of

reasons, *as well as their content* must be something that the individual *adopts*, that subsequently conditions the individual's own conception of what a reason is. The reason why content also must be included as part of the public conception of reasons, is that some contents, such as private inclinations, must be intersubjectively recognized in order to work as reasons. In other words, content is relevant to the structure of reasons, because the content often will denote a starting-point. If we compare this to a logical deduction that is supposed to be *sound*, and not simply valid, then we see that what is *contained* in the premises must be something we can agree on if the argument is to be sound. Reasons determined as that which motivates us in a sense topic-neutral concept, and it will therefore matter what kind of content the reasons expresses. This turns the entire argument of Korsgaard's around, because if this is true, then the reflective structure of human consciousness, or at least the individual's judgmental abilities, will have their concrete form due to a correspondence with the intersubjective domain that contains the normative rules regarding what a reason is. This will consequently establish a triangular ontology – subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and objectivity. This has some implications. The reason why this is a triangular ontology, is that to grant intersubjectivity this strong status will not mean that it necessarily is the same as objectivity, nor that the reasons whose being is situated within intersubjectivity necessarily properly denotes the sphere of objectivity. We did initially start with a type of subject-object dichotomy, but one that included intersubjectivity as part of objectivity. With the notion of public reasons, we now have a triangular, and not dual ontology.

The first implication is that one must ask questions regarding what will happen to Korsgaard's attempt to describe a substantial conception of subjectivity?⁶¹ Reasons, as part of an agent's practical identity are described as essentially public; the reflective consciousness is accordingly public – hence there is no significant difference between oneself and others. Subjectivity, as a level distinct from intersubjectivity, seems thus reduced to Kantian apperception, the presupposed necessity of locating reasons *within* a consciousness. Kant's transcendental unity of apperception denotes the fact that content always belongs to a subject, the self is nothing but the structural conditions for experiential content in that description of it.

The second implication concerns the causal status of reasons. If the intersubjective domain is elevated to the status that I have done here, then reasons exists prior to the subject's self-conception, or in other words, the subject is conditioned by intersubjectivity. If the subject is not understood as a unit that is closed to a greater degree than this, Korsgaard will have

⁶¹ I believe Korsgaard aimed at constructing a substantial conception of subjectivity, given that she included content in the Moral Law, and that she agreed on the existentialism-description Nagel suggested.

undermined her claim regarding the normative status of reasons, as opposed to causal one. *If* the subject acts in a way that is contrary to what is regarded as reasons, then the only way left to interpret this agent will be to claim that the failure of acting in a particular way is due to perceptual inadequacies in the agent. Further, if there is any relevant difference between normativity and morality as a special branch of normativity, then the difference is to be found in the intersubjective domain. The individual will thus no longer be responsible for any differentiation between morality and normativity in general.

In other words, Korsgaard's analysis is drawn to a deeper and deeper emphasis on the fundamentally social foundations of human agency. She has to take this step, given how she interprets the Moral Law and human reflectivity. As we have seen, for Kant there can be no such external influence on consciousness if human autonomy is to be maintained, and any theory based on transcendental arguments that still includes externality will be fundamentally flawed, because the distinction between consciousness and what it experiences is put into doubt. The necessity involved in human autonomy will as a result be equally dubitable. The result is accordingly that the link between external conditioning and individual consciousness can be interpreted as too strong unless the theory can *explain* what it is that enables us to separate ourselves from the intersubjective field and possibly *resist* the reasons of others.

I believe that Korsgaard would disagree with the argument I have just presented, but I believe that this argument is consistent with what she claims regarding public reasons. What I believe she does mean is that reasons have a public nature that is public or intersubjective in virtue of normative standards regarding what counts as a reason on structural or formal grounds. A lot of things may be reasons, but reasons are also frequently separated into good and bad reasons, and this, I believe, may be explained in light of an appeal to an intersubjective standard.

Opposed to the former critical reading of Korsgaard, I believe that the following account better captures what she has in mind: Korsgaard's separation between the thinking and acting (legislative and acting, in Korsgaard's terms) parts of the self, should be seen as a self that has different *attitudes*, in the sense that it is the same reflective self that has a reflective self-relation and a reflective relation to otherness. This means that the self at any time may *disregard* the reasons coming from any of the sources of concern that is associated with any of the two attitudes. That is, the subjective and the intersubjective or public self. This means that it in a very strong sense depends on the self what type of reasons she acts in accordance with – there need not be any misinterpretations – but there is certainly a possibility of

negating some concerns in favour of others. Thus the relationship to one's reasons will be conceived properly as a *normative* relationship rather than a causal one.

The differentiation of attitudes is supposed to explain that different types of concerns, or different reasons may provide a stronger links between self and other as well as keeping individuality and intersubjectivity separated. But such an account of the individual needs also to include a vision of the self that is much more *dynamic* than the one Korsgaard proposes. Hence, even the latter, more sympathetic reading of Korsgaard's conception of the self, has its problems: We can interpret ourselves as static human beings whose fundamental interests lie in our abstractly understood "humanity". But what we understand by the use of this concept, our *conception* of it, varies with the determinate descriptions we attach to the concept. And this does also change with experience, and such an understanding of the formal qualification of the concept trivializes it, because there is no necessity involved regarding its *conception* beyond the formal qualification of being a rational human being.⁶² The consequence of a static view on the self may be that the normativity of different reasons is reduced to a matter of consistency. Insofar as the demands of social life correspond to the practical identity of the agent, she will have reason to endorse them, and if they stand in opposition to the practical identity of the agent, another course of action will have to be taken: "When some way of acting is a threat to her practical identity and reflection reveals that fact, the person finds that she must reject that way of acting, and act in another way. In that case, she is obligated."⁶³ Negation is given a strictly negative role in that scenario, and this excludes moral *development* from the theory. When this condition of consistency is included in the theory, the result is an emphasis on the subject that is too strong. To solve this, we need an emphasis on the subject as a subject with a critical self-relation, and this must mean that the point of priority in the theory shifts from pure subjectivity to the relation of subject and object conceived in a different way. In other words, we need some conception of the subject that allows us to express it in a third way, one that does reduce the subject to either a unit that can be exhaustively explained by an appeal to the society alone or a distinct self that ascribes otherness a purely negative role.

⁶² The distinction between "concept" and "conception" is one that Korsgaard herself uses (see Korsgaard (1996), pp. 113-117).

⁶³ Korsgaard (1996), p. 150.

I.2.2. Transition from Korsgaard to Hegel

I hold the *aims* of Korsgaard's account to be more or less consistent with Hegel's social philosophy. I am not the only one who has made this comparison either. Frederick Neuhouse, in his *Foundations of Hegel's Social Theory*, uses practical identity to explain how Hegel can make the strong connection between the individual and the institutions of the state in his *Philosophy of Right*. Neuhouse says with regard to Korsgaard's construction of practical identity in light of Kant, that "it is indisputable that it is Hegel who first explicitly articulates the idea of a practical identity and emphasizes the importance of *particular* practical identities (as opposed to an identity as a pure, rational being) to both social theory and moral philosophy".⁶⁴

Thus Hegel, like Korsgaard, puts great emphasis on the social aspects of our identity. The *particular* practical aspects Neuhouse speaks of, are thus parts of Hegel's philosophy that connects him to the particular types of practical identities we found in Korsgaard's lectures, i.e. all those identities that comes in addition to our identities as purely rational beings. This does also connect Hegel to some of the objections we raised against Korsgaard. In accordance with the previous objection concerning groups perceiving others as less significant than themselves, we see here that Hegel also is in danger of lacking something close to a evaluative, self-critical self: Hegel's social philosophical project often is interpreted as a philosophy that is meant to reconcile (*versöhn*) modern individuals and modern society, and thus avoid the alienation and individualization associated with the modern world. Thus, it might be that we are faced with a philosopher who emphasizes commonality and community too much. The result may be a suppression of difference or a removal of the relevant difference between different selves.

The idea of reconciliation is an idea of unity with the social world. Being reconciled with the social world involves regarding oneself as a member of the social world in some very strong sense. And so the question naturally arises whether the project of reconciliation does not require the suppression or abandonment of individuality.⁶⁵

Combined with historical experience of how close identification within groups often goes hand in hand with hostile behaviour and opinions of other groups, we seem to be confronted with a project that to a significant degree differs from Korsgaard's project, both in structure and in purpose, although there may be some similarities in content. This is not true.

⁶⁴ Neuhouse (2000): pp. 304-5 n. 26. Neuhouse gets the connection from Michael Hardimon (1994b).

⁶⁵ Hardimon (1994a), p. 32.

Reconciliation, as the aim of Hegel's social philosophy, is also deeply committed to the individual, and like Korsgaard, Hegel's system represents an attempt to among other things establish an account of our individual moral identities. As previously stated, individuality implies autonomy, capacity for moral judgments, and responsibility. These capabilities must accordingly be emphasized and endorsed by the theory if the individual reasonably can be described as reconciled with its surroundings, including society and other people.

The problem with objections of the type inherent in the above citation is that they, in this case, overlook what lies within the term *reconciliation*. As Michael Hardimon has stated, reconciliation is not resignation.⁶⁶ It is an attempt to unify someone and something that will keep its essential distinctiveness in the reconciliation. This means that some sense of conflict is presupposed in the term itself.⁶⁷ The term reconciliation does in other words suggest that the parties that initially confronted each other have become in some way unified, which means that the process *preceding* reconciliation must be examined in order to see whether the reconciled parts themselves will be able to cognise any relevant difference between morality and normativity in general.

Reconciliation is a *synthetic* term, what Hegel calls an identity of identity and distinction. I shall make this clearer by comparing what Hegel has to say with Korsgaard. If we recall the preceding section, we saw that Korsgaard's position could be described in roughly two ways, each of which emphasized different aspects of the self. We had the self conceived in itself or abstracted from interaction – the practical identity of an abstractly conceived “human being”, and the self as immersed in intersubjectivity. The latter position was as a practical identity described as fully in debt to the intersubjective domain of public reasons, and the former was described as more of a closed unit. To redefine these two positions we could call the first one, i.e. the one that is seen in itself as a practical position that conceives itself as virtually *indeterminate*. By saying this, I mean that the position in virtue of its consistency-criterion withholds itself from being determined or given a description that matters from anything outside of it. The only thing that determines its self-conception is itself insofar as something matters for it. It is thus without any *particularity* in that it must be conceived as a totally self-identical unit, the “I=I”, and insofar as it *only* is self-identical, it is indeterminate. The other self is on the other hand *determinate*. It is in contrast with the indeterminate position immersed in externality, and its self-conception, including that which matters for it, is a

⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 23.

⁶⁷ Cf. Williams (1992), p. 239.

completely *particular* description ‘given’ to it by some external source (i.e. public reasons).⁶⁸ That it is particular and not universal is due to the fact that it in contrast with the former position lacks the ability to universalise its position. It cannot think in terms of generality, because it lacks a self-conception that would enable it to go beyond its given content.

We can now return to the identity of identity and difference. In this context, what we are looking for is a self-conception that allows both of these conceptions a place as *moments* of the self, but one that is capable of both abstracting from the given and think in terms of general reasons, as well as allowing experientially derived content to play a part. In other words we need a self that through its self-conception, or *for itself*, is a *singular being*, where *singular* incorporates both indeterminacy and determinacy. We need in other words a substantial practical identity that as singular includes both universal and particular aspects *for itself*.⁶⁹ The following two chapters on Hegel will give us the theoretical and practical foundations for such a practical identity.

That it is reasonable to include individuality in the sense just described – as singularity – is made reasonable if we take a look at what Hegel sees as fundamental flaws with previous philosophical positions. For example, he criticizes Plato for not allowing individuality in his *Republic*. Individuality is here represented by the *particular* concerns and desires the citizens have *for themselves* (these particular concerns are in other words not necessarily ‘given’ by intersubjectivity, but are parts of the citizens’ own explicit and self-conscious voluntary desires):

Plato, in his *Republic*, presents the substance of ethical life in its ideal *beauty* and *truth*; but he cannot come to terms with the principle of self-sufficient particularity, which had suddenly overtaken Greek ethical life in his time, except by setting up a purely substantial state in opposition to it and completely excluding it ...⁷⁰

Hegel continues to tell us that particularity is an aspect of philosophy that is historically later than the Greeks. And Hegel does seem to endorse particularity as a phenomenon that has its proper place in modernity. What he also says, in addition to that which already has been stated, is that

⁶⁸ This of course a matter of degree: Neither of the positions are totally one way and not the other, but way of comparing the two conceptions are related to the arguments presented for both positions. These positions should simply illustrate why we need a third alternative.

⁶⁹ Cf. e.g. *Enc. I*, § 163. The paragraph is the first determination of the *Concept*.

⁷⁰ *PR* § 185 R.

Particularity for itself [*für sich*] is boundless extravagance, and the forms of this extravagance are themselves boundless. Through their representations and reflections, human beings expand their desires, which do not form a closed circle like animal instinct, and extend them to false [*slechte*] infinity.⁷¹

Thus, both of these will in themselves be abstractions, and they cannot by themselves explain human agency (including moral agency) or society properly. When Hegel talks about the “false infinite” in connection to particularity, he envisions a Hobbesian version of human nature, where every agent is a self-sufficient agent who acts on behalf of her strictly private desires. In other words, the fact that people have particular concerns is in this context assumed to denote a completely self-sufficient agent. Particularity is accordingly elevated to an absolute status, one that cannot be subsumed under any other concept, for example singularity. Such an understanding of human nature is for Hegel a path that leads nowhere. We can see that Hegel here wants to conceptualise another category that is meant to be the truth of the two formerly opposite positions. That which makes the self-conception of the completely self-sufficient agent a false infinity is that particularity, as understood in this section, is a step in the *development* of consciousness, but this process of becoming, or what we at the moment may call experience or development of the agents, is hindered by their own self-conception.⁷² Hence, their (false) self-interpretation will by necessity repeat itself until there occurs some sort of mutuality and reciprocity between the agents involved. This means that the self-conceptions of the agents must be negated, and the theory must accordingly include some conceptual means that will enable us to paint a picture of the person as a self-critical, evaluative person.⁷³ This should lead us to view practical identity with its main features (i.e. reflectivity, reasons, autonomy and the normative emphasis on humanity) as implying an *ontological* truth on humanity that is at once descriptive and normative, and allows the possibility of distinguishing morality from normativity in general.

The term that is meant to include both sides of the story, and also explain how a society that includes individuality is possible, is *recognition* (Anerkennung). While *singularity* is the theoretical description of the subject, recognition will explain how the subject *for itself* becomes both determinate and indeterminate. Reconciliation, as was previously mentioned, is in the same way thought to express a synthetic condition, and as such it will prevent a false

⁷¹ PR § 185 Z. The translation is slightly altered.

⁷² WL, p. 155, SL, p. 142. See also Pinkard (1981), p. 462, and (1986), p. 220 n. 30.

⁷³ Which is difficult enough, especially regarding the prospects this gives the agent in question. This one will have to negate all of one's prior reasons and actions. In other words, the reasons one employed for doing a certain action will be negated, and one's practical identity, as the seat of these reasons, will consequently suffer a defeat.

infinity. This being said, I believe that reconciliation refers to the result of mutual recognition, rather than being an “operative concept”. This will be treated more extensively later, but at this moment we may say that the concept of recognition serves as an operative concept in the sense that it contributes to explain individual agency even in circumstances that Hegel regard as far from ideal.⁷⁴ It is in these cases a significant contribution because it helps explain individual agency even in pathological versions. Reconciliation, on the other hand, cannot be connected to such scenarios. Contrary to recognition, which, in the form of mutual recognition is a central part of the development toward reconciliation, the latter term expresses the “truth” or the end purpose of Hegel’s social philosophy.⁷⁵

Most reconstructions of Hegel’s ethics has understandably focused on the part of the system called “objective spirit,” which includes the *Philosophy of Right*, and it is in that context that the question on whether Hegel has any of the repertoire needed in order to allow a genuine emphasis on the individual and its own judgmental abilities arises. One of Hegel’s main focuses is to situate moral beings firmly within a social setting, and it is this setting that in turn directs the individual in normative issues. In other words, society is in itself a normative instance, the seat of ethical substance, and as such it provides the individual’s horizon in normative matters. So far, Hegel is nothing but a strong representative for communitarian ethics. Some cases, such as Hegel’s discussion of the civil servants and the way they are supposed to execute their tasks makes it clear that the distance between the interests of the individuals and the interests of the state may be disturbingly small.⁷⁶ “One of the most striking, and disturbing, features of Hegel’s conception of the modern state is the extraordinary faith he places in the dedication and public-mindedness of the civil servants.”⁷⁷ Hegel does not say that all of the citizens of the state will or should have this strong

⁷⁴ “Ideal” is here used in the contemporary sense, which differs from Hegel’s use of the term. The difference is related to Hegel’s idealism. I will use the term in Hegel’s sense later in the thesis.

⁷⁵ By claiming this, I have positioned myself in the debate on whether recognition or reconciliation is the central concept in Hegel’s social philosophy. This being said, it is evident that both terms are synthetic – they both express a state wherein particularity and Greek *Sittlichkeit* are superseded, but I believe that recognition captures the process towards this result better than reconciliation. In Hegel’s arguments regarding the transition from particularity and into what he calls “reason” (*PhG* – ‘Selbstbewusstsein and *Enc.* §§ 424-437), it is mutual recognition, and not reconciliation Hegel uses to explain the transition. Besides, reconciliation expresses a stronger bond than recognition does, because the latter term is also used to express the social conditions for a person’s right to possess property (*PR* § 51), and this coincides with the principle: “*Be a person and respect others as persons* (*PR* § 36).” As Hegel says, to be a person is to be completely for oneself, and so it is an abstract description of human beings. Now, this changes when one attains property. But it does not alter so much that people gets reconciled with each other; they recognize each other as having rights to property, and respect each other (they do not violate the rights of others), but they are not reconciled. What transforms the initial complete self-sufficiency of the person is recognition. I will return to this later in the thesis.

⁷⁶ See *PR*, § 293 R.

⁷⁷ Hardimon (1994a), p. 216. Cf. Neuhaus (2000), p. 241. Cf. Emile Durkheim’s account of the Altruistic Suicide. Durkheim (2001), pp. 103 ff.

connection to the state, but it is not clear whether the civil servants themselves, or any other for that matter, can behave in accordance with standards that have their origin in the agents themselves as rational agents. The community can itself be seen as the provider of the particularity Hegel claimed to be nonexistent in Plato's *Republic*.

