

HEGELIAN CONTRADICTION IN THOUGHT AND KIERKEGAARDIAN  
CONTRADICTION IN LIFE: AN ATTEMPT TO DEMONSTRATE THE  
RELATION BETWEEN LOGIC AND LIFE

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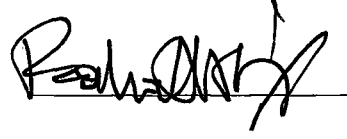
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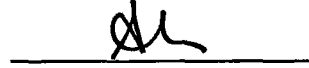
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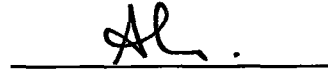
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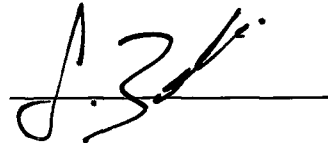
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## ABSTRACT

HEGELIAN CONTRADICTION IN THOUGHT AND KIERKEGAARDIAN  
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RELATION BETWEEN LOGIC AND LIFE

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This thesis is an attempt to demonstrate the relation between logic and life through presenting Hegel's movement of thought thinking itself and Kierkegaard's existential individual, which respectively denote contradiction in thought and contradiction in life. The Hegelian contradiction in thought indicates that the Hegelian logic resolves the logic that can be characterized as "either...or" and the Kierkegaardian contradiction in life implies an existential individual who denotes the wisdom implicit to "Either/Or." The thesis discusses these issues with respect to four meta determinations which are the logic of logic, the life of logic, the life of life and the logic of life. In this attempt, the Hegelian

concept “identity-in-difference” and the Kierkegaardian sense of life constitutes the core of this study. The thesis concludes that “identity-in-difference” opens up a third perspective to life which, when applied to the Kierkegaardian sense of life implies the possibility of a logic of life.

**Keywords:** Contradiction in Thought, Contradiction in Life, Identity-in-difference, Either...or, Either/Or, Dichotomies, Logic of Logic, Life of Life, Life of Logic, Logic of Life, Dialectical Contradiction, Existential Contradiction.



## ÖZ

### HEGELCİ DÜŞÜNCEDE ÇELİŞKİ VE KIERKEGAARDCI YAŞAMDA ÇELİŞKİ: MANTIK VE YAŞAM İLİŞKİSİNİ GÖSTERME ÜZERİNE BİR DENEME

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Bu tez Hegel'in düşüncenin kendisini düşünmesi hareketini ve Kierkegaard'ın varoluşcu bireyini ortaya koyarak mantık ve yaşam arasındaki ilişkiyi gösterebilmek üzerine bir denemedir. İlki düşüncede çelişkiye, ikincisi yaşamda çelişkiye karşılık gelmektedir. Hegelci düşüncede çelişki Hegelci mantığın "ya...ya da" olarak betimlenebilen mantığı çözümlediğini gösterirken Kierkegaardcı yaşamda çelişki "Ya/Ya da" sözüne içkin bilgeliğe karşılık gelen varoluşcu bireyi gösterir. Tez bu konuları dört meta belirlenim açısından tartışır, mantığın mantığı, mantığın yaşamı, yaşamın yaşamı ve yaşamın mantığı. Bu denemede, Hegelci kavram "ayrımında özdeşlik" ve Kierkegaardcı yaşam anlayışı

çalışmanın özünü oluşturur. Tez, ayırmda özdeşliğin yaşama üçüncü bir bakış açısı oluşturduğunu ve bunun Kierkegaardcı yaşam anlayışına uygulandığında yaşamın mantığını mümkün kılabileceği sonucuna varır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Düşüncede Çelişki, Yaşamda Çelişki, Ayırmda Özdeşlik, Ya...ya da, Ya/Ya da, İkilemler, Mantığın Mantığı, Yaşamın Yaşamı, Mantığın Yaşamı, Yaşamın Mantığı, Dialektik Çelişki, Varoluşcu Çelişki.





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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Human Beings have the tendency to produce dichotomies and to concentrate on the separation of the two sides of these dichotomies. By dichotomy I understand a division of thought, belief or proposition into two opposite sides, and by “dichotomous” or “polar” thinking or reasoning, the attempt to reason, as to accept as true, only one side of the dichotomy. This can be explained within the logical context by disjunction characterized as “either...or.” Either the one, it is said, or the other can be true and not both together. Applied to propositions the outcome of this reasoning is the so called law of contradiction, that nothing can simultaneously have and lack the same property or that a proposition and its negation cannot both be true at the same time and again more formally expressed, “A cannot at the same time be A and notA.” This law is accepted universally, as a law of thought together with the law of identity and the law of the excluded middle. Although these three seem to be different laws I think that their basis is the same. I think that all three aim at avoiding or keeping away from contradictions. It can be said that behind these three laws of thought lies this dichotomous thinking characterized as “either...or.” I believe that although this dichotomous thinking finds its application mostly in the form of laws of thought within the field of logic, it

can be applied more generally to every field, whether scientific or not, systematic or not, analytic or not. This is the reason why I call this a “tendency.” It is obvious that we think through dichotomies, but the important thing is how differently we can grasp them and what outcome we arrive at. This is the starting point of this study.

This study aims to demonstrate that seen from a Hegelian framework the dichotomies are resolved in thought. The study stresses the importance of the Hegelian speculative system with respect to the dissolution of the contradictions of thought through the categories “identity,” “difference” and “contradiction.” This speculative system gives rise to a logic beyond what Hegel calls the logic of understanding and which I characterize as the logic of “either...or.” According to Hegel, it is the feature of understanding to make fixed, absolute determinations based on separating oppositions from each other. “Identity is identity” and “difference is difference” claims the understanding and therefore grasps things by separation, remaining one-sided in its conception of truth. Speculative reason, on the other hand, conceives opposites both in their unity and in their distinctness and gives rise to the Hegelian concept, “identity-in-difference.” This study argues that it is through this concept, “identity-in-difference” that the whole Hegelian dialectical speculative logic stands on and in turn transcends the logic of “either...or.” Transcending this logic of the understanding is important in that otherwise contradictions are not resolved and if contradictions remain in the form of “either...or,” the

truth remains according to Hegel one-sided. I believe that there is no sensible reason for accepting only one side of the dichotomies. Since, according to Hegel, "the truth is the whole," there can be no way in remaining in contradiction nor avoiding that contradiction by reasoning according to one side of the opposition. "Either...or" is constituted of opposites and taken together they produce a contradiction.

Chapter II discusses Hegel's conception of logic, and argues how thought thinks itself in Hegelian system. The whole *Science of Logic* is the demonstration of this "thought thinking itself." Therefore my intention is not to explain the whole system in detail, but to focus on a point from which I believe the whole system gets its true meaning. This is the part in the "Doctrine of Essence" of the *Science of Logic* where Hegel introduces the categories "identity," "difference," and "contradiction." After a brief introduction to Hegel's conception of logic, the study evolves on these three categories showing how they led Hegel himself to a logic beyond the logic of "either...or." The discussion in Chapter II ends with a discussion on how to endlessly dissolve all the contradictions in thought, making thought infinite and resolving in turn this shallow "either...or."

Chapter III, on the other hand, is a discussion of the importance of "Either/Or" in the Kierkegaardian framework. As far as Kierkegaard is concerned, the logical disjunction "either...or" becomes the existential fact "Either/Or," thus becoming a single word and utterance reflecting the

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whole wisdom of life. Claiming that “man is in his choice,” Kierkegaard tries to demonstrate that it is through the genuine choice made after confronting with an “Either/Or” that man develops himself. It is certain that contradictions in thought are resolved endlessly, but as can be seen in contrast to Hegel, Kierkegaard’s whole endeavour is with the contradictions of living. According to Kierkegaard, these latter are not as easily dissolved as the former. This is among the reasons for existence and system to be just incompatible. Hence in chapter III, the reader is led through the Kierkegaardian subjective, ethical-existential path towards an existential fact according to which the contradictions of living are resolved. Finally, it is argued that although Hegel and Kierkegaard seem to move from different, even opposite directions, they arrive at the same point. The point is that both philosophers end up with a point where there is no longer any contradiction.

Chapter II aims at demonstrating how the dichotomies are resolved in thought and Chapter III aims at demonstrating how dichotomies are lived. The reader may think that these two tasks constitute different spheres, namely the sphere of logic and the sphere of life and that these two are unrelated. However, I believe that there is a relation between logic and life. In order to demonstrate this relation, I have formulated certain meta determinations which are the logic of logic, the life of logic, the life of life and the logic of life. The reader will discover that the determinations logic of logic and the life of logic are used to describe the Hegelian logic

whereas the life of life and the logic of life (or the existential logic) are used to describe the Kierkegaardian philosophy. Therefore, it can be stated that this study started in order to understand the dichotomies and ended up by finding out certain meta determinations for a trial to construct the relation between logic and life. The reason why the reader may think that these two are different, unrelated tasks may be because throughout the history of philosophy, the doctrines of most philosophers lacked the relation between logic and life; philosophers considered them separately and so did not aim at resolving the gap between the two spheres and establishing the relation. This may not be a problem for most people but it is for me. I believe there is and must be a way to establish the relation between logic and life. This is why this study implies a trial; a trial to avoid the gap between logic and life that is established throughout the history of philosophy.