Part of this problem is, I believe, due to the fact that too small a weight has been assigned the philosophy of subjective spirit in reconstructions of Hegel's ethics. The philosophy of subjective spirit is primarily Hegel's philosophy of mind, but being a systematic philosopher Hegel is committed to the whole, and this part will consequently also play a part in his ethical theory. This is not in itself the arena where normativity and value in general is to be found, but it is a theory of the subject's mental abilities, and therefore also relevant to decision-making in moral matters.

In order to keep the grasp of both differences and similarities between Korsgaard and Hegel, we shall continue with the structural or formal parts of Hegel's system that are relevant to the discussion. This means that we will discuss the 'I' and other aspects that in Korsgaard's theory make up the first principles and constitute the transcendental argument for practical identity. Even though the discussion is done this way, this does not mean that Hegel's system is constructed by means of first principles, such as human reflectivity and similar notions. I have ordered the thesis in this way in accordance with comparison and subject matter, and not according to Hegel's own headlines.

II. PHILOSOPHY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

II.1. Subject and Object

The initial common ground between Korsgaard and Hegel is the relation between subject and object as it is conceived in German Idealism. Hegel would to some extent agree with the priority of reflectivity in Korsgaard's theory, and his arguments regarding self-consciousness and the Hegelian counterpart of Korsgaard's practical identity has some similarities with Korsgaard's notion. Hegel's disagreement with Korsgaard concerns her attempt to use reflectivity as a first principle. As we saw this gave rise to two versions of practical identity. Practical identity was described as either the indeterminate self or as the determinate self. The ontological priority that initially was attached to the self or to subjectivity was through the notion of public reasons translated to an ontological priority of intersubjectivity in the attempt to extend the domain of reflectivity. Hegel, on the other hand, starts out with emphasizing the *ontologically equal importance* of subject and object. The reason why Hegel does not start out with a first principle, is his objection concerning the problem of equipollence regarding first principles. This problem states that because there exists a multitude of first principles, one could e.g. find accounts that focus on subjectivity as first principles, as well as accounts that focus on objectivity as a first principle. Given that there exists several competing and equally plausible first principles, they will rule each other out.⁷⁸

Korsgaard's transcendental argument includes a separation between subject and object, where "object" initially includes intersubjectivity. In a transcendental argument, something in the subject conditions the way in which the subject experiences (and in this case, interacts with) the world. This means that the world in its determinateness is determinate in virtue of capacities located within the subject's consciousness. This is exemplified by the notion of practical identity as the source of normativity: What it is that makes the world normative, are not characteristics in the world, but rather the subject's conception of the world. Even though this means that normativity is a part of the "furniture" of the world, it also means that this is true insofar as there are human beings inhabiting the world. And this, in turn, exhibits the notorious separation of subject and object found in German Idealism. We will in other words start this chapter with the comparing the individualistic part of Korsgaard's argument with Hegel's philosophy. The explicit treatment of that which is similar to public reasons within

⁷⁸ *PhG*, p. 180; *PhS*, § 234, p. 141, and Williams (1992), p. 110.

Hegel's philosophy enters the argument at the end of this chapter, and is further dealt with in chapter III.

To further enlighten why the subject-object dichotomy is a practical problem and a problem that Korsgaard herself is well aware of, it should be sufficient to state that what counts as 'object' in such a theory is everything that is not constitutive of the subject's self-consciousness conceived in itself. This means that even bodily sensations, such as pain, are *a posteriori* experiences, which as such are conditioned and given their determinate form by consciousness. Pain is primarily substantial content, not form or structure. But it is also true that pain, conceived in this way, also is form – that which separates pain from other experiences may be the particular form of pain. The implication is that human consciousness adds features to our given content. And it is not possible to decide whether these features can be ascribed to the objects beyond our knowledge of them, because these features will be implied in our cognising of the objects. The form is thus present at another level of given, namely that which is transcendently given to us as subjects. This distinction is essential to the Kantian version of autonomy, because it implies that we as subjects have capabilities that are independent of externality, and which accordingly cannot be subject to external causation.

If what I said above is true, then Korsgaard can be said to have confused this strict dichotomy, and thus undermined the transcendental force (though not the explanatory force) of her argument. With Hegel, we might say that since experientially determined categories, such as practical identity, implies that past experiences determines the determinate being of new experiences, the subject is both conditioning and conditioned.⁷⁹

It is thus clear that Hegel's point of view is meant to avoid the subject-object dichotomy inherent in the writings of Kant, and accordingly he seems to present us with a weaker conception of the individual than the one found in the writings of his preceding sources of inspiration. Much of the controversy after Kant, and the one relevant to this discussion, concerns the relation between this subject-object dichotomy and freedom. A purely formal law, exhibiting nothing but the structure of human consciousness, and in addition *willed* by our rational capabilities only, is claimed as answer to the notion of human freedom. This means that given the separation between subject and object, where the latter term includes human inclinations, that we are free only by following the moral law, which is the only thing that is generated solely by our own reason.

⁷⁹ ETW, p. 303.

But this austere and exciting doctrine exacts a price. Freedom is defined in contrast to inclination, and it is plain that Kant sees the moral life as a perpetual struggle. For man as a natural being must be dependent on nature, and hence have desires and inclination which just because they depend on nature cannot be expected to dovetail with the demands of morality which have their utterly different source in pure reason. But what is more, one has the uneasy sense that an ultimate peace between reason and inclination would be more of a loss than a gain; for what would become of freedom, if there were no more contrast?⁸⁰

And, Taylor continues, Kant never solved this problem, and was "...raked over the coals more than once by Hegel for it".⁸¹ So it is clear that Hegel wanted to "save" human agency from the unbecoming label of being unfree if acting upon a posteriori inclinations.⁸² It is such questions that make the term reconciliation useful, because it points to a social philosophy that attempts to unite freedom and morality with a more comprehensive account of the human being.

This is one of the problems Hegel wanted to address in his social philosophy. It could be added that he also wanted to address what he regarded as false analytical distinctions in Kant's critical philosophy. Presented this way, it makes sense that it takes a system to address such issues, and it is not simply in practical philosophy that Hegel seeks a comprehensive grasp of a certain phenomenon; it is equally the case in his theoretical philosophy. Given that theoretical and practical philosophy is combined in the system, we should not be keep the theoretical and practical sides rigidly separated: That would amount to including some distinctions that Hegel himself seeks to overcome.⁸³

From this, we can see that Hegel, like any other philosopher, is occupied with philosophical positions and their strengths and weaknesses. But in Hegel these positions are discussed in the curiously proceeding way Hegel labels *dialectic*. Although it is beyond this thesis to properly discuss what is inherent in this term, we will need some grasp of what kind of a philosophical method Hegel employs in order to understand how he seeks to answer the issues presented in this section, and more importantly for us, how he can contribute to Korsgaard's discussion of practical identity.

⁸⁰ Taylor (1975), p. 32.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² This is an aim Korsgaard seems to share with Hegel, although she claims that Kant already has answered the issue. See e.g. Korsgaard (1996), p. 94.

⁸³ An example of such continuity between theoretical and practical philosophy is how Hegel describes thought and will as "different attitudes". He also says that will is present in thought and vice versa. Hence, to introduce a separation between practical and theoretical philosophy is tantamount to separating a self on the basis of different attitudes. We would still claim to deal with the same self, but would add that different description *partially* explains different attitudes. But given the reciprocal relation of these two, it does not seem correct to split them up in any case.

In light of the presented issues that are discussed in Hegel's philosophy, it gives sense to claim that Hegel's philosophical method concerns a discussion of various *ideas*, or positions, rather than facts.⁸⁴ This does not mean that empirical truths are irrelevant to Hegel's project. On the contrary, empirical phenomena, or facts, do in several places contribute to Hegel's discussion of different theoretical positions. Every position Hegel discusses in his introduction to the philosophical sciences, i.e. the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, has its own *Notion (Begriff)*, which may be understood as the set of propositions the subject believes will properly explain her cognition and/or interaction with the world.⁸⁵ But due to lack of correspondence with the object (i.e. that which the positions will have to correspond to in order to be true), these positions will have to redefine themselves, and they are ultimately negated and taken up as part of a more comprehensive position (i.e. a sublation or *Aufhebung*), which in turn is discussed in a similar manner. The object does in this way have a status that make the different positions redefine themselves, which means that the objective world (although discussed in an idealist manner) is seen as something that challenges the subject's *Notion*. I will continue by means of a short presentation of a section in the *PhG*, which hopefully will explain this type of process. This section is also relevant to the common ground of Korsgaard and Hegel, namely the starting-point that consists in a separation of subject and object.

As we have stated, the separation between freedom and inclination has its plausibility in the separate being of subject and object. As distinguished from each other, both extremities will by themselves initially only imply self-identity, and nothing beyond that characterization. Hegel claims the same in the chapter called 'Sense-Certainty' in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The thing (object or *Gegenstand*), as well as consciousness, is "pure being" and "simple immediacy".⁸⁶ The common ground for all endeavours of this kind is that "[among] the countless differences cropping up here we find in every case that the crucial one is that, in sense-certainty, pure being splits up into what we have called the two 'Thises', one 'This' as 'I', and the other 'This' as object [*Gegenstand*]".⁸⁷ These constitute the two givens, the point of departure, not only for epistemology, but also moral theory. The very idea is grounded in

⁸⁴ *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, p. 332 n. 12. Compare *Enc. I* § 172 R.

⁸⁵ It is important to keep in mind that the *Concept* denotes something different in the system, where it is understood as the last and most comprehensive position, the truth of the previously discussed positions. I will henceforth use the terms "Notion" and "self-conception" to indicate the subjective self-interpretations subjects have in their interaction with the world. The term "Concept" will refer to the teleological truth of humanity in this thesis, although it also pertains to the world. For a distinction between different senses of *Begriff*, see *PhG*, pp. 115-16; *PhS* § 142, p. 86.

⁸⁶ *PhG*, p. 83; *PhS*, § 91, pp. 58-9

⁸⁷ *PhG*, p. 83; *PhS* § 92, p. 59.

the supposition that we can find something that is undisturbed by our interaction with the objective world, and thus able to provide us with a neutral point of view. The subject-object dichotomy is therefore a necessary ingredient in consciousness' endeavour: The subjective part is evident in that the subject thinks about something and has a *Notion*, while it is affected by something external.⁸⁸

Hegel himself allows that any point of view that the consciousness might take is a view that already is an interpretation of the world,⁸⁹ which means that what is at stake is the correspondence between Notion and object, or the subject's endeavour to confirm her own assumptions. The "neutral" point of view is simply part of the subject's Notion, and it is therefore a presupposition.

...the distinction between the in-itself and knowledge is already present in the very fact that consciousness knows an object at all. Something is *for it* the *in-itself*; and knowledge, or the being of the object for consciousness, is *for it*, another moment. Upon this distinction, which is presented as a fact, the examination rests. If the comparison shows that these two moments do not correspond to one another, it would seem that consciousness must alter its knowledge to make it conform to the object. But, in fact, in the alteration of the knowledge, the object alters for it too, for the knowledge that was present was essentially a knowledge of the object: as the knowledge changes, so too does the object, for it essentially belonged to this knowledge.⁹⁰

We see here that Hegel already has anticipated a distinction between knowledge of an object and the object itself. In this discussion, it is taken as a *fact* that the object is just as much *in itself* primitive as consciousness is a primitive, i.e. the object is held to be something independent of consciousness. But that which seems to be the independent moment of the relation is consciousness, because this is after all the moment that through reflection and alteration of knowledge can reinterpret the shape of the object. Because the truth consists in the Notion's correspondence with the object, the Notion, as a construct, is alterable, while the object is given. If interpreted practically, this would exhibit a structure wherein e.g. substantive moral claims could be altered if it was impossible to derive consensus from them. We are in other words talking about a version of (a primitive form of) practical identity, or what we may call 'Theoretical Identity', given the epistemological context in which the discussion is grounded.

⁸⁸ One could e.g. read the chapter on "Force and the Understanding" to be about the consciousness that ends up seeing itself in that which initially was external. But however that chapter is read, externality does anyway continue to play a fundamental role in the *PhG*, for example in the Master-Slave dialectic. Hegel does after all criticize subjective idealism.

⁸⁹ Heidegren (1995), p. 79.

⁹⁰ *PhG*, p. 78; *PhS* § 85, p. 54.

But, Hegel continues by claiming that *for us* (i.e. the phenomenological bystanders, or readers⁹¹), “...neither one nor the other is only *immediately* present in sense-certainty, but each is at the same time *mediated*: I have this certainty through something else, viz. the thing; and it, similarly, is in sense-certainty through something else, viz. through the ‘I’”.⁹² Now, sense-certainty is of course itself a particular position, so the way in which the Notion corresponds to the object will of course differ in other positions. So, given this structure, we are as human agents able to take a plurality of substantial contents of consciousness to be true. But what Hegel does in this last citation, is attempt to answer the question of *why* a particular content will be given priority over others. And he does this by showing that what is missing from the original opposition between the two givens in fact is their mutual mediation. Given that the object from the outset is seen as a separately existing entity, its being as self-identical irrespective of consciousness means that consciousness by *necessity* will have to alter its point of view if it wants its Notion to correspond to the object. And this motivation is necessary because consciousness is only mediately present in the world. We sense *something*, and that something is present in our consciousness is that which makes the term ‘consciousness’ reasonable in the first place.

But this should not be left standing as it is. Surely, if it is true that both the ‘I’ and the object are mediations, and thus not fully explicable if abstracted from this mediation, then it must be the *descriptions* of both extremities that will alter if Notion and object does not correspond. I believe this is a fair assumption, and it also seems to be a necessary step towards human reflectivity. The transition from consciousness to self-consciousness does occur

⁹¹ Kenneth Westphal has recently argued that the *PhG* is structured as a Greek tragedy, and it therefore includes three positions: The story-teller (Hegel), the audience (the phenomenological bystanders, the readers), and consciousness. That the various turning-points or negations has a common element with Greek tragedy is a notion I find plausible. Westphal argues for this parallel by citing and discussing several sections of Sophocles’ *Antigone*. The interesting point is that both Hegel and his readers are able to see the weaknesses inherent in the various Notions the consciousness cognises and acts in accordance with, while the consciousness itself attempts to stay within the framework of these Notions until they will have to be negated, where the flaws of the previous position is evident to all parts. See Westphal (2003). I do not think that this reading is equally plausible regarding the system, which is more constructive than the *PhG*.

⁹² *PhG*, p. 83; *PhS* § 92, p. 59. I do not understand why *die Sache* is translated into ‘Thing’ in Miller’s translation. In the Norwegian translation of *PhG*, the word is *saken*, which means roughly ‘the subject matter’ in English. The reason why I find this puzzling is that Hegel usually varies between *Gegenstand* and *Objekt*, and I believe that *Ding* to a greater degree would correspond to the English ‘Thing’. If we are to assume that Hegel uses this term to indicate something other than a particular object (*Gegenstand*) or the objective world in general (*Objekt*), and I believe that to be true, then *die Sache* should indicate the determinate manner in which an object or the objective is understood from the point of view of the phenomenological bystanders, i.e. *us*. Accordingly, it is clear *for us* that the relation of consciousness and object not only implies that the object is seen in a particular manner, and that it exists as such in virtue of consciousness; in a similar way the determinate being of the object implies an ‘I’ who can experience it as such.

In addition, the term is translated into “subject matter” in deVries’ own translations of the *Encyclopaedia*. The Geraets, Suchting, and Harris-edition of the *Encyclopaedia* uses either “matter”, “matter [itself]”, “thing in question” or “thing [*sache*]”, and rightly places *Ding* and *Materie* as related terms.

together with the attempt to construct increasingly more sophisticated theories on the objective world. But what this shows are problems within consciousness vis-à-vis the objective world. And this implies that the consciousness will have to adjust its views on the world. In order to do this, the subject must be *self-conscious*: It must possess something that enables it to evaluate the validity of its practical identity, or minimally be able to reflect upon the content of one's practical identity. This indicates that an eventual alteration of subject and object will not entail their initial determination as self-identical and thus different from each other. That would imply that we gave up the possibility of having alteration in the mental content of the self. That which alters, is the way in which they are mediated, the description of them inherent in Hegel's notion of the "thing" or "subject matter". In other words, the alteration happens to the way their interrelation is described from a third person-level. Korsgaard is right to follow Kant regarding the reflective, self-conscious structure of consciousness. For this indicates that it is the reflective structure of consciousness that makes it possible for us as subjects to reject poorly grounded theoretical identities. It is this faculty that serves as the condition for having a theoretical identity and practical identity in the first place.

But even though Hegel would agree to the importance of self-consciousness, it is given a different priority in his account than in Kant's. To be mediated through the object implies in the abstract sense that the 'I', seen in itself or abstracted from whatever content it might have, is derived from the "interaction" between the two. So in this abstract sense, the relation of perceiving and perceived implies both parts. But for consciousness, the relation implies self-consciousness because its interaction with the world necessitates a self-critical and changeable self, a self that can alter its self-conception in light of evidence found in the external world.⁹³ If we compare the notion of a self-conception with a third-person perspective on the scenario, i.e. the scenario as it is *for us*, or as deduced from the relation of perceiver and perceived, the 'I' would enter this scenario in a way similar to the transcendental apperception in the transcendental deduction in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. It is, in Kant's words, the "...**I think** [which] must **be able** to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all, which is as much to say that the representation would either be impossible or else at least be nothing for me."⁹⁴ This 'I think' is accordingly in itself empty, and has no significance in determining practical matters, which means that what I have called 'theoretical identity' itself consists of theoretical positions that

⁹³ Westphal (2003) uses the term "self-critical evaluative self" in the same sense that I employ in this thesis.

⁹⁴ *Critique of Pure Reason*, § 16, B131-132.

in itself constitutes the content that can be attached to self-consciousness. Self-consciousness or apperception in the Kantian sense will on the other hand have to be present throughout the negations of different theoretical positions, given that it only connects these positions to a singular self. Comparatively, the perceiver and the perceived are abstract moments of a relation that is (1) complementary, and (2) substantial. Self-consciousness in the present context, i.e. as pure apperception, is nothing except consciousness' ability to have substantial content.

II.2. The Encyclopaedia On Reflectivity

With the introduction of material from *Encyclopaedia*, we will be entering Hegel's system. The discussions from here on will primarily consist of issues that have relevance within the system. This means that the previous discussion is to be regarded as an introduction to the issues that will be dealt with here. Although the discussion of the *PhG* was brief, the intention was to direct us to what can be seen as a possible starting-point when we now shall dig a bit deeper into how Hegel regards reflectivity and thought.

We can summarize what was said in the previous section with stating that for Hegel there can not be any starting points in philosophy that simply assumes that the world and we as cognising subjects are constructed in this or that way. To do so will be to invite dogmatism into philosophy. The proper method should accordingly include scepticism and antithetical positions as part of it. The proceedings of the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit* just briefly discussed should be read in that manner. But the process is not simply negative. Consciousness' self-conception as "sense-certainty" briefly mentioned in the previous section eventually becomes hard-pressed and as a result have to give up the assumption that the truth consists in the immediate cognising of the object. But the result of the discussion is also a newfound self-awareness that serves as a constructive way of continuing the dialectic.

With Korsgaard's notion of reflectivity firmly in mind, we see that it will be a mistake to simply exchange her notion of reflectivity with a view that can be read as motion without stability, such as one may interpret what we have said this far. However difficult her account of reflectivity is, it is nonetheless clear that reflection and apperception should be seen as two very different abilities in an individual, and this was made explicit in our discussion of consciousness. But with his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline*, Hegel

starts entering discussions that are thematically closer to Korsgaard's discussion of practical identity. The discussion here, unlike the one in the *PhG*, is concerned with the development and analysis of different features of the human mind. Because we are interested in what may end up in a plausible practical conception of identity, we shall start with habit, something that certainly lacks the reflectivity inherent in Korsgaard's version of practical identity, but that nonetheless is a feature of behaviour that implies that an appeal to a weak sense of reasons needs to be made in order to explain the behaviour of a particular being.

...it is true that the form of habit, like any other, is open to anything we chance to put into it. ... and yet habit is indispensable for the *existence* of all intellectual life in the individual, enabling the subject to be a concrete immediacy, an 'ideality' of soul – enabling the matter of consciousness, religious, moral, etc., to be his as *this* self, *this* soul, and no other, and be neither a mere latent possibility, nor a transient emotion or idea, nor an abstract inwardness, cut off from action and reality, but part and parcel of his being.⁹⁵

Habit marks the transition from the anthropology to the phenomenology, from the parts of being that humans share with animals, to the strictly human.⁹⁶ Hegel does, in his account of feeling, allow animals to have some minimal sense of awareness of self, but it is through habit that an agent's conception of her own individuality is made possible. By structuring the world categorically, a precondition of habit, the individual takes one step on the path toward a genuine conception of the self, the 'I'. And this entails the individual's ability to be interested in, or indifferent to, diverse aspects of the surrounding world, whereas one in feeling is immersed in the content of particular events: "In an organism that has developed large-scale habitual patterns of behaviour, individual sensations are important only as they figure in these patterns."⁹⁷ This includes events that have an *inward* character, due to, among other things, being confined within the human body. We might in other words say that habit enables us to differentiate between sensations regardless of their place of origin. Hence, habit marks the transition to Hegel's version of something similar to Korsgaard's practical identity, but at this point Hegel has not yet explained the reflectivity Korsgaard attaches to our nature. This happens with Hegel's introduction of the 'I' in the phenomenology. Habit is contrasted to the account implied by the previous discussion of the *PhG*, because it does not in itself suggest any properly developed evaluative capabilities in the individual. Nevertheless, it is the first

⁹⁵ *Enc.* III, § 410. See also *PR*, § 151 Z.

⁹⁶ The "phenomenology" is not the introduction to Hegel's system, i.e. the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, but the part of the *Encyclopaedia* that follows the anthropology. It is the part on the "experience of consciousness" that accordingly presupposes the development where habit is the point of transition from what we share with animals.

⁹⁷ deVries (1988), p. 101.

step in which we gradually begin to order the information we receive in our sense-apparatus, and as such it entails the possibility of *discarding* pieces of sensory experience, simply because some parts of experience will not correspond to the relevant habit. This does not mean that habits are formed in accordance with some principle that would allow them to be evaluated, though. Habit does not imply knowledge, but it is the first step towards the possibility of knowledge. We could rephrase this, and say that given the fact that we must presuppose a minimal separation between the subject who has habits and the surrounding objects, habit presupposes a weak sense of knowledge: It implies that objects will be experienced as a result of their correspondence or lack of correspondence to the habit.⁹⁸ But a lack of correspondence in this case would mean that the object simply is disregarded, and hence the object will not strictly speaking be experienced. This rules out any genuine evaluation as this ability is presented here.

Another important qualification is that habits do not need to be (strictly speaking) intentional. This is a problematic qualification, because the habits will inevitably explain why we behave in accordance with some phenomena, while others are neglected as explanators of behaviour. But we are not yet at the level of perception in the same sense that we as mature human beings perceive the world. Compared to our own perception, the habitual individual is still immersed in her sensory experience, and not sufficiently distanced from them. That the habitual creature differs from us with regard to intentionality must therefore be explained by an account from a first person perspective. Whereas perception can be claimed to be intentional if the proper description of it includes the self-awareness of the self that has perceptions, habit lacks this characteristic, because it is the objects that is the point of priority in its experience of the objective world. In other words, an explanation of *why* certain objects are interesting is beyond the habitual creature. The evidence of this seems to be that it would be wrong to claim that the disregarded objects are experienced, whereas a human agent would be able to state the reasons for why a certain phenomenon was disregarded.

In other words, habit does not in itself provide sufficient ground for *agency*, and it is in some way a type of *behaviour* without an evaluative self. We can attribute a self at the level of Kantian apperception, but not the reflective, evaluative self that needs to be included in

⁹⁸ That habit does not imply *conceptual* knowledge is obvious. But someone might object to this on account of “tacit knowledge”, which is skills or knowledge a person has but one that the person is unable to express conceptually. Habit is not at this level either, because even tacit knowledge implies that one take irrelevant features regarding the phenomenon one has knowledge of into account. It is in virtue of the knowledge a person has that these features are discarded, whereas a habitual creature will not strictly speaking be experiencing these features. They will be discarded before they can be taken into the account. In tacit knowledge, on the other hand, the object is *comprehended*, and this means that irrelevant features are *comprehended* as irrelevant.

order to speak of agency. But this is about to change, and even at this low level, a set of predicates is included to explain *why* a being act in one way rather than another. The relevant difference between this and human agency is based on the fact that it is *we*, the observers of the being, who explain its behaviour in light of reasons, while the being itself is assumed to lack this type of reflectivity.

This points to an important distinction, namely between *agency* and *behaviour*. The characteristic exhibited in this section is that agency is separated from behaviour in virtue of the explicit evaluative abilities inherent in agency: The concept of the *agent* entails an individual that *for itself* is able to evaluate things as both essential and inessential. *Behaviour*, on the other hand is only connected to what is essential, and things that are unimportant does not have room within the consciousness of the habitual creature. Another common separation between the two is that *agency* is distinguished from *behaviour* in virtue of the *intentionality* of the former. Actions are commonly described as intentional in virtue of the fact that they are executed as results of a particular *motivation* in the agent. Accordingly, actions are normative phenomena. What separates them from behaviour in this regard is that due to the lack of evaluation in behaviour the latter will also lack a relevant distinction between e.g. causal influence and normative influence. Thus, all influence of the individual that cause this or that pattern of behaviour, or this or that reaction is in this sense on a descriptive level, because motivation as a normative, as opposed to causal, feature of our agency is related to our evaluative abilities. What we are dealing with in the coming sections is related to agency and not behaviour, and this distinction is accordingly integrated in the discussion.

II.2.1. Reflectivity and I-consciousness

Compare the following account with the previously quoted § 16 of Kant's transcendental deduction:

Kant employed the awkward expression, that I "accompany" all my representations – and my sensations, desires, actions, etc., too. "I" is the universal in and for itself, All other humans have this in common with me, to be "I," just as all *my* sensations, representations, etc., have in common that they are *mine*. But, taken abstractly as such, "I" is pure relation to itself, in which abstraction is made from representation and sensation, from every state as well as from every peculiarity of nature, of talent, of experience, and so on. To this extent, "I" is the existence of the entirely *abstract* universality, the abstractly *free*. Therefore "I" is *thinking* as the *subject*, and since I am at

the same time in all my sensations, notions, states, etc., thought is present everywhere and pervade all these determinations as [their] category.⁹⁹

This exhibits the same reflective character that we found in Kant, but it also points to Korsgaard's more substantial, practically oriented account. What seems to have happened in Hegel's account, though explicitly related to Kant, is that the 'I' in Hegel's version is ascribed some significance beyond the mere act of attaching representations of any kind to consciousness. Given that Hegel equates the 'I' with thinking as a subject, it does not seem plausible to read Hegel as giving the 'I' the same status as Kant's transcendental apperception. Although Kant also described the transcendental apperception as a synthetic unity, which thus in some way acts in order to connect content to consciousness, it does not represent any explicit activity the agent herself is aware of. Hegel seems to proceed in a different manner.

In the next paragraph, Hegel draws a line between thinking as such, and thinking as the "thinking-over" of something,¹⁰⁰ and this is followed by the claim that content, through thinking, is changed by this activity.¹⁰¹ It would seem that it is the content received through sensations, intuition and representation that is changed through the *activity* of thought. But if we recall our previous discussion of sense-certainty from the *PhG*, we recall that the self already occupies some conception of the world, something that also was present in the presentation of habit. The point is here, as Willem deVries also has pointed out, to show that Hegel refers to the concrete person through the 'I'.¹⁰² The fact that Hegel starts his analysis of our mind with the abilities shared by animals (feeling, etc.) that excludes the 'I' as part of an agent's self-conception from the explanation is evidence that he holds the 'I' to be something present and active in an agent's self-conception. This leads us to an account of the self that differs from the transcendental one found in Kant, where the 'I' does not refer to the person. So, "...the abstractness of the I does not mean that the concrete person is not the I."¹⁰³ I agree with deVries on this point, but I believe one should hesitate a bit before ascribing the 'I' as it is described in this scenario the full scale of determination that we use in the modern sense of a person. Such a person is to be found within the sections on 'Objective Spirit' in Hegel's system, where the individual, which here is treated abstractly, is analysed in its complexity and as an acting subject. That something is treated abstractly in Hegel's system

⁹⁹ *Enc. I*, § 20 R.

¹⁰⁰ *Enc. I*, § 21.

¹⁰¹ *Enc. I*, § 22.

¹⁰² deVries (1988), pp. 97-99.

¹⁰³ deVries (1988), p. 99.

means that the treatment of the phenomenon has not yet proceeded to the level of having a full articulation of the phenomenon in question. Hence, the 'I' should simply be seen as the most primary determination of spirit,¹⁰⁴ which as such already is self-conscious, *and* has an essence which is *freedom*.¹⁰⁵ The connection between thinking and freedom shall be dealt with in the next section, but we shall make some preliminary remarks.

The freedom referred to above is founded on the abstract version of the self which is self-conscious, and it does accordingly have the ability to abstract itself from all determinate content, something that exhibits the complete indeterminateness of the 'I'. So in other words, we might say that what Hegel is talking about here, is a pure I-consciousness that has itself as content, and even though this is abstract beyond any plausible explanation of human cognition or agency, it is still the minimal determination inherent in the definition of humanity according to Hegel. Although abstract, it is a part of us as thinking beings, and our starting-point is not merely a concept of the 'I', but a *conception* of it. The 'I' is thus from the outset determined as a significant part in a subject's self-conception, and it is equated with *thinking*. In other words, the 'I' denotes a reflective being in Hegel's system.

Before we continue, something needs to be said about the term "spirit" that now has been introduced as more than a headline of parts of Hegel's works. This is a notoriously difficult term, and since this thesis not is intended as a comprehensive account of Hegel's system, I will restrict myself to the two versions of "spirit" that this thesis is concerned with, namely 'Subjective Spirit' and 'Objective Spirit'. These important concepts will only be presented in the way they are relevant to this thesis, so this is not meant to be an exhaustive interpretation. The first thing that needs to be done is to distinguish Hegel's concept of Spirit from such notions as "Cosmic Spirit", which suggests that spirit is some divinity that must be conceived in a pantheistic way.¹⁰⁶ But it is certainly true that spirit is present in all of the parts of Hegel's system that we are discussing here. It is discussed at three levels, two of which are abstractions, while the third expresses spirit as such. The movement we are talking about, is the *an sich* or in itself, to *für sich*, or for itself, and finally to what is *anundfürsich*, or in and for itself.

When Hegel stated that the 'I' is the first determination of spirit he speaks of the *an sich* moment of spirit. The first moment of spirit is accordingly *freedom*, and the term 'essence' is thus tantamount to the claim that e.g. human beings, as spirit, are free in themselves. This

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *Enc. III*, § 381 Z.

¹⁰⁵ *Enc. III*, § 382.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Taylor (1975), pp. 80 ff. See also Finke (1993), p. 163 and 163 n. 5.

does not mean that this freedom is realized, though, and the first step towards the realization of freedom is that some *Notion* becomes *für sich*. Thus, our self-conception or our practical identity is a necessary step on the way to becoming free. But this conception does not necessarily correspond to our essence, which means that we must become self-conscious of this essence in order to be properly free, or free in and for ourselves. The part that concerns Subjective Spirit, is in this context that which establishes the foundations for such a self-conception within the framework of a philosophy of consciousness, while Objective Spirit concerns practical philosophy, or the activity of spirit. The latter is thus both a term for conditions for subjective agency and what intersubjectivity *is*,¹⁰⁷ whereas Subjective Spirit is the account of how we as individuals can be self-conscious about our essence. Both of these moments of spirit are accordingly necessary parts of the realization of freedom. We will now return to how this process is to be seen for the subject.

II.2.2. Reason and Thought

What is the difference between thought as a unit that “pervades all determinations” and an “‘I think’ that must accompany all my representations”? As we shall see, the difference consists in what manner of activity each of the types of “activity” represent. This section is thus primarily intended to mark the difference between what Hegel’s conception of the reflective self can be and a transcendental version that presupposed a rigid form-content distinction. This discussion is necessary in order to explain how Hegel combines subjective self-conceptions with freedom. It is important to keep in mind that the sides of human cognition that will be discussed here are abilities that contribute to our conception of the self, and it is regarding the self and its self-conception that this discussion should be read. We shall start with receptivity.

When Hegel speaks of sensations, he speaks of objects that are perceived at a singular (*Einzelne*) level.¹⁰⁸ This level is transcended at the level of representation, where the ‘I’ is involved with the content received through the senses, and it is thus capable of grasping categorically the type of object it perceives. In other words, the object of the senses can in

¹⁰⁷ Regarding how this description can be connected to intersubjectivity, Pinkard writes of spirit as the “...self-conscious reflection of a community on what it takes as authoritative for itself”. Pinkard (1996), p. 220. For a more specific account of Objective Spirit, see Williams (1997), p. 267, where he cites Nicolai Hartmann. Williams disagrees with attaching self-consciousness to Objective Spirit.

¹⁰⁸ *Enc. I*, § 20 R.

representation be ordered along categories that e.g. distinguishes between predicates (universals) attached to these objects. This means that consciousness at once is immersed with the sensuous content and separated from it.

Representations has an affinity to what Hegel calls the “Understanding” (*Verstand*). The activity of the Understanding involves making analytic distinctions between us as bearers of the concepts that enables us to distinguish different objects, and the objects themselves. The task of the Understanding is in fact to make analytic distinctions, so that we as cognising beings can place objects and phenomena in relevant contexts. “Representation agrees with the *understanding*, which is only distinct from it because it posits relationships of universal and particular, or of cause and effect, etc., and therefore necessary relations between the isolated determinations of representation – whereas representation leaves them side by side.”¹⁰⁹ The content of representation is singular, but the Understanding is responsible for a determinate way of grasping the sensuous content, and what it provides is universality. What this means is that the Understanding is responsible for the categorical ordering of sensuous content. An example of the type of ability the Understanding includes is the ability we have to e.g. separate between an object and the predicates attached to this object. This activity allows us to place an object into a particular group of objects, and hence it is an activity that involves comparing different objects with each other, objects that initially are experienced as singular.

Hegel follows with the claim that “[apart] from the sensible, however, representation also has material that has sprung from self-conscious thinking as its content, such as the notion of what is right, of what is ethical or religious, and also of thinking itself”.¹¹⁰ Thus, and as Hegel himself says, it is not easy to see “where the distinction between these *representations* and the *thoughts* of those contents is to be located”.¹¹¹ The first thing that has to be stated in response to this claim is that thought already is present in our discussion of representation. But we must first distinguish thought from representations.

The Understanding is responsible for the rigid distinctions between universal and particular within the singularly given sensuous content, and representation is similar in the sense that both of the capabilities primarily concern *distinctions* as opposed to *combinations*.¹¹² The combinations are a part of the ‘given’ nature of the manifold taken up by our receptivity, and they are as representations structured in a determinate manner. This

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Combination of what we receive is the task of the original synthetic transcendental unity of apperception in Kant’s philosophy, but we are here dealing with *comprehension*, as a self-conscious explicit way of grasping an object and the relation between objects.

structuring gives representations a universal aspect. To use an example we have used previously, we could say that it is possible to distinguish a singular object into predicates that will give us a qualitative description of what object it is. The predicates will denote the *particular* object, because it enables us to distinguish it from other objects, but the same predicates can also be used to denote other objects, and are therefore in themselves *universals*. Our representations are in other words conceived as ordered in a determinate manner in virtue of categories that pertain to *our* cognition, because the separation between an object and its predicates is nothing given by receptivity as such. The distinctions between particular and universal aspects are made by the Understanding. The Understanding is thus an absolutely necessary side of human cognition, because it allows us to organize what we receive through our senses and whatever else we have representations of. But it does not in itself constitute our entire cognitive faculty. Having now remarked the similarity between representations and the Understanding, we must now return to the ‘I’, which was previously described as “thinking as a subject”.