A strict Hegelian may object to my evolving the thesis on Hegel's *Science of Logic* and to not having made reference to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*; he might say, "if you had inquired into this latter work, you would not have dealt with Kierkegaardian ethical-existential philosophy in your third chapter." There are, however, three counter arguments which I would like to present.

First of all, given the fact that the starting point of this study is the tendency to think in polarity as well as to demonstrate the gap between logic and life, the best philosophers suited to this topic were in my opinion

Hegel and Kierkegaard; more specifically, Hegel's *Science of Logic* and Kierkegaard's *Either/Or*. With the former, one conceives both the process leading behind a dichotomous thinking, that is behind "either...or" and the way how a logic of logic can be constructed, with the latter, both the reality hidden in this polarity, that is, the reality immanent to "Either/Or" and the way a philosophy of life, that is a life of life can be constructed.

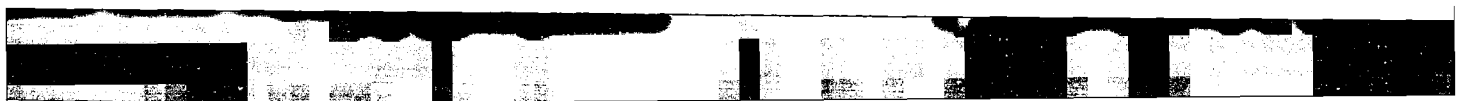
Secondly, Kierkegaard's main attacks were lodged against the *Science of Logic* and less in his other works. The reason for this I think is due to the *Science of Logic* being the root of the Hegelian system. It reflects the relation between categories and concepts such that the reader enters into the realm of pure thoughts. According to Hegel, truth is objective and everything consists of universals. Therefore in my opinion, to deal with the most universal philosophical issues [which is the *Science of Logic*] would give the basis to grasp the Hegelian system in general and open the way to all other apparently more concrete philosophical matters.

The last thing that can be mentioned is that although the *Phenomenology of Spirit* has ethical-philosophical issues such as "ethical order," "ethical action," "ethical self-consciousness," "ethical actuality," and "ethical life" with respect its content, these are so intertwined that they reflect reality as objective, discursive and abstract. This is because Hegel saw the "ethical substance" which is the essence of Spirit, as the basis for individuals' actions and to conceive this essence would give one the whole



truth. The above mentioned ethical-philosophical issues are therefore “essential determinations” which, even though they denote the existential-ethical individual, nevertheless remain as abstractions, as ethical categories and not as existential facts.

In the Conclusion, the reader will find a trial for an application of the Hegelian logic to the Kierkegaardian sense of life, based on the Hegelian concept “identity-in-difference.” This attempt will imply a way for the possibility of a logic of life as well as a way for how dichotomies in life can be resolved through a third perspective.



## CHAPTER 2

### HEGEL'S CONCEPTION OF LOGIC

*That which begins already is, but equally, too, is not as yet.*(Hegel, 1976: 74)

#### 2.1 The Movement of Thought Thinking Itself

Hegel sees the science of logic as the science of thought that thinks itself. This means that logic is not an agent for other sciences, it carries its own purpose within itself. Thought thinking itself determines its own laws and determinations.<sup>1</sup> Any law or determination is abstract because thought thinks itself through abstractions. For instance, a law of biology or physics is abstract even though the law has concrete applications like experiments. It is abstract in the sense that laws and determinations, abstracting themselves from the "contingent features of the concrete," become thought(-form)s (Inwood, 1992: 29), in other words, thought is the basis of a law or a determination. Every activity involves thought.

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<sup>1</sup> Here, 'determination' means all the features that meet in establishing the position of the science in question, so it is similar to "definition" or "delimitation". See Inwood, 1992: 77.

Borrowing Inwood's example, "my perceiving a horse as a horse, my conception of a horse, my feeling of the presence of God, etc., involve the thought(-form)s of, e.g., a 'thing', 'life', or the 'absolute' " (Inwood, 1992: 292). So whatever activity we are engaged in has a reference to the related thought(-form)s. But although every activity involves thought, the thought(-form)s of science are more specific and abstract than any other activity. It involves such thought(-form)s as "nature", "time", "space", "body", "motion", etc., and as far as the science of logic is concerned, thought(-form)s are "pure abstractions" because thought thinks itself only by moving within itself (Hegel, 1990: 56), between the most abstract thought-forms, through deductions, that is, moving from one thought to another by an internal logical necessity excluding all kinds of "given" determinations. This constitutes the difference between the science of logic and the other sciences. Burbidge clarifies this distinction by saying that all the other sciences,

begin with something given in nature, society, or the human person, and then use thought to get to the ultimate principles that explain why things are the way they are. They all presuppose thinking as something self-evident. Logic alone uses thinking to examine the way thinking itself works: how it moves from term to term; how it identifies what is essential in its subject matter; how it analyzes concepts into their component parts (Burbidge, 1993: 87).

There is also a difference between what Hegel calls "Natural Logic" and the "Science of Logic". In *The Philosophical Propaedeutic*, Hegel describes this difference by saying that,

'Natural Logic' is a name given to the natural understanding which man possesses by nature and the immediate use which he makes of it. The Science of Logic, however, is the Knowing of Thinking in its truth (Hegel, 1986: 74).

By this he means the trait of Logic that enables us "to think more correctly," such that, by thinking "the thinking of thinking," the mind gets an awareness that prevents it from any kind of error (Hegel, 1986: 74). Therefore, we can say that the Science of Logic is the logical structure of Thinking. Thinking already implies a logic, whether there is a science of logic or not, and so in my opinion, to demonstrate the logical structure of thinking is to construct a logic of logic. In short, I claim that Hegel's *Science of Logic* is an example for the logic of logic. In order to clarify why I interpret Hegel's attempt as the logic of logic, the elements that constitute Hegel's *Science of Logic* and the relations between these elements have to be understood.

The nature of this logical structure of Thinking is, as stated above, "thought" in its pure abstraction. Hegel also uses the term "category" or "concept" to designate a similar meaning and these are the basic elements of the *Science of Logic*. Categories are, according to Hegel, the determinations of the object which belong to the intellect and which are "universal non-sensuous forms"<sup>2</sup> and a concept is a "universal thought

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<sup>2</sup> Plato had a theory of universals and so had Kant. But Plato did not make any distinction between sensuous and non-sensuous universals whereas Kant made such a distinction and named the twelve non-sensuous universals that he found as "categories." Hegel hold this Kantian distinction (Stace, 1955: 60, 61).

determination”<sup>3</sup> like a category, but it represents “the specific nature of an object” and so it stands above the category (Hegel, 1986: 67).

The *Science of Logic* is mainly divided into two parts, namely “Objective Logic” in which Hegel explains the logical structure of the categories of “Being” and “Essence” and “Subjective Logic” which is more similar in content to formal logic due to its task of dealing with judgments and syllogisms, and in which he discusses the logical structure of the Concept. Throughout this book, especially the Objective Logic part, one gets the impression that these categories and concepts are living entities. This is no surprise. In a sense they are alive because since “we think the thinking of Thinking,” and since Logic carries its own purpose within itself, it is no longer the “I” that thinks or speaks but rather the Thinking that transcends the “I”. Above the “I” is the “pure thought” which is here identical to what Hegel calls “spirit”<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, when thought thinks itself, it is no longer an “I” but “spirit”. In other words, it is spirit which thinks or speaks. Since the categories and concepts seem to be alive and that it is in fact the spirit which speaks, the science of logic Hegel constructs, I

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<sup>3</sup> Hegel uses the terms determinations or thought-determinations and not only the Kantian term category. This, according to Michael Rosen, has two reasons. The first one is that, as opposed to Kantian categories, thought-determinations do not generate their content through a union with matter in experience but through their own selves. The other reason is that, determination can both mean “the *act* of determining” and “the *outcome* of such an act,” i.e. the determined. As such, it reflects well the spirit of Hegel's dialectical system. See Michael, Rosen, *Hegel's Dialectic and its Criticism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 86, 87.

<sup>4</sup> *Geist* in German. Here it is identical with Thinking. Spirit has a variety of senses in Hegelian philosophy. For all these different uses, see (Inwood, 1992).

believe, yields a kind of life to the whole system. This I call it as the life of logic.

Thinking has such a structure that it conceives every category and concept within a coherent whole. In this system, nothing remains in isolation. Everything is understood and becomes what it is through each other. Since it is thought which speaks and accordingly categories and concepts become what they are, Hegelian logic is a process of demonstrating the nature of the categories and concepts, and their becoming in relation to one another. This being a fact, Hegel had to use certain expressions like "for itself", "with itself" "into-itself", "self-related", "for other", etc. I believe that all these expressions reflect the movement of Thought thinking itself such that looked as a whole, the Hegelian logic constructs both a logic of logic and a life of logic.

One purpose of this study is to find out what Hegel had in mind in constructing the Science of Logic. The first thing to be considered in this respect is to emphasize that Hegel did not treat the science of logic merely as formal logic<sup>5</sup>, rather he viewed his Objective Logic as Metaphysics and his Subjective Logic as Logic proper (Hegel, 1986: 76). So in Hegelian

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<sup>5</sup> Pinkard says "Hegel's concern was not with actually providing a system of formal logic as a logician would do it. It was rather with providing a speculative explanation of how logic could be possible." See Pinkard, Terry, *Hegel's Dialectic, The Explanation of Possibility*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988, p. 81.

system (Objective) Logic is identical with Metaphysics.<sup>6</sup> This identity will become explicit throughout this study.

If we look at the introduction of *The Science of Logic* we can find most of the clues about what Hegel had in mind. This part is written in the spirit of a history of logic through which Hegel aims at showing how in the end Logic is to be understood.<sup>7</sup> So what Hegel had in mind was to examine all notions (notion is here in the sense of concept) of logic that were hitherto accepted and after being engaged in the previous ones, to proceed to the reconstruction of logic in its truth, i.e. in its essential nature. All these Notions, according to Hegel, reflect the “spirit” of the world’s consciousness developing through history and arriving at a point to be apprehended in its “own pure, essential nature” (Hegel, 1976: 51).

Hegel recognizes the current conception of thinking based on *separation* such as form and content, subject and object or on truth and certainty. He attributes this characteristic to what he calls “reflective understanding.” He states,

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<sup>6</sup>For instance, in the preface of the *Science of Logic*, Hegel states the science of logic as “metaphysics proper or purely speculative philosophy.” See p. 27. Inwood says “Hegel associates ‘metaphysics’ and the ‘metaphysical’ with thinking and with thoughts or categories, in contrast to sense experience.” See (Inwood, 1995: 199). Kaufmann says “with Hegel, metaphysics ceases to be speculation about the nature of ultimate reality...With Hegel, analysis of categories replaces speculative metaphysics. He gives metaphysics the new meaning and content that it still retains with some of the best philosophers in the second half of the twentieth century.” See Kaufmann, Walter, *Hegel, a Reinterpretation*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978 p. 185.

<sup>7</sup> Kaufmann makes this spirit of history of logic one of Hegel’s essential purpose by saying “instead of simply sitting down to write a book containing *his* philosophy, Hegel considers it essential to give an account of what man has thought so far.” See p. 130.

in general it [reflective understanding] stands for the understanding as abstracting, and hence as separating and remaining fixed in its separations. Directed against reason, it behaves as ordinary common sense and imposes its view that truth rests on sensuous reality, that thoughts are only thoughts...In this self-renunciation on the part of reason, the Notion of truth is lost; it is limited to knowing only subjective truth, only phenomena, appearances, only something to which the nature of the object itself does not correspond: knowing has lapsed into opinion (Hegel, 1976: 45, 46).

Here, Hegel seems to make the Platonic distinction of “doxa” and “episteme”, the first being based on the sensible world, the second on the intelligible world. Resting on appearances which do not conceive things in their essential nature but as illusory and so remaining subjective, reflective understanding of this sensuous reality stays at the level of ordinary common sense, becoming liable to fall into error of conceiving things in their separation. It understands things only as “opinion” and not in their truth. Ironically, as was the case with Plato, ancient metaphysics, which probably involves the first notion of logic, compared to reflective understanding, had Hegel found “a higher conception of thinking” than was accepted in his days. According to this metaphysics thought and its object were not recognized in separation but in agreement. In this respect, its notion of thinking were closer to Hegel's conception of logic in its truth—since truth involves “the agreement of thought with the object” which is achieved when “thinking is supposed to adapt and accommodate itself to the object” (Hegel, 1976: 44, 45). But Hegel does not mean the union of form with its matter given in experience. Thinking accommodates itself to its object by abstracting all the contingent features of that object in order to



reach its thought-form. This being the case one cannot but ask the reason why reflective understanding took over the conception of thinking of the ancient metaphysics which was closer to Hegel's conception of logic. The answer, I think, dissolves itself with the consideration of Aristotle's logic. Hegel says that Aristotle's logic seemed "to be finished and complete" to all appearances (Hegel, 1976: 51). So it *seemed* to be completed when in fact it was not. This was in my opinion due to formal logic introduced by Aristotle. He had introduced such seemingly irrefutable laws that no one had found any need to speculate on them. How and why would one have wanted to refute for example the so called "law of identity" which states that everything is identical with itself? I will discuss these laws in the following sections but for the time being, I can say that I believe Aristotle's formal logic was the beginning of what Hegel calls reflective understanding because of being on differentiating between especially "opposed" categories and fixing them through definitions and propositions. For the time being I will continue in finding out what Hegel had in mind in constructing his Science of Logic.

As I mentioned previously, Hegel claimed that according to what he calls reflective understanding, thoughts were *only* thoughts. From this we understand that in contrast to systems of reflective understanding, in Hegel's system, "thought" has the role of engendering the whole system, and so of the Science of Logic. Hegel says: "logic is to be understood as the system of pure reason, as the realm of thought." And then he goes on

to say: "the necessary forms and self-determinations of thought are the content and the ultimate truth itself" (Hegel, 1976: 50). The truth is the "organic unity" of all the logical (or thought-) forms (Hegel, 1976: 48). We can say that the "ultimate truth", which Hegel also calls as the "Absolute", can be recognized throughout grasping the movement of the categories and concepts of the Science of Logic. But in fact, the ultimate truth exists in the end when the system completes itself. This explains Hegel's conception of the "whole". In the preface of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, he says,

The True is the whole. But the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development. Of the Absolute it must be said that it is essentially a *result* that only in the *end* is it what it truly is; and that precisely in this consists its nature (Hegel, 1977: 11)

Although the above quotation is not from the *Science of Logic*, what Hegel here claims, I believe, applies to logic as well. His aim is to attain the "Absolute," whether in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* or *Philosophy of Nature* or the *Science of Logic*. Therefore, we can say that in the *Science of Logic* Hegel had in mind to attain the "Absolute" truth that can only be achieved through a recognition of the categories and concepts in their development. Now the question is how can these concepts and categories be grasped in their development?

In order to arrive at the ultimate truth, Hegel had to have in mind a system of pure reason working to bring all the categories and concepts together. This system is the so called "dialectical" process according to which the aim is the advance or progress of thought. Therefore what Hegel had in mind was to find out the true path according to which, as he says, "this system in its own self follows" (Hegel, 1976: 54). It seems that once thought enters the true path for its progress and when it gets used to this ongoing process until its completion, the rest comes out naturally. The process is determined by the system itself and accordingly "thought exposes itself," in other words, the dialectical process constitutes the life of thought.

In order to grasp the concepts and categories in their development, we have to consider the *negative* which is involved in thought itself because "it is this which constitutes the genuine dialectical element" (Hegel, 1976: 55). The *negative* or the term *negation* is that which denotes to change and development. A thought in the way of developing itself is subject to negate itself endlessly. What I understand by Hegel's negation is that it is the want to proceed further, the desire or motive for change and development. It is the denial of the thought's present state for the sake of development. It can be said that thought that is to become determinate (positive or established) must develop itself and thought that is to develop itself must negate itself. Brand Blanshard explains this process by saying,

It was a point insisted on by Hegel that thought advances only by the continual overcoming of obstacles through combining them into a whole with what was there already, this whole then serving as the basis for further advance, made in similar manner. Hegel seems to have been convinced that with the help of the implicit system operative in the mind thought could generate the challenging factor from itself (Blanshard, 1964: 59).

Thought's movement is like a positive duel, the challenging factor according to which the negative is the condition for further advance and as such is the genuine dialectical element.<sup>8</sup> The most important feature of the dialectic is as I said the *negative* and "the most important aspect of dialectic," is the "speculative thought" which consists "in the grasping of opposites in their unity or of the positive in the negative" (Hegel, 1976: 56). What is negative is between two opposite categories or concepts. These two opposites, taken together obviously produce a contradiction. And so negation denotes that there is a contradiction or that if there is a contradiction the negative movement is necessary. Therefore thought involves "contradiction" as well as "negation." What is in the nature of thought becomes the condition of the dialectical process. So contradiction and negation are, according to Hegel, the sources of the progress of thought. Therefore we can say that although contradiction and negation

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<sup>8</sup> The contemporary philosopher Whitehead has a similar conception of logic and science. Kaufmann quotes him: "Both in science and logic you have only to develop your argument sufficiently, and sooner or later you are bound to arrive at a contradiction, either internally within the argument, or externally in its reference to fact...None of these logical or scientific myths is wrong, in an unqualified sense of that term. It is unguarded. Its truth is limited by unexpressed presuppositions; and as time goes on, we discover some of these limitations. The simple-minded use of the notions 'right or wrong' is one of the chief obstacles to the progress of understanding." See p. 156.

have seemingly negative significance in themselves, Hegel makes it positive by attributing them the most important aspect of the dialectic: the movement of thought's progress.