Hegel’s main reason for not treating the ‘I’ as the Kantian “pure apperception” is connected to what has previously been stated regarding representation. Representations do have an element of thought due to the fact that they have a universal moment. But in the Kantian account, what is received through the senses is the manifold, which is given unity in virtue of the synthesizing efforts by the transcendental apperception and the transcendental categories of the Understanding. Hegel describes pure apperception as the “activity of making [the ob-ject (Gegenstand)] mine”.¹¹³ Or, in relation to representations, Hegel says that the “path of intelligence in representation is to render the immediacy inward”,¹¹⁴ where “immediacy” is understood as the initial receptivity – the ordinary (empirical) apperception which takes up the manifold as such.¹¹⁵ I take this to mean that our sensuous content as such is something without unity, something that will have to be processed by the Understanding in order to be translated into a status that we, as cognising beings, will find intelligible. This intelligible status is what makes up representations.¹¹⁶ Hegel agrees with the fact that human consciousness internalises content or that it is receptive, as Kant calls it, and he also agrees

¹¹³ *Enc. I*, § 42 Z 1.

¹¹⁴ *Enc. III*, § 451.

¹¹⁵ *Enc. I*, § 42 Z 1.

¹¹⁶ I believe this is consistent with the opening of the Transcendental Deduction: “The manifold of representations can be given in an intuition that is merely sensible, i.e., nothing but receptivity, and the form of this intuition can lie *a priori* in our faculty of representation without being anything other than the way in which the subject is affected.” Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, § 15, B 129.

with Kant that the categories, the concepts of the Understanding who further determines the content, cannot belong to “immediate sensation.”¹¹⁷ But he continues by claiming that

...although the categories (e.g. unity, cause and effect, etc.) pertain to thinking as such, it does not at all follow from this that they must therefore be merely something of ours, and not also determinations of objects themselves. But, according to Kant’s view, this is what is supposed to be the case, and his philosophy is *subjective idealism*, inasmuch as the Ego (the knowing subject) furnishes both the *form* and also the *material (Stoff)* of knowing – the former as *thinking* and the latter as *sensing* subject.¹¹⁸

Hegel does in other words claim that Kant, while clinging on to his claim that content only can be given through experience where receptivity is one moment of experience, in fact says that both the form and the material of representations is furnished by the thinking subject. Hegel’s own concept of thought does have similarity with this, but only partly so. One difference is that Hegel still holds (and assumes that Kant does not) that the object is independent of consciousness. In other words, the Understanding is in the citation above assumed to be the *only* part of our cognitive faculty that is related to cognition. If it is rendered absolute this way, then the assumption that there was difference between self and otherness will be wrong according to Hegel. The reason for this is that the activity of the Understanding according to Hegel *consists* in making distinctions, and thus it will not be able to think except through distinctions. Representations were described as having an affinity to the Understanding, and this affinity consists in the fact that the categories by which the Understanding orders its content also pertain to representations. If this is the extent of the activity that can be performed by our cognition, then we *will* furnish both the form and material of our own thinking to the extent that nothing ever will be ‘given’. This will remove the conceptual means that enable us to distinguish between self and otherness, which is something that has been presupposed all along and is a distinction that certainly corresponds to how we experience the world. It is evident from the first part of the citation that Hegel holds the characteristics of objects to be something that corresponds to the way they are, and not simply something that is in such a way in virtue of our experience of objects. Without going too deeply into the theoretical implications of this, we can say that Hegel by saying what he does once more claims that the objective world is something independent of us. But what he continues with, is to claim that in *thinking* over objects, we will remove their externality without thereby implying that they are reduced to thoughts:

¹¹⁷ *Enc. I*, § 42, Z 1 and 3.

¹¹⁸ *Enc. I*, § 42, Z 3.

Because it is equally true that in this thinking-over the genuine nature [of the ob-ject] comes to light, and that this thinking is *my* activity, this true nature is also the *product of my spirit*, [of me] as thinking subject. It is mine according to my simple universality as [universality] of the “I” *being simply at home with itself*, or it is the product of my *freedom*.¹¹⁹

The first assumption is that to think is to be involved in an activity that differs from mere receptivity. It involves an alteration of both form and content vis-à-vis e.g. sensation. When one thinks, the content of one’s thoughts is simply one’s thoughts. The content may initially have been something *given*, but it does no longer exist in the same manner.

It is important to point out that there is a difference of emphasis between representation and thought. This difference is the separate relation of having a representation of an object, and *comprehending* it. In comprehension the consciousness needs to be connected to a variety of experientially derived content in order to grasp what the phenomenon or object ultimately is, whereas one has *singular* representations of objects or phenomena. The ability to comprehend and thus to combine content is accordingly not strictly speaking an *a priori* ability in the individual, but related to experience. Thought is therefore itself indebted to externality.

Another difference can be exhibited by comparing receptivity and thought with an active-passive dichotomy. While representation may be called passive in that it regards its content as given and fixed, thought is described as the active, self-conscious *thinking-over* of something. When thought seeks to comprehend an object of some kind, the content (that may be derived from empirical experience) is re-structured under the form of thought, which makes the content itself to thoughts. No matter what status one might ascribe to empirical experience, when it is elevated to what Hegel calls experience (which involves what I have called comprehension), which means that it becomes part of the holistic self-conception of the agent, the content is made to one’s own. It has been altered, and has become a part of consciousness. This means that one does not confront any kind of genuine otherness *within* thought itself, as opposed to representations, which are *given* and hence not solely caused by the individual herself. At least not if grant that subjectivity and objectivity are different. And thought is also holistic: “A determinate content, however, contains a manifold *connection* within itself and is the basis for connection with many other ob-jects.”¹²⁰ This means that proper experience, experience that may allow that the self *evaluates* its own content, will be an activity of thinking, which means that evaluation is a *free activity*.

¹¹⁹ *Enc. I*, § 23.

¹²⁰ *Enc. I*, § 46.

This points to a differentiation between Reason (*Vernunft*) and the Understanding as the parts that constitute our thinking. Reason is a more comprehensive activity than the activity of the Understanding, because the activity of Reason points to the fundamental synthetical terms that the Understanding splits up into separate concepts and entities. Reason's affinity is therefore with thinking, because it is concerned with *combination* of seemingly different entities, phenomena and concepts. Thus, it supplies the analytic distinctions made by the Understanding with more comprehensive concepts, so we can see that thinking consists both of the Understanding and Reason, although it has been connected to the latter. Reason is in other words a vital ability regarding how we can conceive the relation between subject and object, and thus how we can understand ourselves as free. The transformation of otherness into a status that reformulates otherness as something no longer alien is thus a result Hegel comes to in light of a rational re-thinking of a separation originally posited by the Understanding.

The being-at-home-with-oneself, or the transformation of otherness involved in this process is basic to Hegel's understanding of freedom. The underlying point here is the same that we found in Korsgaard: Freedom does here mean that what is ultimately acted upon must be something of the agent's own construct, something that should be understood as part of the agent herself, and not something genuinely other or alien. I shall attempt to explain how Hegel's view on reason and thought and their relation to freedom can be understood.

The epistemological gap between subject and object does still represent a challenge to practical philosophy, because any content and thus any reasons derived from objectivity will still remain external unless something in our thinking can explain the relation differently. Hegel's reply is that content itself presupposes form, and vice versa:

... in fact, both of them are equally essential, and that, whilst there is no more a formless content than there is formless stuff, still the two of them (content, and stuff or matter [Stoff oder Materie]) are distinguished from one another precisely because the matter, although it is not in itself without form, shows itself to be indifferent in its way of being with regard to form, while content as such is what it is only in virtue of the fact that it contains developed form within itself.¹²¹

In other words, content and form are inseparable, and this means that ascribing a particular status to one of the extremes will be a fallacy. There is no such thing as pure form. But Hegel does seem to imply that form itself at this point can be regarded as external to the content: "But we find that the form, too, has an existence that is indifferent with respect to the content

¹²¹ *Enc. I*, § 133 Z.

and external to it....”¹²² Hegel attempts to argue that the discussion must proceed from that determination, and he uses the means of an example in order to show that form itself is identical to its content. If we first grant with Hegel that pure thought as in e.g. logic is formal, and thus can be regarded as indifferent with respect to its content and accordingly can be seen as independent of it, and we then allow that someone can review a book as content-less, Hegel says that:

...what an educated mind refers to primarily as “content” only means what is well thought out. But this means also that we must admit that thoughts are not to be considered as indifferent to their content, or as being in themselves empty forms, and that, just as in art, so too in all other domains, the truth and the solidity of the content shows itself to be identical with the form.¹²³

A second reply that could be made involves the implications of the difference of status accorded the extremities in positions like the previously discussed sense-certainty, where the extremities are the subject and the object. Given what we have said so far, it is clear that any content and form implies each other insofar as they can be spoken of as such. But it is also true that the content of our consciousness changes in e.g. different contexts, while we experience that we ourselves stay self-identical. Our being as self-identical (what we in this discussion might call a feature of our identity, and not an external description of us as objects) means that different content as such not necessarily will change the way we cognise them. As this sentence implies, our interaction with any given phenomenon seems to be structured in a way that forces us differentiate from the content we are “given”. That this differentiation is necessary could be explained simply by pointing out that we at different times possess different contents. And so the implications of the splitting-up between self as form and content as given will be of both theoretical and practical value. This means that even if we dislike Kant’s separations of the different sides of our lives, it seems to be presupposed in the way we lead our practical interactions with the world. Thus, the Understanding is yet again proved to be a vital side of our cognition. What kind of a view of the self does this give us?

First, we may state that given the last part of the discussion, or the second reply, we must include a self that itself possesses content. This is related to the description of thought as containing a “manifold connection within itself”. This means that the self’s *experience* in the Hegelian sense includes an adoption of reasons that enables us to differentiate in the world. Compared to a purely formalistic version of the self that did not include thinking as an

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

activity that necessarily is connected to such a self-conception, the self would be unable to distinguish itself from the content with which it operates. To claim a total independence vis-à-vis the content of our consciousness will signify that we reduce our consciousness to the operations of an algorithmic machine – a *behaviour* based on inputs and outputs. This is why it is absolutely necessary that the ‘I’ itself must be seen as substantial, and it gives us a practical reason for why Hegel referred to the concrete person through the ‘I’. Only in that way can we stand in a relationship to otherness and cognise it as such. This indicates a diverse and manifold conception of the self, one that is self-identical and thus distinct from everything, but one that also includes some conception of *relevant distinctions*. The ‘I’, as denoting thought, must consequently include some characteristics that are employed to make these distinctions, something that points in the direction of normativity embedded in our receptivity. Even though it must be remarked that Korsgaard’s notion of reflectivity as an ability to think about ourselves is not compatible with the algorithmic machine-metaphor, we are nevertheless closing on a conception of the self that is quite a bit more substantial.

To return to Hegel’s own determinations of the ‘I’, he states first that the ‘I’ is the “pure self-related unity”,¹²⁴ or pure reflectivity, and accordingly it lacks determination. Secondly, it is an “*absolutely determined*, opposing itself to all that is other and excludes it – *individual personality*”.¹²⁵ This does not mean that the ‘I’ as such is to be understood as a closed unit, one that excludes otherness by its own self-identity. That would transform self-consciousness from being infinite, i.e. the *possibility* of including *all content*, and to a finite object, one that in virtue of its own determinate being is excluded from all other objects. If we recall what was previously said regarding thought, then thought is seen as the *activity* that includes both of the previously mentioned moments, i.e. both the pure ‘I’ and the ‘I’ as personality. The moments are after all *immediate*; they are analytic abstractions of what Hegel essentially conceives as a synthetic unity (compare the former account of Korsgaard and the indeterminate and determinate versions of the self). As “pure” the ‘I’ relates to itself only, and in this context this means that it *thinks*, not necessarily as an tautological form of thinking, or I=I, but in virtue of content that is *its own*. This content is also means of distinguishing itself from otherness, in other words the personality Hegel referred to. To differentiate between the two aspects is to mark out different conceptions of the same self.

The ‘I’, as a thinking, rational being is related to the external world. This relation involves both of the immediate determinations (i.e. pure self-related unity and individual personality)

¹²⁴ *WL* II, p. 253; *SL*, p. 583.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

combined in activity that presupposes receptivity in general and the internalisation of the content of receptivity. Hegel calls the latter part of the activity the *ideal* moment, and it is in this process that the consciousness makes the object *its own*, reinterprets it in the form of thought, as the object itself *is* thought, and thus transforms the nature of the object into something that is not genuinely other or alien, but part of the consciousness itself *as free*. Representation and the Understanding are thus presupposed (conceptually) in Hegel's conceptions of thought and Reason, and not simply negated, but also preserved in Hegel's account. I will henceforth use the term "reason" to denote the capabilities that has been held separate as the Understanding and Reason in this chapter.

A summary of that which has been said in this section can be illustrated by the notion of an evaluative, free self: Because the 'I' involves evaluation, which is a form of thought, it includes both the ability to combine and distinguish mental content. The reasons employed in evaluation are also thoughts, both in their form and in their content. This means that the reasons we employ in evaluation will not come from anything external to us, but they are derived from our personality (as determined above) and evaluated in a self-relation. This does not mean that one excludes oneself from receiving external influence, only that insofar as this influence is to be regarded as reason-giving for ourselves, it does so in virtue of our evaluation, which is a *free* activity in the sense that it will not be *caused* by genuinely external influences.

These claims are not simply of theoretical importance; they illustrate the activity involved in being a socially responsible free agent as well. The theory just presented is presupposed in Hegel's practical philosophy, where the self once again develops in a series of self-conceptions, from immediacy, to mediation, and to a new immediacy, and so forth. When Hegel refers to the immediate moments of one's self, he refers to moments that are *an sich*, or part of the agent but not yet posited by the agent herself *as a practical content of one's consciousness that through actions expresses the self* of the agent in question. In other words, one must become immediately oneself by being mediated through social interaction, i.e. *Bildung*:

Thus a child, for instance, [considered] as human in a general sense, is of course a rational essence¹²⁶; but the child's reason as such is present at first only as something inward, i.e., as a disposition or vocation, and this, which is merely internal, has for it equally the form of what is merely external, namely, the will of the parents, the learning

¹²⁶ "Essence" or "Wesen" is Hegel's term for the *an sich* moment of objects in general, i.e. what they *are*, but not yet posited in the world, i.e. as *existence*. The unity of essence and existence is *Actuality* or *Wirklichkeit*.

of its teachers, and in general the rational world that surrounds it. The education and formation of the child consists therefore in the process by which it becomes *for-itself* also what it is *in-itself* and hence for others.¹²⁷

To become *for itself* in this context is to become what we previously referred to as becoming a “person” in the contemporary use of the term. The end result of such a process is what Hegel calls *anundfürsichsein* – being-in-and-for-itself, where the Concept of humanity, the *an sich* moment (e.g. rationality, as a part) is *für sich* for the agent.¹²⁸ Hence, thought in the form of the ‘I’ must be present in the child insofar as it can be called a rational essence. Further, when Hegel said that the ‘I’ was “thinking as a subject”, this can only mean that the ‘I’ is a content inherent in thinking from the very beginning, that it not simply is a necessary feature of our own receptivity, but the minimal description of the thinking (thus form *and* content) of a human being. Thus, freedom and rationality are features of the dispositions of human beings. When that is stated, the following comment must be that freedom and rationality still is something still needs to be cultivated. The form and content of one’s self-conception will need education in order to be properly free. In other words, it is not off target to claim that we start out with a type of practical identity, and in this respect we have a confirmation of Korsgaard’s arguments. But the content of this identity is different – it is pure self-identity and negative freedom (I will return to this in the discussion of thought as practical activity – as will).

We have now come to the place where we can see a clear parting of directions regarding the arguments of Korsgaard and Hegel. Given that Hegel claims that social interaction and education have the importance suggested by the last citation, the contractualist premises of Korsgaard’s argument seem to be denied by the Hegelian account. When this is put into the context of a moral theory, otherness will already be included in the account, because, as we shall see, it is presupposed in our disposition as *ethical* agents: “This means that, for all that religion and ethical life are a matter of *believing*, or *immediate* knowing, they are radically conditioned by mediation, which is called development, education, and culture.”¹²⁹ There are two sides of this interrelation with regard to the educated human being. The theoretical is the *ideal moment*, the internalisation and *being at home in otherness* as expressed by reason’s *thinking over* of the object. The practical moment is the extension or expression of one’s own freedom in the world, i.e., agency, the positing of one’s own intentions in the objective world.

¹²⁷ Enc. I, § 140 Z.

¹²⁸ See section II.2.1.

¹²⁹ Enc. I, § 67.

II.2.3. Extending the Domain of Reason

Recall Korsgaard's arguments on the generality of reasons, where she employed Wittgenstein's private language argument. In Korsgaard's argument, the possibility for constructing her notion of Citizens of the Kingdom of Ends and using this notion to interpret the Moral Law in a proximately communicative fashion, is made reasonable in light of the public character of reasons and rationality. Hegel does also include an aspect that resembles this:

... thought is itself and its other, [...] it over-grasps its other and [...] nothing escapes it. And because *language* is the work of thought, nothing can be said in language that is not universal. What I only *mean* is *mine*; it belongs to me as this particular individual. But if language expresses only what is universal, then I cannot say what I only *mean*. And *what cannot be said* – feeling, sensation – is not what is most important, most true, but what is most insignificant, most untrue.¹³⁰

This is not exactly the same argument that we have in Korsgaard's reconstruction of Wittgenstein's argument, but it contains some of the same points, at least regarding reasons. In Korsgaard's argument, language precedes the individual consciousness, so that language as a rule-governed system is established when the individual speaker employs it. This is at least how it seems reasonable to interpret the metaphor of the language-user who obeys and the legislator who sanctions the claims of the language-user.

Now, Hegel identifies thinking with necessity, in other words that thinking in his account is law-like, and this means that if one gives reasons of a type that only expresses the inclinations of an individual, then utterances of this kind cannot reasonably be expected to conform to the necessity that language is supposed to express.¹³¹ I believe that Wittgenstein and Korsgaard are right regarding the normativity embedded in practice of this kind. As language-users as well as thinking beings, we can make mistakes and we will make mistakes now and then. The cause of mistakes of this kind is frequently misunderstandings, failures to see any known order in the presumably intended meaning of a sentence.

If we take this and combine it with the presented theory of thought as the faculty that unites the subjective and objective aspects of experience, we will have an account of intersubjectivity. And the point of priority is accordingly the already existing community of language-users. Language is a normative phenomenon largely because language exists as

¹³⁰ *Enc. I* § 20 R.