## 2.2 Thought's Progress and Contradiction

Thought involves contradiction in its nature and at the same time progresses. How is this possible? Indeed, depending on the point of view or analysis from which contradiction is to be considered, I think that such a question can only be asked by the one who conceives contradiction in a negative sense, by the one who wants to "avoid"<sup>9</sup> it. Once we give a descriptive analysis of what a contradiction is, we want to deny its existence. Considering the principle of contradiction, for example, which says that "nothing can simultaneously have and lack the same property", or that "a proposition and its negation cannot both be true," or the way Hegel uses, that "A cannot at the same time be A and notA" (Hegel, 1976: 416), one wants to avoid the contradiction. Hegel says that the insight,

commits the mistake of thinking that it is reason which is in contradiction with itself; it does not recognize that the contradiction is precisely the rising of reason above the limitations of the understanding and the resolving of them (Hegel, 1976: 46).

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<sup>9</sup>The reader will remark in the following pages that I use the verb "to avoid" negatively and the verb "to resolve" or "to overcome" positively. The first one denoting the operation of the understanding and the second one denoting dialectical-speculative reason which will be clearer in the rest of the study.

The descriptive analysis of contradiction belongs to what Hegel calls (reflective) understanding which by nature thinks by separating and fixing the meaning of the opposed categories and as such remaining one-sided. Hegel thinks that thought, through understanding, possesses such a "limited abstraction" that it "remains at the point of fixed determinacy," without being able to advance (Hegel, 1990: 57). Therefore, thought involves contradiction and at the same time progresses through reason which freeing itself from all limitations, overcomes one contradiction after another by way of the negative movement inherent in thought. This is my explanation for the Hegelian dialectical process or of Hegel's operation of dialectical-speculative reason.

Hegel talks about dialectic as "the moving soul of further development" (Hegel, 1990: 58). Contradiction, recognized in a positive sense, becomes dialectical and so apprehended as "the unity of the opposites." Dialectical process leads to a speculative logic beyond the logic of the understanding, which considering Hegel's determinations I characterize this latter logic as the logic of "either...or."<sup>10</sup> Only through such a recognition of a logic beyond the logic of the understanding that contradiction becomes something to be resolved and not something to be avoided and only then it is not considered as an error. Hegel states,

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<sup>10</sup>The importance of that expression will be apparent throughout this study and especially in chapter 3 where the expression will no longer be written separately but in one word as "Either/Or."

In general, our consideration of the nature of contradiction has shown that it is not, so to speak, a blemish, an imperfection or a defect in something if a contradiction can be pointed out in it. On the contrary, every determination, every concrete thing, every Notion, is essentially a unity of distinguished and distinguishable moments...which pass over into contradictory moments (Hegel, 1976: 442).

According to Hegel's recognition of opposition, opposites are in unity but their distinctness—their being without an independent being—is also maintained (Hegel, 1976: 60). So, for example, A and notA as in the proposition "A cannot at the same time be A and notA," require each other but they also have a distinctness. How did Hegel explain this? He explained it through three categories or moments in the dialectical-speculative process which will now be our main concern. These are "identity", "difference" and "contradiction". I claim that together with these three categories, Hegelian logic demonstrates the way how dichotomies, that is one-sided determinations are resolved and what I characterize the Hegelian logic as the logic of logic acquires its true meaning.

## **2.3 Categories of Reflection**

### **2.3.1 Identity, Difference and Contradiction Expressed in the Forms of Laws of Thought**

According to Hegel, the categories "identity", "difference", and



“contradiction”<sup>11</sup> are mostly understood in the form of “universal laws of thought,” that is, in the form of propositions absolute in themselves. So, when analyzed, the laws of thought come from these three categories which Hegel calls, “the categories of reflection.” “Reflection” means the “mutual dependence of the terms on each other” (Stace, 1955: 180), or it is “to move on beyond something and to grasp the resultant unity” (Hegel, 1986: 70). This means that these three categories become determinate only as being considered in relation to themselves and to each other. Hegel gives the example of the universal law of thought that comes from the category ‘identity’ which is the absolute proposition “everything is identical with itself,  $A=A$ . Or negatively:  $A$  cannot at the same time be  $A$  and not $A$ ”. And he adds that throughout history, ‘ $A=A$ ’ is considered as being immediately true (Hegel, 1976: 409). Here, immediately true implies that what is asserted in the proposition, that is, the simple self-relation of  $A$  is considered only as what Hegel calls “in and for itself” and not “of and from itself.” When  $A$  is considered in and for itself, Hegel means that it is simply identical with itself and as such it is immediate but when it is of and from itself, it is “mediated” by its other which is its opposite. With respect to this explanation Hegel objects to the immediacy of any law of thought. In its traditionally accepted form, there does not appear any transition

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<sup>11</sup> Identity, difference and contradiction are all the moments of essence. When we ask what a thing *is* in its essence, we come up with the most abstract determinations of the thing’s relation to itself and to its other moments which are expressed as identity and difference. Pippin says that Hegel’s logic seems to claim that “what a thing is...involves a dialectical, even contradictory, logic.” See (Pippin, 1993: 384).



between a category and its opposite as well as between the opposite laws of thought. Hegel states,

...if these categories [the categories of reflection] are put in the form of such propositions, then the opposite propositions equally appear; both present themselves with equal necessity and, as immediate assertions, are at least equally correct. The one, therefore, would demand proof as against the other, and consequently these assertions could no longer be credited with the character of immediately true and incontestable propositions of thought (Hegel, 1976: 410).

Hence although the proposition "everything is identical with itself" is an immediate assertion, Hegel claims that it cannot be immediately true because it has to prove itself against its opposite proposition which can be expressed as "no two things are completely like each other" or "all things are different" (Hegel, 1976: 422). The first law is as we know the law of identity. The second one described here is what Hegel calls the law of diversity. These two in fact oppose one another since according to the first law what is declared is "A is A" whereas according to Hegel, the second affirms "A is also not A." The reason is that since according to the law of diversity there are no two things like each other, Hegel thinks that this implies that "A is distinctive" and that the expression of this proposition is not "A is A" but just the opposite which is "A is not A" (Hegel, 1976: 422). As such, Hegel remarks that many propositions that are considered as "absolute laws of thought" in fact oppose and contradict one another. It is only when one sees the truth of each contradictory pair of proposition that the contradiction is dissolved. If one does not see the truth that underlines

each side (as in the case of the contradictory pair of propositions mentioned above), one does not see them in their relation to each other, and as such one thoughtlessly repeats them one after the other, considering them aloof from each other. Hence we say "A is A" and "A is notA" without conceiving the reason why such a contradiction emerges. According to Hegel, unfamiliarity with the true nature of thought produces the confusion to be led into "an error that ought not to happen" and conclude that this is "a subjective mistake" (Hegel, 1976: 436).

If transition between these so called absolute propositions is ignored, the assumption of each will exclude its opposite and this is for Hegel, not a proper determination. The truth is that when one assumes one of the absolute laws of thought, its opposite equally appears, this is inevitable and only then the thoughtless consideration is avoided. Hegel explains it by the very next lines,

If everything is identical with itself, then it is not different, not opposed, has no ground. Or, if it is assumed that no two things are the same, that is, everything is different from everything else, then A is not equal to A, nor is A opposed to A, and so on. The assumption of any of these propositions rules out the assumption of the others (Hegel, 1976: 411).

It is as such that the laws of thought oppose and contradict one another. According to the first proposition, A is assumed to be A whereas according to the second one A is assumed as notA. This is obviously a contradiction between propositions, more properly between laws of

thought. But in fact, this contradiction between propositions dissolves itself when the first and the second proposition are not considered as contradictory determinations but rather as completing one another and so as demonstrating that the truth is the whole. Therefore, according to Hegel, the proper determination of identity as the moment of essence is the fact that it is both identical to itself and different from itself. When thinking is nothing but “external reflection”, it fails to grasp this “essential identity,” and it only grasps “abstract identity” according to which identity and difference are combined externally. This approach, according to Hegel, is only historical and the truth is rather that,

a consideration of everything that is, shows that in its own self everything is in its self-sameness different from itself and self-contradictory, and that in its difference, in its contradiction, it is self-identical, and is in its own self this movement of transition of one of these categories into the other, and for this reason, that each is in its own self the opposite of itself (Hegel, 1976: 412).

Together with the above passage, we now started to determine what identity, difference and contradiction have as their proper determination.

### **2.3.2 The Proper Determinations of Identity, Difference and Contradiction**

Something is different from itself in its self-sameness and self-identical in its difference. How does Hegel arrive at such a determination? To grasp the meaning of this sentence, which traditionally seems to be

rather self-contradictory, we have to compare the traditional sense of identity with that of Hegel's conception.