¹³¹ Compare the argument regarding the public character of form and content of reasons in section I.2.1.

structure of right and wrong practice *before* the individual language-user adopts it. This point is very similar to what Hegel says about 'Reason' in his discussion of the child. In a similar way to a human being's rational disposition, a human being is from birth constructed in a way that makes it *possible* for it to learn the proper use of language. The development of language, especially with regard to its particular form, seems to be a contingent matter, but once adopted, language itself will limit the ways in which it can be used, because the 'system', so to speak, prohibits any use of language that cannot be extended beyond one particular individual. On the other hand, individuals themselves can *contribute* to the community of language-users, but development of this kind depends upon the approval of others. If there is mutual agreement on what e.g. a single term designates, then it can be used. If not, then any use of the term will be nonsensical to any listener.

To follow Hegel, we would have to treat reasons in a similar manner, and this would mean that the strong link between a subject's reflectivity and her reasons entail her equally strong link to the surrounding world. Given Hegel's strong emphasis on development and education, i.e. from *an sich* to *für sich* to *anundfürsich*, and consequently the deep aspect of *relation to others* embedded in such notions, it will be wrong to assume that one can start from the consciousness of the individual. This is what Korsgaard's fallacy consists in from a Hegelian point of view, and it is the same insight that for Hegel necessitates the transition from Subjective Spirit to Objective Spirit.

III. OBJECTIVE SPIRIT

III.1. Transition from Philosophy of Consciousness to Practical Philosophy

It is now evident that Hegel believes that practical, reason-giving categories, founded on a conception of the self, presupposes a theory of intersubjectivity. The examples regarding language shows quite clearly that practical claims of an individual are valid insofar as they correspond to rules that governs the language-community as such. This means that it is this community that sanctions the claims individuals make. Korsgaard points out that e.g. orders from others exhibit claims of obedience, claims that we *immediately* are inclined to follow.¹³² But through Hegel (and Wittgenstein) we see that this immediacy is mediated by the fact that we are able to recognize e.g. an order as an order. The fact that some claim is an order does of course correspond to the intentions of the other (at least as far as we are concerned, and as far as we can *know*), but it also corresponds to the mutual understanding of what an order is; and this understanding is not restricted to the agents of this particular example. As Korsgaard says, the “argument invites you to change placed with the other, and you could not do that if you failed to see what you and the other have in common”.¹³³ And what is common is not only one’s humanity, it is, as Korsgaard quite rightly says, the fact that both of the agents are *persons*, and it also includes a connection between the practical identities of the agents. It includes a mutual recognition of each other as persons, made possible through intersubjective mediation, for example language and customs. In other words, the medium of e.g. language is one of the means we employ in order to *express* or *externalise* our intentions; they incorporate our will.

The will marks the transition from subjective to objective spirit for Hegel. The relevant difference between the two levels is that subjective spirit first and foremost is a treatment of the individual ‘I’, while objective spirit, as *expressed* or *externalised* spirit concerns the community, and is therefore to some extent presupposed in the fully developed subjective spirit, i.e. spirit as reason. In other words, the objective sphere is needed in order for there to be surroundings in which an individual can fully develop. Development will to a certain extent be possible within a purely “natural” environment, i.e. an environment that only consist of a human being in interaction with objects. For both our and Hegel’s purpose, such an analysis will exhibit several shortcomings. One of those is the previously mentioned

¹³² Korsgaard (1996), pp. 142-3.

¹³³ Korsgaard (1996), p. 143.

possibility of a bad or false infinite. The reason for this is that subjective spirit mostly involves seeing *oneself* in external objects,¹³⁴ which means that any proper foundation for a practical identity as a *moral* identity will be severely limited. Objective spirit, on the other hand, is “spirit ... set on constructing its own revelation, making the world over in its image”.¹³⁵ Hence, any *community* or society is objective spirit, and this provides the framework in which the previously mentioned process of *Bildung* takes place.¹³⁶ Others are thus relevant as they, in light of *Bildung*, will partake in conditioning the rational disposition of the person, and they are thus part of the foundations of the agent’s practical identity. We shall now begin the section on agency, or on the will, which is one of the central capabilities that makes Hegel’s version of intersubjectivity one that has some deep similarities with Korsgaard’s account. Both regarding “public reasons” and also regarding how well one can know the intentions of the other.

III.2. Reason and the Will

The will is reason as *posited* or made objective, or as Robert Williams says, “...reason in practical activity”.¹³⁷ This means that to analyse an action is tantamount to an attempt to understand the intentions of the agent who performed the action. A stronger claim would be that the agent’s practical identity is partly revealed through an action. Whether or not the agent’s identity is revealed in full depends on the manifestation itself, for example whether or not it allows different interpretations, or to what degree an action corresponds to intersubjective standards. As we have seen, an utterance that refers only to particular inclinations in an individual cannot be expected to be grasped as easily as e.g. a logical argument. The latter will at least contain some shared standards. Another example could be values. Whereas a particular inclination or sensation may be a phenomenon experienced by one individual only, values tend to refer to shared practices and experiences, even if they only are shared by a few people. The will, as reason made objective or manifested, is thus a precondition for interaction, because it involves an attitude and a corresponding activity that others may respond to. And others can and will respond because they, too, are creatures of

¹³⁴ deVries (1988), p. 52.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ We see here that Hegel places human beings firmly within a social setting, a sort of early version of Heidegger’s *in-der-Welt-sein*.

¹³⁷ Williams (1997), p. 122.

will, acting beings. In other words, the separation of theoretical and practical reason is only two sides of the same coin, according to Hegel.

The distinction between thought and will is simply that between theoretical and practical attitudes. But they are not two separate faculties; on the contrary, the will is a particular way of thinking – thinking translating itself to existence [*Dasein*], thinking as the drive to give itself existence.¹³⁸

In other words, Hegel's conception of the combination of thought and will shares some characteristics with Korsgaard's determination of practical identity as a practical, normative form of identity. The connection between thought and will (i.e. will as manifested, active thought) suggests a strong emphasis on reasons for acting in the Hegelian account, in the same way that the reflective self is connected to reasons in Korsgaard's lectures. Hegel himself confirms this when he states that "when intelligence is aware that it is determinative of the content, which is *its* mode no less than it is the mode of being, it is will".¹³⁹ Agency cannot be interpreted in any other way than in terms of the will for Hegel, and as rational, agency or practical activity begins with thought, and is accordingly necessarily connected to all the designations we ascribed to thinking above.¹⁴⁰ But Hegel takes the relationship between theoretical and practical attitudes a bit further. The relationship between thought and will cannot be between anything but different attitudes, because thought is in itself activity:

... the will contains the theoretical within itself. ... It is ... impossible to adopt a theoretical attitude or to think without a will, for in thinking we are necessarily active. The content of what is thought certainly takes the form of being; but this being is something mediated, something posited by our activity.¹⁴¹

To the extent that willing, as a practical attitude, partakes in our cognition, theoretical activity should itself be described as somewhat practical. This means that thought itself is an intentional activity, something that contributes to explain the difference between thought and representations. The will is thus also a holistic concept in that it both provides content and of form, as well as it is responsible for translating content and form into objective

¹³⁸ *PR*, § 4 Z. *Dasein* is normally translated into "determinate being" or "being-there". "Being-there is being with a determinacy, that is [given] as immediate determinacy or as a determinacy that [simply] is: *quality*." (*Enc. I*, § 90) There is potential for misguidance in this determination, one that could lead us to interpret *Dasein* as only material being. This is not what Hegel means. He does denote e.g. language as *Dasein*: "...language as the most spiritual existence [*Dasein*] of the spiritual." (*PR*, § 164)

¹³⁹ *Enc. III*, § 468.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. *PR*, § 4 Z.

¹⁴¹ *PR*, § 4 Z.

manifestations, i.e. actions.¹⁴² Because of this strong interrelation between that which usually is referred to as subjective and objective, expressed in the claim that the rational subject *itself* is manifested in its actions, the actions are seen as extensions of the individual will. The entire scenario entails in other words a very strong sense of *responsibility* regarding one's actions.¹⁴³ And events cannot be regarded as actions, i.e. expressions of the will, unless they have the characteristic of belonging to someone, i.e. someone who expresses her own will in the action – who declares it to be *hers*.

This strong interconnection between thought and will leads to a theory that gives different theoretical conceptions very different practical consequences. Hegel discusses different positions that emphasises abstractly conceived *moments* of Hegel's own holistic concepts of reason and the will. Hegel does accordingly return to several of the theoretical positions, but he examines them as *practical attitudes*. For example, the previously discussed *representation*, or more precisely, the ideas associated with representation, will for Hegel constitute a self-conception that expresses itself by annihilating all determinacy. This self-conception, in which cognised content has the status of being 'given', and hence external or alien to the self, will by annihilating the 'given' prove for itself its own freedom. The ideas associated with representation are more or less tantamount to the conception of the relation with the world that governs the Understanding. I will comment this briefly before I continue.

The first thing that needs to be stated is that Hegel more or less postulates freedom as both a characteristic of and explicit *concern* for every acting human being. So if we recall Korsgaard's arguments regarding humanity, we will see that Hegel through the reconstruction of the theoretical content of representation, where he makes it into a practical attitude, constructs a perverse version of a subjectivity that is unlimited (which is pure I=I only), who regards every *given* content as limitation of its own indeterminateness, and that therefore, *by having freedom as content of its own*, will seek to destroy all determinacy. Although slightly re-interpreted, Hegel uses a position similar to the self as indeterminate described in section I.2.2., and examines the practical consequences of having such a self-conception. This picture of the self represents Hegel's attempt to construct a self-conception out of a purely transcendental analysis of the capabilities of the individual. What we have here, is a very clear transformation from theoretical to practical philosophy, in that capabilities and categories

¹⁴² This is, as Robert Williams points out, related to Kant's distinction between *Wille* and *Willkür*. See Williams (1997), pp. 122 ff. See *Enc.* III, §§ 477-8. For *Willkür*, content is something external to it, although Hegel claims that what its activity consists in is to choose between different inclinations. Insofar as these inclinations are something outside the agent – a content of *Willkür* that must be described as 'given' – *Willkür* expresses contingency, and not freedom in the proper (Hegelian) sense.

¹⁴³ See *PR*, §§ 113, 115-18.

inherent in our cognising of the world themselves are transformed into explicit *conceptions* that the agent acts in accordance with. In this sense, what we have is a counter-example to Korsgaard's attempt to construct practical categories out of transcendental determinations of the human subject, because we have here a subject that is *abstracted* from experience and interaction, but one that is placed in a context of experience and interaction in order to see whether it is a feasible self-conception.

The determination of freedom we are dealing with here is the notion of freedom as absolute indeterminateness, i.e. what has been called "negative freedom".¹⁴⁴ As interpreted here, negative freedom derives from the conception of humanity that holds three things to be true of human cognition and agency. The first is that human beings are constructed in a way that makes us partly independent of the external world, because the external world in its determinate form is structured by abilities *in the individual*. In other words, we are responsible for a *conditioning* of the world. The second point is that these abilities are elevated to self-conceptions and combined with the self-conception of a free being. The third point is that the world is external to the subject, and every experience of this external world will then be seen as events that may influence the individual, and they are in addition caused by something *alien* or *external* to the agent. When this self-conception is raised to a normative status, to that which will be manifested in the will of the agent, the result is an individual who sees otherness as a threat and seeks to destroy it. But the entire scenario is constructed on the basis of treating one's humanity as a normative, practical form of identity, even though this identity gives us intolerable and implausible explanations of human agency.¹⁴⁵ The opposite position, *positive* freedom, involves what we have called being-at-home-with-otherness, or that external things not necessarily are seen as opposed to one's freedom: This position, which we can ascribe to Hegel, claims that there is a continuity between self and otherness, that otherness not necessarily should be seen as something genuinely *alien* to the agent, and that it therefore not threatens the freedom of the agent. Given that the agent as will manifests itself, the agent will as active being itself be positivity. Positive freedom is in other words a version of freedom that is compatible with the self-limitation, and thus compatible with the individual

¹⁴⁴ The distinction between negative and positive freedom is to my knowledge first made by Isaiah Berlin. It does correspond to a separation between positive as manifest and negative as abstract, a usage that was common in Hegel's time, and one Hegel himself uses already in the *Spirit of Christianity and its Fate*, written some time between 1798 and 1800. The distinction is also present in some even earlier fragments.

¹⁴⁵ It should be added to this that Hegel's seemingly far-fetched examples may not be as far from the target as they seem at first. An example is Benjamin (1988). This is a study that uses one of the most famous of Hegel's discussions, i.e. the Master-Slave dialectic of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in order to explain domination, and one of the central issues in her analysis is negative freedom and the subject-object dichotomy as content of the will.

as an agent. Given that the agent herself is positivity, there is a similarity in how an agent must see herself, as a rational being that extends her rationality into actions, and how she sees the “external world”. Given that the self willingly commits a self-limitation, then the limitation imposed on it by the surrounding environment in which it lives should not be seen as a something external that limits the freedom of the self, but something that goes hand in hand with the individual’s freedom as *determinate* activity. But it will depend on the self-conception of the agent in question. If the agent has a conception of freedom as negativity, then the environment will be alien insofar as this conception is part of the agent’s practical identity.

Hence, the interpretation of the will’s activity given here can also be read as an attempt to construct something similar to a transcendental account of agency *and* normativity (which is inherent in the position as negative freedom) by replacing Korsgaard’s description of the reflective human being with an negatively free human being. I believe that this position is theoretically (though not practically) stronger than Korsgaard’s because it stops before the attempt to extend the reflectivity of the individual has been made.¹⁴⁶

We have now seen one example of self-conception based on previously discussed theoretical positions. The connection between the formal or structural sides of human consciousness and freedom led to negative freedom, a conception that was indeterminate in that it was opposed to content, due to the *given* nature of content. We shall now see whether its opposite conception, namely a self-conception based on determinacy is a more feasible option. The former position was subjectivist because it lacked the conceptual means necessary to translate itself into objective existence without also involving performative contradiction: To leave a lasting, objective impression on its surroundings would be tantamount to determine itself in a particular manner.¹⁴⁷ Determinacy, on the other hand, is the self’s manifesting of itself in a determinate manner. If we recall the discussion on habit, where habit was seen as the stage where consciousness liberated itself from the objective mode through the (later explicit) separation of subject and object, then the will manifested as determinacy is a step backwards. It is immersed in objectivity and accordingly unfree. In other words, it lacks subjectivity.¹⁴⁸ We could extend this point by saying that the will in this position at best can be seen as expressing particular idiosyncrasies. Even though it might seem a bit odd to

¹⁴⁶ Another point is that negative freedom as a self-conception, though a very implausible one in Hegel’s example, still is present in our modern conception of freedom, e.g. the modern notion of “liberty”. For some related examples and practical differences between negative and positive freedom, see Wood (1990), pp. 41-2.

¹⁴⁷ See Williams (1997), p. 124.

¹⁴⁸ Williams (1997), pp. 125-6.

include a self in this scenario, it must be included if Hegel's theory of the will is to be enlightened by this discussion. Thus, I believe that the correct way to view the will as determinacy is to claim that it presupposes the distinction between subject and object, and that it accordingly *must* include a self, but that this self should be seen as the extremity of consciousness' activity of translating the objective world into its own subjective self. It is, in practical terms, pure acceptance without any evaluation, and as such it lacks subjectivity as an explicitly defining characteristic *for consciousness*, but necessary *in itself*. Hegel's own practical examples are those of the child or the slave, and since these two are interpreted as rationality and will *an sich* and not *anundfürsich*, they seem to be consistent with this interpretation.¹⁴⁹ So while each of the two mentioned positions may be seen as respectively absolute subjectivity and absolute objectivity, Hegel's own position involves them both.

The activity of the will consist in cancelling [*aufzuheben*] the contradiction between subjectivity and objectivity and in translating its ends from their subjective determination into an objective one, while at the same time remaining *with itself* in this objectivity.¹⁵⁰

But how do we get from the previous articulations of the will and to this one? If we take a look at the two forms, we see that they correspond to two different kinds of content: A purely subjective, indeterminate one, and an objective absolutely determined one. In other words, content as pure form, or refusal to take any form, and form as pure content, or a lack of reflective distance vis-à-vis the content.

We shall continue this discussion by attempting to come closer to Hegel's own position. This will alter our focus from the previous view on the subject as abstracted from social setting, and into a discussion of what will happen when the subject becomes involved in *interaction*, and accordingly is *responded* to.

The next sections will focus on an important qualification regarding normativity. As we have seen in this section, it is plausible to claim that Hegel holds every act of the will to be normative. This does not mean that they are ethically good, though. When we introduce other people as part of the inquiry on practical identity, we will see that interaction with other people, as opposed to a reflecting on other people, is that which for Hegel constitutes ethics as a necessary part of a properly conceived practical identity. But it is nevertheless important to keep in mind that there are versions of normative practical identities within Hegel's system that has nothing to do with morality, and there are reasons inherent in these identities that

¹⁴⁹ Cf. *PR*, § 26.

¹⁵⁰ *PR*, § 28.

does not depend on e.g. a particular upbringing. Such a picture of the human agent will of course exhibit several shortcomings, but it is nonetheless constructed as a very real possibility and a real facet of human agency in Hegel's works, although it is an abstract and incomplete story of the human being.

III.3. From Subjectivity to Intersubjectivity

In Korsgaard's analysis as well as in the previous account we might say that the self who acts in accordance with her practical identity is committed to a *specific* practical identity. The strength of Hegel's argument is that the connection between an agent's self-conception and its actions are closely interconnected: It makes sense to ascribe abstract content such as negative freedom to a practical identity in the account just presented, whereas it remains more vague what kind of agency one would expect from a person who treated her own humanity in Korsgaard's sense as practical, normative form of identity. Apart from the obligation given by the Moral Law, the other guidelines inherent in Korsgaard's conception of a practical identity are those that are offered by the categorical imperative. The other level Korsgaard included was in contrast to this subjectivist account a strong emphasis on intersubjectivity – public reasons. As we saw, it was difficult to argue for both at once with the means we found within Korsgaard.

We have up until this point focused on the parts of Hegel's philosophy that deals with the subjective conditions of freedom, but we see that something similar to Korsgaard's notion of public reasons is present in Hegel's view of the mature agent as well. One example of this is the previously mentioned emphasis on the importance of education. So the question is, what will happen to that which originally was determined as subjective motivations, namely freedom and correspondence with the world, when the self-conception that explains the way in which these interests are manifested is a self-conception that partially will be constructed in interaction with others? As we said in section II.2.3., Hegel treats language as an already existing system that the individual must be educated in and conform to. Since reasons are part of that which is expressed in language they are also related to this system that in a sense exists independently of individuals. Does not this mean that Hegel himself is faced with the same problems regarding the causal influence of reasons, and that he consequently must lack the means necessary to distinguish between agency and behaviour? And if reasons should be

regarded in this way in Hegel's account as well, will this not mean that the difference between morality and normativity in general will be decided at a level beyond the individual? I will in this section with its subsections answer that Hegel indeed does have the means to distinguish between agency and behaviour, and that the difference between morality and normativity in general can be decided by the individual, but only insofar as the individual is placed within a social context.