According to Pippin, the distinction between the traditional and Hegel's conception of the law of identity rests on the copula 'is'. The task is whether this 'is' is the 'is' of *predication* or of *identity*. Pippin claims that Hegel's "whole point is that the 'is' in question for an *essential* determination must always be the 'is' of identity" (as opposed to the traditional sense of identity which is that of predication). In the judgements of predication, a universal is attributed to a particular as in the proposition 's is P' or the same thing is denied by claiming 's is not P.' Pippin states,

*...in investigating some essence* [my italics], Hegel insists that we can never be satisfied with simply predicating a universal of some particular...As he has argued throughout, we are interested not in what properties s happens to have but in just what s is so that *it* can have properties. Thus the term in the predicate position will not say what s (and nothing else) essentially is, *unless* it expresses some identity between subject and predicate. But again, if it expressed this identity merely tautologously, or non-dialectically, or with no 'difference' and just 'identity', we should end up with some version of the uninformative [for example, as in the proposition "Socrates is Socrates"] (Pippin; 1993: 393, 394).

The subject and the predicate in the case of "A is A" is therefore both identical and different. It is identical due to the relation of the essential determination of the subject but it has to be also different otherwise it expresses only an "empty tautology" and does not have content. When it

does not have content, it thus becomes an “empty identity”<sup>12</sup> according to which it is usually claimed that identity is not difference or that “identity and difference are different” (Hegel, 1976: 413). Hegel then goes on to tell us in the form of an objection what in fact the very nature of identity is,

They do not see that in this very assertion [A is A] they are themselves saying that identity is different; for they are saying that identity is different from difference; since this must at the same time be admitted to be the nature of identity, their assertion implies that identity, not externally, but in its own self, in its very nature, is this, to be different. But further, they do not see that, by clinging to this unmoved identity which has its opposite in difference, they thereby convert it into a one-sided determinateness which, as such, has no truth. It is admitted that the law of identity expresses only a one-sided determinateness, that it contains only formal truth, a truth which is abstract, incomplete. In this correct judgment, however, it is immediately implied that truth is complete only in the unity of identity with difference, and hence consists only in this unity (Hegel, 1976: 413, 414).

As can be seen, the objection to the unity of identity and difference is for Hegel far to be an objection. On the contrary, what people did assert was the very claim for identity to be difference and also that the truth is complete only in so far thought is freed from one-sidedness.

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<sup>12</sup> J. M. E. McTaggart, quoted by Reynold L. Siemens says that the law of identity which “asserts A to be A...is a complete tautology. Its truth rests, not on identity in difference, but on the absence of all difference. If any difference existed between the A of the subject and the A of the predicate, the assertion of their identity would be a proposition which might be true, and which, true or false, would have some interest. But it would not be the Law of Identity of formal logic. And it is this Law of Identity of which Hegel speaks here.” See (Siemens, 1988: 112).

Hegel claims that "the experiment with the pure law of identity" shows a statement which is true but the statement says nothing. For example, if the answer to the question "what is a plant?" is "a plant is-a plant" the statement involves truth<sup>13</sup> but it says nothing since actually, what is expected as an answer was a different determination. Hence Hegel argues that the law of identity involves contradiction within itself. When someone says "the plant is—," we expect this person to say something, to bring forward "a further determination." But since according to Hegel "only the same thing is repeated, the opposite has happened, nothing has emerged. Such identical talk therefore contradicts itself" (Hegel, 1976: 415, 416). Previously we have seen how the laws of thought were contradicting each other. Now here we see how the law of identity involves contradiction within itself. This contradiction again dissolves itself when the entities involved in the law of identity acquire a determinate nature. An entity abstractly identical with itself means that the entity has nothing to differentiate itself from the other. As such it is empty and indeterminate. Hegel says "it is only by actively relating itself to, and differentiating itself from itself, that an entity acquires a determinate nature." Hence it can be said that the model "A=A" as well as other laws of thought acquire their content through "self-differentiation" (Inwood, 1992: 133).

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<sup>13</sup>Rather, the statement is "correct" but does not involve truth. Most of the analytic critics of Hegel fails to understand this distinction and so misunderstand Hegel. For a detail explanation, see Harris, Errol E. (1993) *The Spirit of Hegel*, New Jersey: Humanities Press, p. 83.

Why did Hegel deal so much with the law of identity? Why did he not accept this law as a law of thought? Simply because his system is “dialectical” (Siemens, 1988: 104).<sup>14</sup> The law of identity expresses only identity, excluding difference. I believe that if Hegel could not have found a way to attack this law in its traditional context, he could not have constructed such a system. So, we can ask, is it not possible to have a dialectical system which involves the law of identity? Yes, I think that it is possible, but only if thought does not have what Hegel calls “infinite obstacle”(Hegel, 1976: 51) for its movement. To accept the law of identity as a law of thought I think would be in Hegelian system an infinite obstacle. A law of thought shows the thinking of thought. Therefore, for Hegel, to accept this law in its traditional context would mean that thought thinks itself through repeating itself and so in “empty tautology” and as such it is condemned to remain one-sided. One-sidedness is again an obstacle since thought is not likely to recognize the truth of opposition. Hegel did indeed not refute the law of identity, rather he tried to accommodate it to his dialectical system by grasping its truth. And the truth is that the law of identity must be understood dialectically. Previously I defined the logic of logic as the demonstration of the logical structure of thinking. According to this definition then the demonstration of the laws of thought would also be a logic of logic. But seen from the Hegelian framework, I believe such an attempt will only be one-sided logic of logic

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<sup>14</sup> Siemens says “Everybody knows that Hegel’s arguments are dialectical, so his ambivalence about the law of identity should come as no surprise.” (Siemens, 1988: 104).



in which the truth will remain as incomplete. A logic of logic is significant only when the categories of thought are posited in their true relation with each other and this true relation I think is constituted through identity and difference in their proper determination.

Identity preserves difference, and difference preserves identity. When I say "A=A," this identity points out to a difference, A must be something different from notA in order to be identical with itself. And when we say "A is different from notA," this difference points out to an identity, A must be identical with itself in order to differentiate itself from notA. Hence, according to the Hegelian logic, identity is difference and difference is identity. But still, both identity and difference retain themselves as they are, that is, identity remains as identity and difference remains as difference. Therefore, it will be much proper to say that the Hegelian logic is a logic in which each opposite mutually involves its other while retaining itself as it is. And what I claim is that such a logic is a logic that understands through " 'neither-nor' and 'both'." For instance, when we conceive the law of contradiction in its truth, we no longer think as it is impossible for the same thing both to belong and not to belong at the same time, that is, we no longer think through what I formulate as the logic of "either...or" in which we are led to be one-sided, but instead grasp the mutual exclusion and inclusion of opposites together. This is also related with the "law of the excluded middle." This law, according to Hegel, though different from the other two laws, comes from the law of contradiction. The



law of contradiction states that “there is nothing *at once A and not-A*.” This, according to Hegel, implies that “there is nothing that is *neither A nor not-A*, that there is not a third that is indifferent to the opposition” (Hegel, 1976: 438, 439). But just as it was the case with the law of identity according to which identity necessarily implied difference, Hegel thinks that the law of the excluded middle grasped properly states that the third as excluded from the law is in fact already inherent to the law itself. Hegel says that the law differentiates A as positive and so +A and as negative and so -A. But in fact according to such a determination, there is a third which is the A itself. Hegel says “this A is neither +A nor -A, and is equally +A as -A” (Hegel, 1976: 438, 439). Therefore, according to my formulation of the Hegelian logic as “neither-nor’ and ‘both’,” it can be said that through a proper conception of the law of the excluded middle, one can no longer fix the meaning of the opposite determinations by saying for example that “A is either A or notA and not both at the same time,” rather it is said that “it is neither A nor notA and it is both A and notA at the same time.” It is I think such an awareness of the proper determinations of the entities involved in the laws of thought that gives rise to what Hegel calls “sublation,”<sup>15</sup> which generally means in Hegel’s philosophy thought as canceling, preserving and elevating itself. Therefore, it will be appropriate to say that Hegel’s system is thus a speculative process of “sublation.” And this process culminates in the “Absolute.” An ending point where all sublations bring about the absolute resolution of contradiction. One after the other, all the

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<sup>15</sup> *Aufhebung*, in German.

categories follow the path of this speculative process through their self-differentiation, self-identity and unity together with distinctness, that is respectively, through cancellation, preservation and elevation. To understand this movement of thought, it is necessary to have a recognition which transcends the logic of understanding, that is of "either...or." There is I think no choice for thought but to follow the path of "dialectical-speculative reasoning," in other words the Hegelian logic of logic involves necessity that comes from within the proper determinations of categories.

According to Bhaskar the logic peculiar to Hegel's categories of reflection consists of "the dialectical principle of the identity of exclusive opposites," and he thinks that Hegel's central logical claim is that "the identity of opposites is not incompatible with their exclusion, but rather depends upon it" (Bhaskar, 1994: 118, 119). This is also called as "identity-in-difference" and as such lies at the basis of "dialectical contradictions" which will be our next concern.

#### **2.4 Dialectical Contradiction Towards a Logic Beyond the Maxim "either...or"**

Dialectical contradictions constitute the root of the whole Science of Logic. As can be understood, such contradictions are different from the traditional or descriptive sense of contradiction. I think that Hegel has a coherent system in which every category and concept finds its place accordingly within the movement of thought's progress. But reflective

understanding does not conceive how contradiction can dwell in a coherent system. And I think that this is due to understanding's tendency to think in "either...or" polarity. When there is opposition in thought such that one is in a position of claiming either the one part of what is asserted or the other as true and not both together, one believes doing this for the sake of coherency. According to Hegel, this aspect of coherency leads to one-sidedness in thought and so to what he calls "dogmatism." He states,

It thus became dogmatism, because it had to assume, in accordance with the nature of finite determinations, that of two opposed assertions, both propositions, one had to be true but the other had to be false (Hegel, 1990: 60).

This is also what Hegel understands by one-sidedness: through accepting the one as true and the other as false, understanding takes side by fixing the truth-value of both sides and as a result contradiction is avoided. So we encounter two different aspects of the same issue: in its traditional sense, one conceives contradiction as an obstacle for coherency in thought, whereas according to the Hegelian conception, one recognizes the same thing as a necessity for coherency. Hence, in the Hegelian system, coherency does not mean to get rid of all inconsistencies as the case with a descriptive system. Rather it means to accept contradictions as they occur—because as said earlier, contradiction is in the nature of thought—and as a necessity—because thought progresses only by using contradictions. Hence we can say that understanding attempts to avoid contradiction by holding that "A must be either +A or -A" (Duquette, 1990:

6), which is the positive and negative, each side existing indifferently on its own (Hegel, 1976: 428).

If we come back to the categories of “identity” and “difference”, we can say that contradiction is between the identity and difference of two opposed categories like for example, “being” and “nothing”. In the beginning, the opposed categories seem to be merely different from each other but to think over the one inevitably leads to the other, and as such they become identical (Burbidge, 1993: 95). This, I think, puts down “identity” and “difference” as categories or moments leading the movement of thought, and so as I mentioned previously, together with them, the Hegelian logic of logic acquires its true meaning.

Burbidge describes contradictions as paradoxes, and he thinks that the task of thought in Hegel’s *Science of Logic* is to find out the reason of these paradoxes and resolve the conflict. According to him, it is Hegel’s attempt to arrive at the “essential” by identifying and differentiating that leads to contradictions (Burbidge, 1993: 90). This attempt of arriving to the essential is, as previously mentioned, reflection, and according to Burbidge, this is the activity of thinking which involves “the combination of two distinctly different thought within a single perspective,” and he defines contradiction in this respect as something that is “both positive and negative at the same time and in the same respect,” and since this “contradiction cannot be consistently thought, it falls to the ground”

(Burbidge, 1993: 97). Ground is “the resolved contradiction,” “essence as unity of the positive and negative.” It is in ground that oppositions and contradictions are both cancelled and preserved (Hegel, 1976: 435) and therefore it shows itself as the unity of identity and difference.

The opposed determinations exist *at the same time*, as for example when Hegel says: “...identity, not externally, but in its own self, in its very nature, is this, to be different” (Hegel, 1976: 413). I think that in order for difference to be in the very nature of identity, they cannot exist “successively” or “at different times” but “at the same time” or we do not even need to mention time at all since the movement of all the categories and concepts, and not only that of identity and difference, are not chronological but logical. This means that transition between categories is not an external relation but on the contrary, it is an internal relation which implies that all determinations as well as oppositions are inherent to the categories themselves, that is, every determination and opposition of the *Science of Logic* comes from within and so far-away to be chronological.

#### **2.4.1 Categories of Reflection in Relation to the First Categories of the Science of Logic**

At the very beginning of the *Science of Logic* Hegel first introduces the categories “being” and “nothing” because after asking “with what must the science begin?” he arrives at these two categories. He accepts

“something” (being) to be involved in the beginning but he also accepts “nothing” by saying that,

the beginning is not pure nothing, but a nothing from which something is to proceed...The beginning, therefore, contains both, being and nothing, is the unity of being and nothing (Hegel, 1976: 73).

Soon after he gives the reason for this unity: “that which begins already *is* but equally, too, *is not* as yet” (Hegel, 1976: 74). This, I find, is Hegel’s beautiful motto explaining the progress of thought. That which begins is *not* as yet because it will pass through further determinations and so be both “identical” with (since it already *is* something) and “different” than (since it is *not* yet) these determinations.

What is the reasoning that brings thought the categories “being” and “nothing” as a beginning? What can a beginning consist of? From where can one start to speculate? According to Hegel, a proper beginning can only be something “immediate,” otherwise if it is “mediated,” then this beginning cannot be pure, in such a beginning, thought does not think its proper and pure beginning and so cannot know the proper path to follow. A beginning for a science of logic must then be what Hegel calls an “immediate” or “beginning proper” (Hegel, 1976: 68). Contingent features cannot constitute a beginning proper since they do not involve necessity but merely contingency. We are then looking for a “necessary beginning.” This beginning must then be a pure abstraction since, according to Hegel,

it is only when things are abstracted from their contingent features that one reaches necessity. And since these so called pure abstractions are the categories themselves, it is thus the categories which constitute the beginning proper.

Which one of the categories then is the one that stands for this beginning proper? Hegel says that this category is "Being" or rather "pure being" which is both "indeterminate" and "immediate." The beginning proper is therefore "pure being." But in this indeterminateness and immediacy, "pure being" is in fact "nothing."<sup>16</sup> Hence, "being" and "nothing" are in fact the same because of having the same determinations, or more accurately said, because of both being without any determination. Both are "immediate" and "indeterminate." But since they are also equal to their own self, the truth rather is<sup>17</sup> that they are both distinct and inseparable from each other (Hegel, 1976: 73). Together with this determination, "pure being" ceases to be immediate, it becomes as something mediated and as such ceases to be one-sided (Hegel, 1976: 71, 72). This determination in

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<sup>16</sup> According to Cynthia Willett. Hegel in fact "chooses to begin his Science of Logic...[Hegel] implicitly chooses to privilege one of the opposed categories, in this case being, over the other category." See "The Shadow of Hegel's Science of Logic" in George di Giovanni (ed.) *Essays On Hegel's Logic*. 1990, p. 85. I think that Hegel's system does not allow the idea of choice since everything and especially the beginning, speculatively determines itself. There is no place for choice in such a system according to which "thought thinks itself." Hence for Hegel, "the problem of beginning" is in fact not a problem since the beginning determines itself through itself.

<sup>17</sup>Hegel, in the Science of Logic, emphasizes the importance to grasp the true nature of all determinations with respect to philosophy. He says "their [determinations] truth consists only in their relation to one another, that therefore each in its very Notion contains the other; without this knowledge, not a single step can really be taken in philosophy (Hegel, 1976: 438).



turn leads the movement of thought to the category “becoming.” Hence again we can emphasize that the determinations as well as oppositions come from within, that is, it is through being as “reflected-into-itself” that being is both equal to and distinct from nothing and vice versa. And again it is only through the movement of being to nothing and nothing to being that becoming emerges. Being and nothing considered as distinct from each other makes them opposite categories and considered as having the same determinations, which is their being indeterminate, makes them equal to each other and the name of this movement is then becoming. In Hegel’s words,

what is the truth is neither being nor nothing, but that being—does not pass over but has passed over—into nothing, and nothing into being. But it is equally true that they are not undistinguished from each other, that, on the contrary, they are not the same, that they are absolutely distinct, and yet that they are unseparated and inseparable and that each immediately *vanishes in its opposite*.<sup>18</sup> Their truth is, therefore, this movement of the immediate vanishing of the one in the other: *becoming*, a movement in which both are distinguished, but by a difference which has equally immediately resolved itself (Hegel, 1976: 82, 83).

What I claim is that when we talk about “identity” and “difference” with respect to laws of thought, these categories of essence are expressed in

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<sup>18</sup> The “ceaseless vanishing of the opposite into themselves is the *first unity* resulting from contradiction” (Hegel, 1976: 433). As examples to this vanishing of the opposites, Hegel gives some common examples such as the positive and negative; light and darkness; virtue and vice; good and evil; above and below; right and left and father and son. See (Hegel, 1976: 437, 441).



the form of a proposition (as in “everything is identical with itself,  $A=A$ ”). But when considered not in their application to propositions, they are moments of opposite determinations. Hence, for instance, “being” is *identical* with “nothing;” “being” is *different* from “nothing;” and “being” and “nothing” as the one vanishing in the other are *identical in their difference*. Stace states the same assertion by saying,

First we say that the two terms [being and nothing] are distinct. And then we assert that they are identical. It is this contradiction which forces us to advance to the third category, becoming, in which we see that the identity is not the whole truth, and that the difference is not the whole truth, but that the whole truth is the identity *in* difference. For becoming combines both the identity and the difference (Stace, 1955: 97).