There is a significant way in which the account given by Hegel differs from Korsgaard's account. This difference springs from an initial similarity. Both Korsgaard and Hegel talk about the self as a unit that exercises and manifests its judgments in light of certain reasons, and these reasons are in both cases related to the agent's practical identity. The similarity does accordingly consist in the attempt to unify the self and otherness by opening the possibility for having the subject endorsing external events or claims made by others on account of their consistency with the self-conception of the agent. The difference that springs from this similarity is the way this assumption is treated in the works of Korsgaard and Hegel. Whereas Korsgaard treats this at the third person level, as a description that will explain the reasons another person will have for endorsing or dismissing e.g. a claim made by another, Hegel treats this demand at the first person level, which means that *correspondence is seen as a reason in itself*. The person does not only differentiate the world on the basis of the correspondence of Notion and object, but correspondence is itself seen as a reason operative in the self and for the self. Hegel's description of the subject thus opens the possibility for alteration and negation of particular self-conceptions as events the individual will be aware of and will be able to interpret as rational in the sense that she can understand the reasons for it. In other words, there is a possibility of still having reasons that motivates the self to continue acting even if the claims made by others may negate or be contrary to an agent's practical identity. We can formulate this in another way. Korsgaard treats this correspondence as a demand for consistency regarding one's substantial values, something that makes the explanation similar on the levels of third and first person. The reason for this is that it is the same substantial values that will explain a decision on both levels. For Hegel, on the other hand, the content of one's self-conception is described differently, because the correspondence itself is seen as a reason to act even though the remaining reasons one might have to e.g. disapprove of the claims made by another are negated. Thus, Hegel describes the individual as an evaluative, self-critical being in and for itself.

This shows that the previous determinations of the self-conceptions of the willing and acting self as indeterminate and determinate is only to be seen as mere *possibilities*. But

possibilities that nonetheless derive from reasons. For example, because one cannot reasonably will something unless one is prepared to determine oneself in a specific manner, there will be quite conceivable options for negating one's own indeterminate. In other words, there are reasons to do otherwise in the Hegelian account, reasons that derive from the way we as acting human beings fundamentally relate to the world.¹⁵¹

But there are problems with the claims made by myself in this reading of Hegel. The problems concern whether it in fact is reasonable to claim that either determinacy or indeterminacy can contain any possibilities of evaluation. The former is not sufficiently distanced from objectivity, while the latter holds it to be insignificant. And so both of them make up identities that are *detached* from the world in that they exclude otherness: The one simply swallows all otherness, while the other is intimidated by the very thought of it. These two positions, due to a similar stance vis-à-vis otherness and the world in that it is the self that constitutes the point of priority, can be regarded as counter-examples to the notion of endorsing claims and events in the world insofar as these correspond to an agent's self-conception.

There is one characterization of individuality that we have yet to discuss, although we have claimed it to be inherent in the already present determination of the individual as thinking and willing. The feature I want to mention is responsibility. Whereas autonomy and judgmental or evaluative capacities represents an individual's capabilities to distance oneself from external influence, responsibility is directly connected to the social arena, and not simply an agent's own sense of authorship for her actions. Responsibility involves three things that are connected to this discussion. First, responsibility entails a conscious self-limitation, or in other words a proper act of will. As such, it presupposes autonomy, or that nothing genuinely other than the self commits the action. Thirdly, responsibility connects these features with a social demand and a social affirmation of the subjects as agents in the proper sense. Hence,

¹⁵¹ Indeterminacy is consequently ruled out as a proper description of thought as well, given that thought and will are two notions referring to the same thing in different attitudes. Further, when thought thinks something over, it is at the same time involved with a willing restriction of its content, that at the same time is its form, and so thought is itself as finite and determined as the will is. Their universality is also the same; we have the possibility to will virtually everything, and so our capability, if abstracted from its *actual activity*, may be seen as independent. But it makes no sense to will abstractions or indeterminacy, and it is also inconsistent. In addition, Robert Williams points out that self-consciousness in Hegel's theory of recognition has a double significance: Self-consciousness is also what it not is. This is relevant to the present discussion, because pure indeterminacy (which is the phenomenological result of determinacy understood as desire) as negative freedom is unstable, and its very own self-conception implies determinacy, both in itself, and in the context of its (inevitable) interactions with the world. In itself, it is determinate in virtue of excluding all other determinacy and thus reducing itself to something self-identical, i.e. an object. In relation to otherness, it is determinacy because it is dependent on external things, such as food, in order to persevere. The last characterization reminds of Plato's *Gorgias*, and the description of the hedonist as a "leaky jar" that constantly needs to be refilled and as such is a source of concern (*Gorgias* 493d-494a). On the double significance of self-consciousness, see Williams (1997), pp. 51-2.

the relevant condition of Hegel's ethics is that a practical identity must be compatible with the realization of the freedom of others, and this means that others must be seen as an operative notion within the agent's conception of her own practical identity. They must be part of one's practical identity as an active, normative form of identity, which means that a view that only sees other people as either threats or objects that in some way are extensions of the self will be flawed.

III.3.1. Recognition

The discussion until now has focused on two features, the first of which was the individual's freedom, that was seen as a determination of how the individual is in itself and how it is for itself, i.e. as a self-conscious concern. The other characteristic was the individual's motivation to correspond to its environment, a concern that was indebted to the ontologically equal status of subject and object. This was separated from Korsgaard's account in that Korsgaard emphasized consistency and suggested either a primary ontological position for subjectivity or for intersubjectivity. This was mainly due to the Kantian way of interpreting otherness, either as a matter of consistency or as public reasons.

The two characteristics focused on in the Hegelian account are supposed to describe the individual as an evaluative, self-critical individual due to the assumption that both of these characteristics constitute explicit, normative *concerns* for the agent. And these are the initial determinations of a Hegelian foundation of practical identity.

We are now entering issues that once again force us to redefine the ontology of the Hegelian part of the thesis, which means that the initial subject-object dualism must be replaced with the triangular ontology of subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and objectivity. We must in other words deal with how the structural side of intersubjectivity, for example such phenomena as language, is to be incorporated in the theory, and we must also attempt to separate the concrete other person from objectivity. What we are aiming at, in addition to these descriptive inclusions of a third ontological level, is a way to grasp the relevant distinction between morality and normativity in general. But we shall start at the other end, with a short discussion of the possibility of self-sufficient agents.¹⁵²

¹⁵² I have borrowed the term "Self-sufficient agents" from Pinkard (1996), who analyses the Master-Slave dialectic of the *PhG* under the headline – "The Claims of Self-Sufficient Agency: Freedom and Self-Consciousness". See Pinkard (1996), pp. 46 ff. Westphal (2003) agrees with this translation of Hegel's headline

In accordance with the description of the individual that we just gave the question arises, do we really need other people? And if we do need others, then is this not only because we live in social environments that make us interact with others due to our own selfish concerns? These are questions that Hegel deals with in his theory of recognition, and in particular the famous Master-Slave dialectic. This argument starts out with two self-sufficient agents who confront each other in a type of pre-social context. We have already discussed what type of practical identities that confront each other in Master-Slave dialectic. They are immediate in the same way that the will is described as immediate in its self-interpretation as indeterminate,¹⁵³ and their conception of freedom is that of negative freedom.¹⁵⁴ The basic difference between being confronted with others and being confronted with external objects is other people's ability to negate the actions of self-consciousness, and thereby also negate its intentions. The following citation concerns this difference:

In this determination lies the tremendous contradiction that, on the one hand, the 'I' is wholly universal, absolutely pervasive, and interrupted by no limit, is the universal essence common to all men, the two mutually related selves therefore constituting one identity, constituting, so to speak, one light; and yet, on the other hand, they are also two selves rigidly and unyieldingly confronting each other, each existing as a reflection-into-self, as absolutely distinct from and impenetrable by the other.¹⁵⁵

It is interesting that Hegel describes the two selves as "the essence common to all men".¹⁵⁶ And the very fact that both of these are described as the same essence should in light of Korsgaard commit them, as humans, to treat the other as a sort of extension of oneself, i.e. as a free being worthy of respect and fellow Citizen of the Kingdom of Ends. For Hegel, on the other hand, the outcome of this confrontation is a struggle. That a struggle will occur is no mystery given the self-interpretation of the selves. But it is also a denial of the assumption that one is committed to respect others in virtue of one's mere humanity: The selves in this scenario represent a close approximation to purely universal human beings, i.e. human beings

(also regarding the *PhG*) by claiming that this is the correct translation of the main title of the section, "Selbständigkeit und Unselbständigkeit des Selbstbewusstseins". See Westphal (2003), p. 60 n. 13.

¹⁵³ To be more precise, practical identity as indeterminacy is an immediate position which itself is *mediated* by the interaction with natural objects. The interaction with natural objects (i.e. consumption) is that which transforms the initial immediate self-consciousness (self-consciousness as desire) to the indeterminate self-consciousness whose practical identity is self-identity and negative freedom. Cf. *Enc.* III, §§ 426-29.

¹⁵⁴ See section III.2.

¹⁵⁵ *Enc.* III, § 430 Z.

¹⁵⁶ The words "allen" and "gemeinsame Wesen" is (among others) emphasized in the Suhrkamp edition of the *Werke*. The *Zusätze*, however, are from the text of Boumann, who reputedly made changes in the *Encyclopaedia* text (See TW 10:430), and these should accordingly be treated with a bit of caution. The Miller translation adds confusion, because (as is evident compared to my citation) it lays emphasis on a comparatively small amount on the text (his translation is also based on Boumann's text). It is however common to use the *Zusätze* in modern readings of Hegel, and this thesis is no exception.

without further *particular* descriptions. Alternatively, the selves confronting each other could perhaps better be described as purely rational beings, because it is after all humanity as mere rationality that confronts the one in its confrontation with the other. The concern for freedom and correspondence is maintained, but the latter has been redefined as the concern to make the world over in its image – i.e. pure negative freedom.

On the other hand, ‘humanity’ is a relational term, because it points to the universal characteristics the two confronting parts share, but what they will not recognize in the other. This is the contradiction pointed out in the *Zusatz*,¹⁵⁷ and it thus signifies a critique of a pure reflectivity as a sufficient condition for moral agency. In other words, one’s rationality is in this scenario used as normative practical identity. As practical it is necessarily related to other, external things. Hence it is self-contradicting in that it *should* recognize significance in this otherness as such, while what it does is to refuse significance in otherness on account of its own universality.¹⁵⁸ A practical identity of this kind accordingly lacks the potential to extend beyond its own self-relation. It does not matter whether e.g. reasons or language or any other intersubjective phenomenon places the individual in a social setting, because as long as the reasons operative in one’s practical identity can be deduced from a non-social consciousness, these may rule out all other reasons due to issues of consistency.

As readers of Hegel are well aware of, this dialectic develops from a life and death struggle and into a relationship of Master and Slave. The latter is the inevitable result of the combination of a self-conception consisting of negative freedom and the fact that one of the agents will lose in such a struggle. I will not go into detail regarding how the transition from this stage to recognition is made, because there is an immense amount of secondary literature that already have dealt with that issue. Given that I have focused on self-conceptions this far, I will continue to do so.

The outcome of the life and death struggle, as well as the contradictions inherent in the indeterminate self-conception, shows that the self-conception that makes this scenario explicable is a case of the bad or false infinite.¹⁵⁹ Insofar as the self-conception of the agent is more moderate than described here there will be possibilities of redefining the self, and re-evaluate the normative status of the reasons one previously acted in accordance with. This more moderate position is primarily directed at the agent’s conception of “correspondence”.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. *Enc.* III, § 431 Z.

¹⁵⁸ It should also be mentioned that Hegel holds ethics (read: *Sittlich*) to be part of the *Concept* of the human being – it is part of the metaphysical description of humanity – and immoral and amoral behaviour is accordingly itself a contradiction, a manifestation of intentions at odds with what human beings are in themselves.

¹⁵⁹ See section I.2.2.

In other words, the description I have ascribed to “consistency”, i.e. that the external world is consistent with the self insofar as it corresponds to the self’s notion of freedom, i.e. negative freedom, will constitute an infinite negativity. The only way to reasonably interpret an alteration of the self-conception of the latter agent will be by means of force, or negating its conception of freedom, which means that it must become a slave. For our more moderate purposes, though, and regarding what we described as the self-critical, evaluative individual, the correspondence takes another form, one that should lead it to evaluate its reasons. But the important point is that this must be seen as prescriptive. Insofar as the individual is a self-critical, evaluative individual, it *should* re-evaluate its reasons if the correspondence with the world e.g. leads to struggle, or is weakened for other reasons. But it *must not do so*. In some cases, it would even be right in not doing so, for example if the environment the individual lived in was a fascist environment. Thus, we must continue with the reasons that may justify the individual in resisting the claims of its environment, the reasons that will mark the distinction between morality and normativity in general. I will continue with focus on the individual as it was first described in this section, but the term “correspondence” will be translated into “recognition”. Given that we are dealing with the individual seen within a social context, “correspondence” is an insufficient term because it suggests a conceptual relation that is limited to the consciousness of individuals. Recognition, on the other, implies that proper correspondence between the self and other involves the *activity of the other* in affirming the self. This can take many different forms. An important distinction, however, is that one must separate recognition as a motivation in the individual, and *mutual* recognition as the establishing of a reciprocal, affirmative relationship between agents. For example, the struggle in the Master-Slave dialectic exhibits recognition only as a motivation in the individual, and it cannot become *mutual* unless both in some way redefine themselves. In other words, in the motivation to be recognized there are limitations of what types of agency that really can fulfil this motivation, and the concept of recognition thus marks the transition from mere normativity and to a special branch of normativity that concerns how one responds to others, to the domain of morality, or ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*), as Hegel calls it.

Recognition is a big and difficult issue which is present in throughout Hegel’s social philosophy, and different interpreters have commented on the various versions of mutual recognition, from the conflict-related aspects present in the Master-Slave dialectic, to the recognition of oneself in the other that characterizes the relationship between brother and

sister,¹⁶⁰ to the deeply emotional recognition in the love-relationship,¹⁶¹ the legal recognition as possessors of property,¹⁶² and several more. Another point is that Hegel never really gives any deduction of the concept of recognition. It is rather introduced as a facet of human interaction, and its validity is “proved” by what it can explain, and what types of agency that are ruled out as a result of attempts to make them fit with the interpretation of the human being as a being in need of recognition. Hegel’s discussions of slavery in ancient Greece and Rome are further examples of this claim. As we have seen, Hegel held that Antiquity was an “objective” order of society that contained no room for individuality: “[T]hey did not know that man as such, man as this universal ‘I’, as rational self-consciousness, is entitled to freedom”.¹⁶³ Freedom was in Antiquity limited to those that had the status of being citizens, meaning that the major part of the population of e.g. a Greek *polis* would have restricted freedom in the sense that elements of *otherness* restricted their agency. Thus, Hegel explains the slave-revolts in Rome as a struggle for recognition.¹⁶⁴

There is obviously not enough room to exhaustively discuss this important notion in Hegel’s social philosophy, and I take it to be sufficient here to note that recognition as a process involves the following moments in a simplified version:¹⁶⁵

1. An initial confrontation, or an *Anstoß*, that exhibits the difference between the agents as *singular* agents;
2. The mediation, or *Vermittlung* – conflict or affirmation, depending on whether the recognition is mutual or not, which in turn depends on the self-conceptions (read: practical identities) of the self-consciousnesses involved in the process;
3. The other is recognized as a free agent, enslaved, or killed, depending on the practical identities that confront each other in the mediation, and the context in which recognition takes place. The proper result of a *mutual* recognition is *freilassen*, or the mutual recognition of each party as a free agent, that consequently is regarded as such and left in this way by the acting selves.

¹⁶⁰ *PhG*, pp. 337-8; *PhS*, § 457, p. 275.

¹⁶¹ *PR*, § 158 Z.

¹⁶² *PR*, § 71 R.

¹⁶³ *Enc.* III, § 433 Z.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ This version is indebted to Robert Williams’ studies of recognition. He offers an account that is by far more complex and comprehensive than this, but these are elements that are taken from his book, *Hegel’s Ethics of Recognition*. See Williams (1997), especially Part One. The focus on self-conceptions is introduced into this account according to the subject matter of the thesis, and is my own contribution. The contribution is in turn of course inspired by Korsgaard’s lectures.

Apart from this structural determination, recognition is a process that also implies that we *should* transform the previous self-conception of negative freedom to one of positive freedom. Thus, recognition is introduced as a feature that not necessarily needs to involve cognition of the difference between the agents involved. The process of recognition that is summarized in the three moments above is accordingly the process that takes place between individuals as persons in the contemporary sense of ‘persons’. In other words people who already have a practical identity that includes particular characteristics (apart from the obvious differences that separates one person from another as an object – physical distinction¹⁶⁶). But it is also a concept that denotes the type of affirmation one receives within the family.

Opposed to my reading of the role of recognition, it has been claimed that recognition has an indispensable role in the system because Hegel holds intersubjective mediation to be a necessary condition for self-consciousness, or as Kenneth Westphal puts it, that “self-consciousness is possible only on the basis of consciousness of others”.¹⁶⁷ This interpretation is connected to the Master-Slave dialectic, and the initial negative results of this dialectic is according to this reading meant to show that unless mutual recognition takes place, then self-consciousness as the reflective structure of mind (cf. Korsgaard) will not be possible. If this is true, then the interpretation of recognition suggested here is wrong. Westphal himself argues that this is wrong, not only because of the size of the section in the *PhG*, but because Hegel’s aim is to argue polemical against Fichte’s thesis on the compatibility of self-sufficient agents and mutual recognition.¹⁶⁸ It is true that consciousness, not of others, but of otherness, seems to be involved in the process of achieving self-consciousness in Hegel’s theory, but the fact is that self-consciousness must be presupposed in all of the stages of the *PhG* that is prior to the introduction of recognition. So when Allen Wood says that the “gist of Hegel’s position is that I can have an adequate consciousness of myself only if I am recognized by others, and recognition can be adequate only if it is fully mutual”,¹⁶⁹ what “adequacy” should refer to, is whether or not the *self-conception* of the agent correspond to the Concept of the human being as a social being. And consciousness and self-consciousness is presupposed in the notion of a self-conception, because to have a self-conception is to have an *evaluative, reflective self-*

¹⁶⁶ By this I do not mean that physical appearance is a trivial thing, but it is subsumed under the concept of practical identity insofar as it is connected to some *ideal*. In those cases, an ideal e.g. of beauty will be connected to a set of reasons and a particular interpretation.