When we search for the question “with what must the science begin?,” we arrive at “the unity of being and nothing.” The “more reflected form” of this unity, that is the more general or the more abstract form is, according to Hegel, “the identity of identity and non-identity [difference]” (Hegel, 1976: 74). I think that as such the unity of the opposites is expressed through the categories “identity” and “difference.” Concerning this identity Duquette says,

One discovers the significance of the thought constructions employed in Hegel’s Logic in the determination of their content through the principle of negation. According to this principle, any thought determination can be properly articulated only in relation to its “other” or “opposite,” such that the meaning of the given concept is expressed in a conceptual synthesis of the concept and its “other.”

Hegel refers to this synthesis as an “identity-in-difference” in which the separateness of the concepts is denied or abolished, but their distinctness nonetheless preserved (Aufhebung) (Duquette, 1990: 3, 4)

We can now proceed on to demonstrate the categories of reflection as the base for Hegel’s speculative system as well as the base for the logic of logic and demonstrate how Hegel resolves the logic of the understanding that I formulate as “either...or”

#### **2.4.2 Speculative Reason Resolves the Logic of “either...or”**

Earlier I had said that opposition or polarity in thought was the tendency that was at the core of philosophical endeavours, in fact, the endeavour that constitutes the beginning of philosophy. Now, what do we see? We see that when Hegel asks the question “with what must the science begin?,” he arrives at the categories “being” and “nothing” which indicate this polarity in thought. It is now explicit that Hegel’s philosophical system really exposes thought’s progress according to the history of logic. And the categories of “being” and “nothing” in their unity constitute the beginning of the whole process as well as the basis of all further movement of thought. Hegel states,

the progress from that which forms the beginning is to be regarded as only a further determination of it, hence that which forms the starting point of the development remains at the base of all that follows and does not vanish from it... Thus the beginning of philosophy is the

foundation which is present and preserved throughout the entire subsequent development remaining completely immanent in its further determinations (Hegel, 1976: 71).<sup>19</sup>

Although the beginning of philosophy according to Hegel, is the category being, all other categories that come after being with regard to deduction, are further determinations of being such that together, all the categories in the end form a unity. Therefore, more abstractly said I believe it is “unity” which constitutes the basis of all categories, and I also believe that since this unity is explained through “identity,” “difference” and “contradiction,” I claim that these three constitute the root of Hegel’s philosophy. This becomes apparent when Hegel states that when identity and difference together with opposition

have been put in the form of a law, still more should the determination into which they pass as their truth, namely, contradiction, be grasped and enunciated as a law: *everything is inherently contradictory*, and in the sense that this law in contrast to the others expresses rather the truth and the essential nature of things (Hegel, 1976: 439).

This is Hegel’s “law of contradiction” which after inquiring the traditional sense of the laws of thought, he posits his own that characterizes his dialectical-speculative system of thought. “Everything is inherently contradictory” at the above passage implies that everything involves

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<sup>19</sup>This passage explains at the same time Hegel’ idea of the “whole.”

identity and difference since it is only when identity and difference is taken together that contradiction emerges.

Science of Logic begins with the category being (together with nothing) and ends with the category of the Absolute Idea. "In between this "beginning" and "ending" are a series of thought determinations which develop in a progressive movement" (Duquette, 1990: 5). To grasp this "unity" is the indication of a speculative reason reasoning on a speculative content<sup>20</sup>, which does not attempt to resolve the contradiction through one-sided determinations. Hegel says,

The commonest injustice done to a speculative content is to make it one-sided, that is, to give prominence only to one of the propositions into which it can be resolved...It is the understanding or the ordinary common sense, which by seeing the unity of the opposites "startling" or "paradoxical in itself" that does this injustice (Hegel, 1976: 91, 84).

Speculative reason does not see this as paradoxical, but as a flux immanent in contradiction and that is the reason for "contradiction" to be the moving soul of the whole process. Hegel says, "contradiction is the root of all movement and vitality; it is only in so far as something has a contradiction within it that it moves, has an urge and activity" (Hegel, 1976: 439).

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<sup>20</sup> Wee again see Hegel's conception of the science of logic as being "speculative philosophy", i.e. "metaphysics proper".

Speculative reason is not like understanding in the sense that unlike understanding, it resolves any obstacle it confronts with. Previously I have mentioned the law of identity (and the other laws of thought) understood through the understanding and any kind of one-sided determinations as being obstacles for thought. I believe that at the base of both obstacles, lies the tendency of avoiding or keeping away from contradiction. With respect to such an attitude, obstacles are avoided when one side of the opposite determination is ignored. Therefore, I believe that understanding seen from the Hegelian framework, stops the movement of thought just from the beginning by an attempt not to overcome but to avoid all contradictions. This implies that thought remains finite in its determinations. Speculative reason, on the other hand, uses these contradictions as an urge for movement. Hence the movement is not stopped but just the contrary, it endlessly proceeds further. This endless movement in turn indicates that thought is "infinite." Thought is infinite because it is no longer dominated or enslaved by the logic of "either...or" of the understanding. Hegel says that "finitude is the most stubborn category of the understanding," because finitude is "fixed in itself" and so it is "determined or destined to its end" and it is not to "be brought into flux." It does not reconcile with its other (Hegel, 1976: 129, 130). Therefore, it can be said that understanding presupposes the exclusion of the "other" of a category for the sake of limitation or definition but since through the speculative reason, a category appears to be identical with and distinct from its other or opposite, which is characterized as "identity-in-difference,"

the maxim of “either...or” becomes resolved, and as Duquette says understanding “produces a contradiction to thought” which is unable to make sense of that contradiction (Duquette, 1990: 7). This is because as I previously claimed, understanding has the tendency to produce dichotomies and therefore to think in polarity. It is through the Hegelian categories identity, difference and contradiction, more specifically through “identity-in-difference,” grasped through the speculative reason that thought becomes infinite and that in turn the logic of “either...or” is overcome. I believe I had demonstrated the Hegelian attempt to demonstrate the logical structure of thinking having as its base the categories identity, difference, and contradiction. This demonstration implies for me to have shown how does Hegel does a logic of logic and also how through this logic of logic he attempts to resolve dichotomies produced by the understanding.

## **2.5 Summary**

In order to show the movement of thought thinking itself, and so to show the reason why I characterize this attempt as a logic of logic, I had to first clarify what is understood by “thought” in a general sense and then stress the difference between the thought characteristic of the Science of Logic and of the other disciplines. For a further explanation of thought, I also needed to introduce the reader the similar terms in meaning that Hegel uses along with the term “thought.” Categories and concepts were

among them. The movement of categories and concepts is such that one becomes what it is through the other. This movement, in turn implies that the thinking of thinking indicate the Thinking transcending the individual "I."

After determining the general structure of the Science of Logic, I started to find out what Hegel had in mind in constructing the system of the Science of Logic. The first clue was to emphasize that the Science of Logic was written in the spirit of a history of logic. This implied that Hegel attempted to apprehend all the Notions of Logic that were hitherto accepted and in turn engaged himself with the reconstruction of logic in its essential nature. The first and most important thing characteristic to the previous conceptions of logic was their being based on conceiving things in their separation. And this conception goes back to Aristotle's introducing formal logic which comprises definite, irrefutable laws of thought. In opposition to this conception, Hegel proposes a system according to which the dialectical-speculative reason bring all the categories and concepts together into a whole, the whole being itself the ultimate truth or the Absolute.

In this dialectical system of thought, the movement is determined by negation and contradiction. We have seen that negation denotes that there is a contradiction or that if there is a contradiction the negative movement is necessary. Contradictions, in the Hegelian speculative logic,

are not avoided but resolved. To avoid has a negative meaning whereas to resolve denotes something positive. In order to understand the difference between the two and to grasp the significance of thought developing itself through categories, we considered three categories of Essence, which were "identity, "difference," and "contradiction."

Throughout history, these categories are understood in the form of laws of thought. What Hegel objected was the immediacy of these laws because the immediate conception of the laws of thought brings thought only to enumerate them one after the other without discovering the transition between them. We saw that Hegel's entire attempt was to consider all determinations together with propositions and laws of thought in relation to one another. With respect to this endeavour, I have tried to demonstrate how identity and difference were mutually dependent on each other and so in unity, while considered in their own self, were at the same time self-subsistent and so retaining their distinctness. This, I described as the logic beyond the logic of "either...or" and I formulated it as "neither A nor notA and both A and notA." The implication of the logic of understanding that I characterize as "either...or" was defined by Hegel as one-sided as well as dogmatism. Such an apprehension views contradiction as merely something negative and not as an urge to combine two opposite determinations in a single perspective. As an example for such a conception of contradiction, I have inquired the beginning of the *Science of Logic* where Hegel searched for the first category. I examined it



together with the categories that it was related to in the sense of transition. These were the categories “being,” “nothing” and “becoming.” Next I showed the relation between these three categories and the three categories of reflection and concluded that identity, difference and contradiction were not only the categories expressed as the laws of thought but also moments of opposite determinations. And so being was identical with nothing, being was different from nothing and being and nothing together were identical in their difference. Hence I claimed that at the root of the unity and distinctness of opposite determinations lied the categories identity, difference and contradiction and it was only through the dialectical-speculative reason that one could arrive at such a conception. I also showed that such a conception implies in the end the resolution of the dichotomies produced by the understanding.