¹⁶⁷ Westphal (2003), § 13.9. p. 60.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. pp. 60-62.

¹⁶⁹ Wood (1990), p. 78.

relation. And so the issue in the Master-Slave dialectic is the question of what will happen if two self-sufficient agents confront each other.

Apart from the Master-Slave dialectic, the individual in Hegel's philosophy is from the beginning seen within a social setting, a setting that makes recognition possible, given that it constitutes the climate one idealizes and transforms into one's own thoughts. The family is in Hegel's philosophy seen as a unity consisting of positive freedom. If we recall the self-conceptions that gave rise to the struggle in the Master-Slave dialectic, we see a very different scenario in Hegel's description of the relation between brother and sister:

The brother, however, is for the sister a passive, similar being in general; the recognition of herself in him is pure and unmixed with any natural desire. In this relationship, therefore, the indifference of the particularity, and the ethical contingency of the latter, are not present; but the moment of the individual self, recognizing and being recognized, can here assert its right, because it is linked to the equilibrium of the blood and is a relation devoid of desire.¹⁷⁰

In other words, the self-conceptions of brother and sister are a form of pure positive freedom, lacking any of the characteristics of the previously described self-conceptions. This is a type of immediate recognition devoid of conflict due to the absence of negative freedom. Even though the brother-sister relation may be a bit more turbulent than how Hegel describes it, the family is certainly the place wherein the self is affirmed simply on the basis of its *being*. This does not mean that the parents and the child are equal, though. The child is affirmed as a "rational essence", but not recognized as a mature adult. Thus, the family, as an initial personal relationship, will ideally be an environment of affirmation, one that is seen by the individual as a 'home', as an environment that affirms the gradual development of proper agency in the self. This does of course include a gradual inclusion of conflict, because individual growth is characterized by an individualization of our motivations, or in other words, that we start developing particular concerns that distinguishes us from others. But although the child may be seen as a prime example of a being in need of affirmation regarding its beliefs and actions, this is also a fundamental need and concern for a mature individual. Recognition is thus connected to our self-concern in that it contains the possibility of having our self-conceptions confirmed: "In being recognized as independent, his self-understanding (his being-for-self) is *affirmed for him* as being true, as being in line with what he really is (his being-in-itself)."¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ *PhG* pp. 337-8, *PhS* § 457, p. 275.

¹⁷¹ Pinkard (1996), p. 53.

This is Wittgenstein's argument all over again, only this time it starts out with a more holistic version, where language is supplied with the more general perspective of *development* and *education*. We have noted that the self to some extent is dependent on the result of its will's manifestations in the objective world, because the self is present in the world through its expressions as a willing being. And, as we have said, other people have a special significance in this matter, because others have the unique capability of being the same creatures as the subject, and they can therefore resist or endorse the intentions of the subject. Other people thus have a continual status as partaking in the *conditioning* of our self-conceptions. Although these self-conceptions are something irreducibly connected to the self as the author of her own reasons, the need for recognition connects the reasons of the self to the expectation for affirmation by others. The external part of the conditioning of our self-conception does accordingly come from two sources. The first is concrete others, as implied by the discussion above, and the second one is the structural demands imposed on us by community.¹⁷² Demands of the latter type will be relatively abstract, normative guidelines that govern how we are to interact. Examples of this may be formal demands regarding what reasonably can count as reasons (not personal inclinations, for example) and the use of language, as well as more substantial rules such as positive law. In other words, normative guidelines that connects the subject to intersubjectivity by the fact that these guidelines are recognized and presupposed in one's participation in communal life.

Given that the self is manifested in its actions, and thus deeply responsible for her actions, the need for recognition is a vital one. To use Korsgaard's terms, given the social nature of human beings, described in the last paragraphs, a complete absence of recognition will deny our own nature, what we are *in and for ourselves*. Given that these are concerns that are explicitly *for the agent*, the agent will truly be deprived of good reasons to go on with its life and activity. When we previously allowed the agent to have reasons to continue one's endeavour regarding the correspondence of Notion and object, we spoke of a theoretically abstracted agent – the 'Theoretical Identity'. But this was of course only part of the story, something that became evident as we described thought as an activity and thus not completely separated from the will. It was a distinction made by differentiating two "attitudes" belonging to the same self. The practical side of the story, which includes the conception of the human being as a social agent, presents the need for recognition as a need that is fundamentally

¹⁷² Given the structural conditioning of the individual that happens in interaction with an intersubjective environment, the way one treats objectivity will at least partly be indebted to how the social individual is constructed. For example, if we deal with nature on a conceptual level, we use language, and are therefore also part of the language-community, and must conform to the rules of that community.

related to human beings' concern for unity with the environment it inhabits. If recognition never is achieved, then this is tantamount to *alienation* because this ensures that unity never is realized. This will also mean that the primary condition for Hegel's understanding of freedom, namely removal of the alien character of otherness by being at home in otherness, will be gone, and the individual will be unfree. In such a worst-case scenario we thus find an individual that is deprived of all her fundamental practical reasons. It is a scenario that, in Korsgaard's terms, is worse than death.

III.3.2. When the Other Comes to Count

We suggested in the prior chapter that recognition is the means that enables us to distinguish between morality and normativity in general. We did not make that distinction, but claimed that recognition as a practical, normative concern in a sense united the formerly conceptually distinct concerns of freedom and correspondence. Other people have the ability to live independently of us as singular beings. Although this will not prove that they are self-sufficient, they can refuse our desires for being recognized. This is an important separation, and it does once again deny a practical self-conception of indeterminacy. Recognition must come from an independent, rational source, because if it is dependent on us in the sense that it is dependent on our will, then recognition will not take the form of social affirmation or correspondence, but take the form of coherence or self-affirmation. This distinction is also implied in the notion of *mutual* recognition described in the prior section under moments 1 to 3.

We shall once again summarize what has been said, but this time in order to see whether it is possible to construct any principles that allow us to distinguish between that which up to this moment has been described at the level of normativity in general. Some special branch within the domain of normativity has been assumed to be moral from the beginning of this thesis, and if this reconstruction of Hegel is to give us an alternative to Korsgaard, we must find out whether such a distinction can be made in light of the presented theory. The other option would be to claim that the distinction between morality and normativity in general is superfluous, but this would disable us in making normative comparisons between e.g. cultural boundaries, and it would also weaken the view of the evaluative, self-critical agent. To remove this distinction is tantamount to weaken our evaluative capabilities, because such a

distinction makes evaluation of different motivations possible. This distinction does not necessarily have to be between morality and normativity, but it should be a distinction made on the basis of generality, where one level, e.g. the good, is utilized to compare and evaluate claims made from other levels of normativity. This does not mean that one can exclude incommensurability from our evaluations, but that some values are more important than others, such as the value of a human life. Besides, we have described the individual's reasons as something that the individual seeks affirmation of, which means that the individual as a social being is endowed with the capabilities of distinguishing between what is good for oneself and what is good for others. And given the connection to intersubjectivity, then the question of what is good for others in general, or the question of what is *right*, will be a distinction the individual should be able to make on this basis.

The individual is described at two interrelated levels. The first is a general account of the interests of individuals, and this corresponds to an ontology of the human agent. So we might continue with asking what kind of interests or motivations we might ascribe the individual as an agent. The primary interest of the individual described throughout this thesis, is of course freedom. This interest is connected to all *actions* as manifestations of the individual's will. The other interest is correspondence and recognition. Correspondence was primarily connected to the *ideal* moment of the agent, or the internalisation of externality wherein externality will receive a form that is not *alien* for the agent. But this is also a process that is connected to the individual's agency, and because the *ideal* moment of the agent is *externalised* in the agent's actions, the environment in which actions are undertaken must not itself be alien to the agent. In other words, the agent must be recognized as such. It is important to emphasize that difference is a vital part of the concern for correspondence. Being motivated is in this thesis related to the fact that we *want* to make alterations, both in ourselves, intersubjectivity and the world. The assumption is that this will contribute to negate the difference between these levels, but the fact that difference exists must not be taken as a bad thing. This difference promotes agency, at least up until the point wherein difference shadows all commonality and prevents the individual from being at home in otherness. It is thus a valuable thing that different people have different particular traits and interests, because this difference makes the world an interesting place to live in.¹⁷³

The ontology of the individual does, as we stated, correspond to these interests. The individual is described as *free*, a fact that is determined as part of human ontology *an sich*, but

¹⁷³ Thus, I hold the objection that Hegel excludes difference in his philosophy to be false (compare section I.2.2.). But we must not make difference and distinction absolute either.

not necessarily realized. But the individual is also *rational*, which makes the individual seek correspondence, and it is *social*, which is related to the concern for recognition. Thus, both of the two last mentioned parts of the individual's ontology makes the individual able to realize its freedom, but it is also described as dependent on a third level, namely intersubjectivity.

Insofar as intersubjectivity, from family life to the state and international organizations, is related to the individual's concerns and ontology, it is a domain of positive freedom. But as the domain wherein individuals come together and interact, it is also an arena in which misunderstandings and conflict occurs. Because this domain is connected to the self-conceptions of the individuals, and it is possible for individual's to have self-conceptions that endorses moderate versions of negative freedom, intersubjectivity, at least some levels of it, may also be a sphere of alienation. But some level of intersubjectivity is nevertheless connected to what can count as reasons, because in order to fulfil the demands of the individual, expressions must be made, and these must, at least regarding their (abstract) form and content (as interrelated, but not necessarily as deeply substantial aspects), be recognized as valid in accordance with generally accepted guidelines. For example, Hegel's argument on the universality of language will rule out private inclination as a valid reason, because it cannot be recognized as such by others.

What kind of principles can we construct on account of these descriptions? The first thing that leaps to mind is that these three levels give some restrictions on what can count as a principle. First, it is clear that it must be universal, both regarding the possibility of having it recognized and regarding the fact that it must reflect what has been established is important for all individuals, which corresponds to the ontology of the human individual. Thus, a suggestion is, "one cannot act in any way that violates the freedom of human beings". From this one could construct a series of more specific rules, for example, "do not alienate others". Or, regarding the connection of freedom and responsibility, "one cannot be held responsible for any actions performed as a result of coercion".¹⁷⁴ Several other imperatives could be constructed that in accordance with the descriptions above would prohibit any action conducted that to a sufficient degree could be determined as a violation. These are important determinations, but insofar as they are connected to the individual's needs, they are only negative determinations that prohibit a variety of actions instead of encouraging agency.

¹⁷⁴ These principles are only meant to be examples of principles one could construct based on the ontological account of human beings, and not *the* principles. A discussion of the most suitable principles to accompany this thesis is beyond this thesis.

In this context it is interesting to see that Hegelian philosophy has a common feature with the Reflective Endorsement-tradition in that the prohibitions given by the principle and imperatives just given are directed at prohibiting actions that would be bad for us. This does not mean that these principles and imperatives necessarily ensures our well-being as individuals, they are only directed at the abstractly conceived universal characteristics of human beings, and as such they do not include particular interests.¹⁷⁵ But they do nevertheless aim at preserving the conditions that *must* be met at some level if the individual is to develop into becoming in and for itself that which it essentially is. One of the sides of the human being is that it's self is expressed in its actions, and this means that violation of the principles, that as principles must be connected to intersubjectivity and shared views of what is allowed, ensures that the individual is sanctioned if transgressions are committed. It is not unreasonable to assume that an individual who commits violation to the freedom of another individual, e.g. on the basis of confirming her own self-conception of negative freedom, will be sanctioned by the community. A violation of these principles, insofar as they are recognized as valid by the community, will thus contain sanctions against the individual, because the community and concrete others will deny the reasons behind such actions, and thus also deny at least parts of the agent's self-conception.

Thomas Scanlon has pointed out the reasons for acting in a certain way implied by this type of understanding of the human being is contrary to the way we see ourselves as moral agents.

... moral motivation is often discussed as if it were solely a matter of motivation to act – a source of motivation that is triggered by the conclusion that acting in a certain way would be morally wrong and then weighs against competing motives (like the sanction that is attached to violating the law). This “sanction model” is false to the facts of moral experience. “Being moral” in the sense just described by the morality of right and wrong involves not just being moved to avoid certain actions “because they are wrong,” but also being moved by more concrete considerations such as “she’s counting on me”...¹⁷⁶

What Scanlon says is that other people in virtue of their relation to us effectively can negate all considerations that motivated us to act in a particular way in the first place. It is the experience of “her being there and counting on me” that is the relevant observation in this

¹⁷⁵ Which means that this is a conception that is connected to some minimal conditions for well-being, and not the “good” in the Greek sense. It is good in the sense that we may be motivated to do moral actions, and that such actions promote fundamental conditions for our well-being.

¹⁷⁶ Scanlon (1998), p. 155. See also pp. 149 ff.

context. To understand the relevance of Scanlon's observation, we can compare benevolent actions with Hegel's account of the interrelation of Reason and the will as well as the universality inherent in *agency* as committed in light of reasons. If it is true that reasons for acting are public, being in the Hegelian sense expressed through our willed actions, then agency of the type exemplified by Scanlon can only be explained by the type of motivation found in the consideration that "she's counting on me". The relation between expression and motivation found in the "sanction-model" is in a sense a performative contradiction, because the expression, being the intersubjectively available part of the action, expresses duty and benevolence while the intentions (that anyway are beyond our reach, given the way they are withdrawn and hidden in the manifestation if the action is benevolent but e.g. done for selfish reasons) are contrary to this benevolence because they do not imply any considerations of the other. This does not mean that actions undertaken on such premises do not exist, but what it does mean is that they do not exhaust our notion of moral motivation. For Hegel it would simply be false to claim that they have anything to do with *ethical* motivation, because the language in which the motivation is explained is intra-subjective as opposed to the intersubjective theory of meaning inherent in Hegel's notions of reason and the will.

Compare this with the claim that for Hegel, the threshold of the ethical is "when the other comes to count."¹⁷⁷ The principles we connected with the presentation of the individual must hence only be seen as part of the story, one that serves to distinguish normativity in general from morality. Normativity is distinguished from morality in that actions that violate morality as the domain of what we might call "universal conditions for well-being" also are done for some reasons that motivate the violator. But this does not give us any explanation of the normativity of morals except for the sanction-model Scanlon referred to, and it would give us principles that are similar to the restrictive examples above. In order to explain benevolent actions, we must include others as active reasons in the practical identity of the agent, meaning that the well-being of others also functions as an explicit concern for the benevolent agent. This leads us back to the distinction between the need for recognition and the occurrence of *mutual recognition*.

That people needs to be recognized is something Hegel claims to be a matter of fact, and it is something that can be realized in several different ways and in several different degrees of intimacy, as we have seen. Even though Hegel clearly holds the need to be recognized as a human fact, something present in our self-conception as an ontological truth, the occurrence

¹⁷⁷ Williams (1997), p. 199.

of *mutual* recognition is a contingent event in the sense that it depends on the *particular* self-conception of the *singular* individuals engaged in social interaction. Thus, the occurrence of mutual recognition is not an event that necessarily is realized. Given that the need to be recognized can take several forms depending on context and the self-conception of persons, it is perfectly possible for an agent to seek recognition through actions based on reasons that makes *mutual* recognition impossible. Mutual recognition occurs as a result of interaction between agents that in some way count for each other. This is related to the need for recognition, but not manifested as a selfish drive. Mutual recognition is thus based on the self-conception of an agent that is willing to include the other; someone who does not cognise the other as genuinely alien, but in a sense sees *itself* in the other. This does not mean that the other is an extension of the self, but that the selves cognise each other as rational and as having a mutual interest, namely confirming each other as free, rational beings. I do not mean to suggest that this process occurs every time human beings confront each other, because that would make recognition a causal process. The point is that the self-conception of the other as counting corresponds to the well-being of the self and is related to our interaction with others. This is one important reason for why Hegel places such great emphasis on the family and other forms of social interactions. Others are after all present from the very beginning.

Another thing the status of the other as counting contributes to explain is the way other can partake in altering our self-conceptions. Having the other count includes two features, namely that the other is, as stated, acknowledged and recognized as other, and that the other is not alien to the self, but a being that itself gives reasons that may contribute to the self's understanding of the environment she lives in. The fact that people are separated in this manner, and that they can hide their intentions because they govern their own manifestations, makes the dependency on intersubjectivity a dependency that nonetheless exhibits contrasts between the agent, other people, and intersubjectivity as such. So although this is an account that emphasizes intersubjectivity, it does not allow a fundamental priority to either of the moments. In contrast, by formulating a theory exclusively through an intra-subjective language, it is difficult to acknowledge the special significance of the other as explanation of the outcome of a certain action.¹⁷⁸ From this, it should be possible to also see intersubjectivity

¹⁷⁸ Another issue related to intra-subjective accounts of morality is the concept of *conscience*. The history of this notion has gone from being interpreted as a valuable moral faculty and to being related to evil after Hegel and perhaps especially Hannah Arendt. Hegel's account of conscience is related to our issue here, but we will return to it later. Here it is sufficient to say that Hegel sees conscience as being related to particularity, and thus purely subjectivist, while duty, which is often related to conscience, belongs to the sphere of objective spirit (*PR* §§ 132, 136). Conscience is thus a faculty that expresses the individual's preferences and not communal imperatives like those found in morality. The extreme example of the lack of continuity between others and the self that this

as an “other” that counts in some way.¹⁷⁹ This could be exemplified by e.g. pointing out how people often tend to recognize and let themselves be modified by social institutions that is beyond the immediate face-to-face relation they have to their family and other personal relationships. This points in direction of Hegel’s theory of *Sittlichkeit*, a discussion beyond this thesis, where Hegel tries to describe how a modern society can be a domain of positive freedom, and thus “a home” for its citizens.

III.4. Intersubjectivity and the Evaluative Self

At the end of the prior section, we saw that not only other people, but also intersubjectivity partakes in conditioning the practical identity of the self. Thus, we seem to be back to the objection first mentioned in our introduction of Hegel, the objection that the reconciliation between subject and other leaves less room between individual and intersubjectivity than preferable. This means that the self still is presented as dependent on otherness for its ethical disposition. Thus Hegel is faced with objections of the type made by Ernst Tugendhat: “Hegel does not allow for the possibility of a responsible, critical relation to the ... state.”¹⁸⁰ This criticism should be reinterpreted to concern the way in which individuals are conditioned by their intersubjective environment, and it should focus on whether it in fact is possible for an individual to object to that which partly conditions her own practical identity.

The answer involves the terms “responsible” and “critical”, and it regards Korsgaard’s condition of transparency. As we recall, Korsgaard claimed that any attempt to answer the normative question could not rely upon answers that presupposes that the source of our motivations is something outside of us in the sense that it represents something we can have no knowledge about. In this sense, our motivations are ascribed to *us* if they are to be called motivations, and they are thus connected to the autonomy of the agent in Hegel’s sense of autonomy. It is here important to recall that the otherness that is a necessary condition for practical identity in Hegel’s philosophy need not be the substantive otherness found in the *Philosophy of Right*. In fact, human beings are described as beings with a practical identity as

account expresses, is Adolf Eichmann, whose conscience was clean. Frederick Neuhouser has used the concept of conscience constructively in his attempt to prove that moral subjectivity has a room within *Sittlichkeit*. See Neuhouser (2000), pp. 241 ff.

¹⁷⁹ See Williams (1997), p. 199.

¹⁸⁰ Tugendhat (1986): *Self-Consciousness and Self-Determination*, Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, pp. 315-16. Quoted from Neuhouser (2000), p. 241. Neuhouser has amended the translation.

their ontology – we are free rational beings who demand recognition on the basis of our freedom. Recognition thus implies a mediated practical identity, but this is in itself made possible, as we have seen, on account of the already presupposed identity of the human being. Moreover, the connection between thought and will cannot make us anything but responsible beings, due to the self's manifestation of itself in its actions. This is both a phenomenologically plausible way of viewing actions in that it corresponds to our own deep sense of authorship of our actions, and it expresses the particularity involved in any action undertaken by a singular human being.

The fact that people voluntarily limit themselves as positively free agents must be seen in connection with the practical identity that is expressed in agency. Insofar as the self at least partially is revealed in its actions, we will have to interpret actions as corresponding to the particularity of this agent. People's actions are of course results of more than ethical motivation. According to Hegel, this is a feature of *each* individual, and it expresses a view that seeks to unite what Korsgaard described as a variety of *different* practical identities. We are all fundamentally particular, and the common ground are initially only the same characteristics concerning humanity as such that Korsgaard describes, and this is, as stated, united in Hegel's conception of the singular human being. This means that both of the extremities of one's practical identity is exercised and is vital to the self-limitation of the individual. In other words, however universal one is as a human being, one is still a particular, with particular interests and motives. That human beings are endowed with the capacity to differentiate between particular and universal is a central feature of the capacity human beings have to be ethical beings, but this does not mean that the singularity that includes both of these aspects are purely one and not the other in interaction with for example the state. As a singular being, one is essentially both parts, although one has the capacity to be focused one way or the other. This means that no matter how one views oneself in relation to e.g. social structures and other facets of Hegel's notion of objective spirit, one is irreducibly a singular individual, who in virtue of one's particular *and* universal disposition is able to have a critical distance vis-à-vis its surroundings. At least in principle. For example, given that there exist a wide range of types of role obligations and modes of interaction, and that this is connected to *one* individual as a singular individual with both universal and particular interests, the individual must be able to order reasons into relevant domains. This is another argument for the self whose reasons for acting are transparent for the self as a rational and evaluative.

So what does self-critical mean in this scenario? First of all, the conditioning of one's self-conception due to the interrelation between self and intersubjectivity implies that the moments

the self has internalised are parts of one's self-conception. This self-conception is something one can evaluate and be critical of. But what happens when there is perfect correspondence between individual and otherness? If the environment and the self share the same ends and values, how are we to explain how a self is motivated to negate her own practical identity? What if the domain of relevant others is the Kingdom of Few?

To answer this is difficult, because an answer needs to include that we are indebted to otherness at some level, but also that we must be critical to it in some circumstances. The concern that enabled the individual to have a social life in which freedom *could* be realized, was that the other came to count, both concrete others and intersubjectivity. But that others come to count does not rule out our possibility of being critical to them. If modern society is a domain of positive freedom and a *home* for the individual, then this is because there is a correspondence between how a society realizes itself and the concerns of the individual. Given that this description is relatively abstract, a similar correspondence would be valid for more intimate relations that are *homes* for the individual. The need for recognition is related to both of these levels, but it is sufficient that the individual has some arena of mutual recognition. Those capabilities and concerns it is imperative that the individual is recognized for are those we included in the ontological account and the concerns that corresponded with this account. If this minimal affirmation of the individual is denied, then the individual will most likely either revolt against the treatment it receives, such as the slave-revolts in ancient Rome, or it will be alienated and hence not really capable of agency. That the other comes to count will thus designate the individual's capability to cognise that scenarios that are examples of this denial of the basic and minimal conception of the human being are in conflict with the self-conception of the agent herself. Given the way the self is related to other people and otherness, and that this is a *mutual* relationship where the self also can experience her own contributions as something that *matters*, it will not make sense to endorse treatment of others that denies them their most fundamental concerns, because such endorsement would make interaction without some form of coercion impossible. In addition, the fact that an agent from the outset is placed within an intersubjective framework, with a variety of different forms of interaction, should enable the person to conceptually and practically distinguish between that which is particular and that which is universal.

Does this mean that we have a duty to interfere in violation of the universal concerns? This question is made problematic by another concern that also is related to a conditioning of an agent's practical identity, namely the question of conflict between morality and personal relationships. We might say that the prior objection was based on the assumption that a

mature citizen of Hegel's state has become indoctrinated to the ethos and mores of that society, which means that the relevant difference between universality and particularity was gone. This makes these two objections different on the basis of emphasis only. Where the first could be described as "universal" in the sense that it excludes any relevant difference regarding normative claims made by society and the individual, this objection is based on the fact that there is a real difference between the two, but that it is impossible to claim any priority to either of the extremes. In other words, if one has a duty to help others, then this will also concern the well-being of one's beloved, though perhaps for different reasons, but it will be impossible to evaluate these reasons. This objection is made even stronger as a result of our own commitments to our personal relationships. I believe that for many of us, the obligations coming from our personal relationships are so deep-felt and so strong that we either act in accordance with them, or find ourselves unable to act on account of the deep conflict between the right and the good. But there is still possible to distinguish between the reasons one employs for deciding on one course of action, and we have partly answered this by connecting the reasons to one unitarily conceived agent. Thus, insofar as e.g. another person and one's beloved both are human beings, and the reasons for deciding one course of action rather than another can be reduced to that concern, then there is not really a conflict between two distinct set of reasons, but a moral dilemma. In those cases that particular concerns also contributes as reasons, we do have a scenario that at least can be justified with regard to morality, but one that the agent nevertheless is responsible for. In such cases, the responsibility an agent has for performing a certain action will often be transformed into the experience of "blame", both by the agent herself and by others. What I will suggest, is that this feature of our selves regarding the reasons we operate one the basis of, is an example of the way in which we are sensitive to distinctions and hierarchic ordering of different obligations. And in some cases, nothing will be right. But because these features of our lives are connected to us as *singular* human beings, beings that both has particular and universal features, we *can* evaluate between the reasons that motivate us, something that is exemplified by feelings of blame and other related phenomena. This is due to the complex foundation of our practical identities. The answer to the question regarding whether we have a duty to help others is that we do have such a duty. Such a duty is directed at the well-being of oneself and other as social, and it will thus correspond to reasons one reasonably should endorse if the other comes to count. If this is a duty we for some reason seldom do help others, then this means that there is room for development. And possibly not only for ourselves, but also the environment we live in, because this environment will in the Hegelian account also be

responsible for the degree in which it promotes benevolence and benevolent actions. And a voluntary endorsement of such a duty is thus not only a constraint on our agency, but a characteristic of us as moral beings.

Conclusion: The Hegelian Endorsement of Autonomy

The notion of self-conceptions that have been present through the entire thesis is, I think, a reasonable conception, especially in light of the philosophical development after Hegel, most notably the inclusion of hermeneutics to the philosophical arena. That we have self-conceptions is something I simply take to be a fact of life. We have seen several times over that some sort of notion of self-conception or practical identity has been used in order to separate the subjective from the objective. More precisely, these descriptions of the subject have been described as something that enables the subject to differentiate the continuous impression that “bombards” it, in a manner of speaking, in its interactions with the world. It is thus reasonable to assume that Hegel, at least from the articulations of the nature of habit, includes some sorts of practical categories in his theory, something that most definitely separates him from Kant.

In light of this, we can ask ourselves, what does Hegel mean by saying that human beings are free *an sich*? The answer to this would be that they *really are free*, only that they do not know it yet. How is this possible for a habitual creature? Is it not reasonable to say that an analysis of habits would imply accounts of behaviour rather than agency?

If we accept Hegel’s view on the intentionality of actions, that the self with its motivations is incorporated in its manifest actions, the picture will be the same the other way around: The receptivity of the individual must also be connected to the self-conception of the subject, at least as long as we are dealing with normative phenomena. Normative phenomena are characterized by their non-incidental relation to the self, meaning that the self in a sense is responsible for when the predicate “normative” is attached to certain phenomena. This is thus also a feature of our receptivity, which in this case is understood as intentional. This means that even though we not necessarily think things over as e.g. habitual creatures, we pervade all our receptivity as their category in the sense that we are not simply responsible for making the sensuous content our own, but that practical categories understood as our reasons explain why we are interested in something and not in other things. In other words, our self-conception

constitutes the horizon in which we judge things to be relevant or irrelevant, and it thus brings a subjective element into receptivity. Thus, we may be seen as partaking in the “causal” influence the world has on us, which means that genuine otherness, strictly speaking, only belong to the causal influences that are beyond our self-conceptions. If something external influences our agency, then it can only be described as causal insofar as we recognize something as a reason for our action. Hence, this external influence will be influencing us because we take it to be a reason. If not, then it is simply coercion, or it is something beyond normative explanations. It is in other words perfectly possible to be a natural creature whose *behaviour* to an important degree is explained by e.g. hormones. What I talk about here is essentially features of the individual that is present for the self, one’s self-conception. And in light of both Korsgaard and Hegel, we might say that it is impossible to conceive of a reason unless the person grasps something as a reason. That which makes something a motivation to act in a certain way, i.e. a reason, is fundamentally related to our self-conscious, evaluative capabilities. And there is no correspondence between externality and self unless this externality already is interpreted and situated within a conceptual and *motivational* framework the agent herself is *responsible* for.

But is this not tantamount to the claim that our intentionality can be reduced to some early influences in our upbringing? And does it really bring us additional information beyond Korsgaard’s claim that reaction in an individual is due to the degree external claims correspond to our practical identity? The answer to this will also include an answer to how Hegel can claim that human beings are free *an sich*.

That which needs to be added to this is the ontological account of the self, the story of the free rational self. This is what I have called practical identity in Hegel’s sense in this thesis. According to Hegel, this is a description that is true of human beings independently of the particular description that may otherwise designate them as singular beings. It is the universal element. The gradual development from *an sich* to *für sich* to in and for itself or *anundfürsich*, is the transition from what we are in ourselves to the transparent practical identity, that also must include considerations of what this nature implies given our surroundings. In other words, practical identity is to be understood as the condition of practical identity. This is not a vicious circularity, because the practical identity that represents a sublation of a prior version is a negation and a new substantial description, meaning that we at least in principle are seen as creatures whose capabilities and self-description develops in order to best realize what we are in ourselves.

Given this relative dependency on context, we see that the only transition involved in objective spirit is represented by challenges made by other subjects who are free in and for themselves. The proper term for correspondence in this context is *recognition*, the concept that entails the possibility of a *free community* as long as it is *mutual*. Recognition, other people and otherness in general are thus strong elements in the Hegelian ontological foundation of the practical identity of the individual, something that does seem reasonable insofar as we, as human beings, are social.

The Hegelian account emphasizes freedom in its realization, as *positive freedom*, as something that is good for us, and should thus be subsumed under the Reflective Endorsement-tradition. Given that Hegel's account was supposed to provide an alternative to the Kantian Appeal to Autonomy, which was described as the logical consequence of the Reflective Endorsement-tradition, this seems to be a wrong determination of how the Hegelian part is related to what Korsgaard presented. The answer is of course that the traditions that have been explicitly discussed in the first chapter of this thesis both have some commonality with the Hegelian account. Both Korsgaard and Hegel could be described as theorists that hold freedom as autonomy as a central feature of human agency, and consequently of normativity. The difference is that while Korsgaard's argument springs from the notion of autonomy as self-legislation, or that nothing alien to us *causes* our reasons for actions, the Hegelian alternative claims that the establishing of a practical identity is a *realization* of the freedom that corresponds to our interests and ontology. This realization of freedom is connected to human well-being, and not simply restricted to the individual self, because it is developed within the framework of a community. As we have seen, given the ontological foundations of these features, the community cannot be regarded as the limits of this concern either. Whereas Korsgaard, given her point of departure, seem to have conceptual difficulties in expressing the relation between individuals and otherness, the Hegelian account emphasises the individual as distinct from yet dependent on the environment she lives in. The aim of combining these features in this way constitutes the Hegelian Endorsement of Autonomy, which provides the foundations of our practical identities.

Bibliography

- Beiser, Frederick C. (ed.) (1993): *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, Cambridge: Cambridge U. P.
- Benjamin, Jessica (1988): *The Bonds of Love. Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination*, New York: Pantheon Books
- deVries, Willem A. (1988): *Hegel's Theory of Mental Activity. An Introduction to Theoretical Spirit*, Ithaca: Cornell U. P.
- Durkheim, Emile (2001): *Selv mordet*, translated by Halvor Roll, 1st ed. 1897, Trondheim: Gyldendal.
- Finke, Ståle R. S. (1993): *Om hvordan komme seg herfra til dit i Hegel*, in *Agora*, no. 1, 1993, pp. 159-72.
- Fossland, Jørgen, and Grimen, Harald (2001): *Selvforståelse og frihet. Introduksjon til Charles Taylors filosofi*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget
- Fulda, Hans Friedrich (2003): *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel*, München: Verlag C. H. Beck
- Hardimon, Michael O. (1994a): *Hegel's Social Philosophy: The Project of Reconciliation*, Cambridge: Cambridge U. P.
- _____. (1994b): *Role Obligations*, in *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 91, no. 7 (July), pp. 333-363.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1970): *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag.
- _____. (1971): *Philosophy of Mind. Part Three of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*, translated by W. Wallace and A. V. Miller, Oxford: Oxford U. P.
- _____. (1977): *Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A. V. Miller, Oxford U. P.
- _____. (1986): *Early Theological Writings*, translated by T. M. Knox and R. Kroner, 1st ed. 1971, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- _____. (1991a): *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, translated by H. B. Nisbet, Cambridge: Cambridge U. P.
- _____. (1991b): *The Encyclopaedia Logic. Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*, Transl. Geraets, Suchting and Harris, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing.
- _____. (1998): *Science of Logic*, translated by A. V. Miller, 1st transl. 1969, New York: Humanity Books

- Heidegren, Carl-Göran (1995): *Hegels fenomenologi. En analys och kommentar*, Stockholm: Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposion.
- Honneth, Axel (1995): *The Struggle for Recognition. The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.
- Kant, Immanuel (1996a): *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, translated by James W. Ellington, in Morgan (ed.)(1996): *Classics of Moral and Political Theory*, 2. ed., Indianapolis: Hackett.
- _____. (1996b): *The Metaphysics of Morals*, translated by Mary Gregor, Cambridge: Cambridge U. P.
- _____. (1997): *Critique of Practical Reason*, translated by Mary Gregor, Cambridge: Cambridge U. P.
- _____. (1998): *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge: Cambridge U. P.
- Korsgaard, Christine (1996): *The Sources of Normativity*, Cambridge: Cambridge U. P.
- Kuehn, Manfred (2001): *Kant. A Biography*, Cambridge: Cambridge U. P.
- Nagel, Thomas (1996): *Universality and the reflective self*, in Korsgaard (1996), pp. 200-210.
- Neuhouser, Frederick (2000): *Foundations of Hegel's Social Theory. Actualizing Freedom*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. P.
- O'Neill, Onora (1996): *Introduction*, in Korsgaard (1996), pp. xi-xv.
- Pinkard, Terry (1981): *Hegel's Philosophy of Mathematics*, Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, vol 41, no. 4 (Jun.), pp. 452-464.
- _____. (1986): *Freedom and Social Categories in Hegel's Ethics*, Philosophy and Phenomenological Research vol. 47, no. 2 (Dec.), pp. 209-232.
- _____. (1996): *Hegel's Phenomenology. The Sociality of Reason*, Cambridge: Cambridge U. P.
- _____. (2000): *Hegel. A Biography*, Cambridge: Cambridge U. P.
- Scanlon, T. M. (2000): *What We Owe to Each Other*, Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard U. P.
- Taylor, Charles (1975): *Hegel*, Cambridge: Cambridge U. P.
- _____. (1985a): *Human Agency and Language. Philosophical Papers I*, Cambridge: Cambridge U. P.
- _____. (1985b): *Philosophy and the Human Sciences. Philosophical Papers II*, Cambridge: Cambridge U. P.
- Vetlesen, Arne Johan (1998): *Dydsetikk i individualiseringens og globaliseringens tid*, in

- Vetlesen (ed.)(1998): *Dydsetikk*, pp. 151-211, Oslo: Humanist forlag.
- Westphal, Kenneth R. (2003): *Hegel's Epistemology. A Philosophical Introduction to the Phenomenology of Spirit*, Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Williams, Bernard (1980): *Persons, Character and Morality*, in Williams (1980): *Moral Luck*, Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., pp. 1-19.
- Williams, Robert R. (1985): *Hegel and Transcendental Philosophy*, *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 82, no. 11 (nov. 1985), pp. 595-606.
- _____. (1992): *Recognition. Fichte and Hegel on the Other*, SUNY Series in Hegelian Studies, Albany: State University of New York Press.
- _____. (1997): *Hegel's Ethics of Recognition*, Berkeley: University of California Press
- Wood, Allen W. (1990): *Hegel's Ethical Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge U. P.