Having understood the difference between understanding and dialectical-speculative reason, I showed that through the latter, thought becomes infinite by overcoming all the obstacles it confronts. And lastly, I concluded that it is through the categories identity, difference and contradiction, more specifically through “identity-in-difference,” grasped through the speculative reason that thought becomes infinite and that in turn the logic of understanding, that is “either...or,” is resolved.

This whole chapter aimed to demonstrate essentially two things. The first one was to show that Hegel’s attempt was in turn to do a logic of logic

and the second one was that through the Hegelian logic, dichotomies were brought into a resolution.



## CHAPTER 3

### KIERKEGAARD'S EXISTENTIAL THINKER

*Either/Or. This is my motto, and these words are not, as grammarians think, disjunctive conjunctions; no, they belong inseparably together and therefore ought to be written together in one word, since in union they form an interjection that I shout at mankind (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 159).*

#### 3.1 Existence Versus System

In this chapter, I will discuss Kierkegaard's practical wisdom based on "Either/Or"<sup>21</sup> together with his main objections to Hegel's system. Kierkegaard, in contrast to Hegel, is an antisystematic existential philosopher who criticizes the idea of system. Therefore, it is not only Hegel's system that he attacks but any philosopher who has a system. It may also be noted, however, that concerning the system, Kierkegaard mostly refers to the Hegelian system, especially in his work *Concluding*

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<sup>21</sup>The reason for "Either/Or" written in one word is in fact stated by Kierkegaard in the above quotation but the reason will be explicit throughout this chapter and as such it constitutes the core of this study.

*Unscientific Postscript*. The main reason for this is Hegel's being considered as the most systematic philosopher. Therefore the discussion that follows is based on a critique of Hegel's system.

It may be odd to discuss together in the same study, the views of two philosophers, one of whom is the defender of system, and the other as the one attacking any kind of system. It can be claimed that there cannot be much to discuss philosophically apart from reflecting on the reasons of their defending and attacking the idea of system. After all, one prefers or claims systematicity in philosophy whereas the other philosophizes without a system. Therefore, the reader might wonder about what more there is to discuss. But, in fact, it is on the basic difference between Hegel and Kierkegaard that the discussion of this study develops.

Why can a thinker reject system in philosophy? There can be many possible reasons for this, but as far as Kierkegaard is concerned the reason is very clear: Simply because a "system of existence" does not exist (Kierkegaard, 1992: 112), in other words, an "existential system" is impossible (Rockmore, 1993: 147) and so it can be said that a logical system such as Hegel's cannot explain my individual existence in this world and its systematicity does not allow this. On the contrary, it disregards my existential being for the sake of doing science (philosophy). The most important thing that the system disregards is my human need of making choices. There is no place for "choice" in Hegel's system because

everything is dialectically or speculatively determined. Hegel's science of logic seems to explain everything and yet the existential individual who chooses his "life," his "life-form," is out of the system. And this, according to Kierkegaard, is no surprise because system and existence are incompatible (Rockmore, 1993: 147)—briefly put, one is theoretical the other is practical or one implies objectivity whereas the other implies subjectivity. Existence is one among the moments of Hegel's speculative system.<sup>22</sup> But it is, as Kierkegaard says, merely a "thought-existence;" a conceptual moment according to which one finds humanity only in general and so there is place only for the idea of existence but "an existing individual human being is not an idea" (Kierkegaard, 1992: 329). As Robert Solomon says,

The Hegelian system does attempt to capture individual existence in the logical development of concepts but it captures only the concept of the individual, and not the individual (Solomon, 1990: 79).

Or as Kierkegaard himself says,

When, for example, an existing person asks how pure thinking relates itself to an existing person, how he goes about being admitted into it, pure thinking gives no answer but explains existence within its pure thinking (Kierkegaard, 1992: 313).

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<sup>22</sup>Existence is considered as a moment of the category "appearance" of the Doctrine of Essence. The categories peculiar to "existence" are "thing" and "property."

We must not conclude that, according to Kierkegaard, there is something wrong with the idea of existence or with any other "idea" in general. As we have seen in the second chapter of this study, Hegel has a system of pure thought willingly aimed to demonstrate the necessary relations between ideas or categories. In such a system, particular feelings, emotions, life-experiences cannot take place since, as far as Hegel is concerned, these cannot be the foundation of the world due to their lack of logical necessity. So, Hegel concluded that if we want an explanation of why the world is as it is we must understand the necessary relation between ideas (specifically between categories and concepts) and so obtain objective truth.

Hegel believes philosophy should always have objectivity as its aim. In contrast to this view, Kierkegaard proposes not abstract ideas but practical wisdom or ethical reality. Therefore there is nothing wrong with the "idea" of existence apart from that it does not explain existence itself. Roubiczek says that in the word "existence" lies a philosophy that is related to "the individual's own life and experience" and such a philosophy is not "abstract speculation" but "a way of life," that is "a philosophy capable of being lived" (Roubiczek, 1966: 10). This is what I call the life of life in order to differentiate Kierkegaard's philosophy from what I characterized the Hegelian logic as the logic of logic.

Hegel talks about ontological reality, Kierkegaard about ethical reality; Hegel aims at objective truth, Kierkegaard at subjective truth true for himself; Hegel searches for necessary relations, Kierkegaard searches for usefulness in life; Hegel considers systematicity, Kierkegaard practical wisdom. In my formulation, Hegel constructs a logic of logic, Kierkegaard a life of life. And at the basis of all these differences lies a self either as a "knower" or as a "doer."

In contrast to Hegel's view of the self as a knower, Kierkegaard's starting point stresses a view in which the self is a doer. In the *Journals* he says,

What I really lack is to be clear in my mind what I am to do, not what I am to know, except in so far as a certain understanding must precede every action. The thing is to understand myself, to see what God really wishes me to do; the thing is to find a truth which is true for me, to find the idea for which I can live and die. What would be the use of discovering so-called objective truth, of working through all the systems of philosophy and of being able if required, to review them all and show up the inconsistencies within each system;...I certainly do not deny that I still recognise an imperative of understanding and that through it one can work upon men, but it must be taken up into my life, and that is what I now recognise as the most important thing (Jones, 1975: 209, 210).

A system which does not have application in individuals' lives, seems to show itself as an abstract game or only as what Kierkegaard calls "thought-experiment." Although finding out what God wishes the individual to do can also be considered as a game, we can say that this game has

an application in life and so it is useful; such an existential game opens the way for the individual to understand himself and what God wishes and so in turn what he is to do in this world.

As can be observed, Hegel's and Kierkegaard's philosophical stands are quite different. The former, as a knower, makes himself responsible of showing the objective, discursive and absolute truth unfolding itself through speculative reasoning whereas the latter, as an acting self or a doer, lives his life with a passion of finding out the idea which will be the explanation for what he is to do in this world so that he will have the truth for himself—that is a subjective truth true for Kierkegaard. We can say that Kierkegaard replaces argumentation with passion (Rockmore, 1993: 146) and he is in search of "a philosophy of life" and not of an epistemology devoid of existential facts. Therefore we have two opposing frameworks of philosophical issues: speculative thinking and practical wisdom or what I call the logic of logic and the life of life. Hegel wants to explain the progress in thought whereas Kierkegaard is looking for progress in one's own life and the most impressive difference is that Hegel lives the opposition or contradiction *in thought* whereas Kierkegaard is living the same thing *in his own life*. This impressing difference made me formulate the first one as the life of logic<sup>23</sup> and the second one now I formulate it as

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<sup>23</sup> As I mentioned in chapter III, page 12, Hegel's construction of the logic, I believe, produces a kind of life to the whole system. The categories and concepts deduce themselves from one another and so give themselves life. At the core of this life lies contradictions, in other words, thought moves itself only through contradictions.



the logic of life. Previously at page 52, I characterized Kierkegaard's philosophy of life as the life of life. Now I claim that this philosophy of life involves a kind of logic, in other words, I believe that life itself has a logic and that Kierkegaardian existential philosophy can be interpreted as an existential logic, a logic that comes within the existential facts, a logic that characterizes the individual's dichotomies being lived, the latter one called as the existential contradiction.

### **3.2 Existential Contradiction**

The existential thinker is a master of his own life. He is an artist in understanding himself. Unlike a scientist, "he [the existential thinker] does not abstract from existence and from the contradiction, but he is in them" (Kierkegaard, 1992: 351). Kierkegaard is the thinker who experienced contradiction in his own life. What does it mean to experience contradiction in life? It means to confront with an opposing situation of "Either/Or" in which one is forced to make a decision, to choose one side of the opposition since choosing the two sides together or even not being able to decide in favor of one or the other will create a contradiction. It is true that this is not peculiar to Kierkegaard and that every person is experiencing similar things in life. True, but isn't it the task of the existential thinker to philosophize on the problems of life, on the most important truths of

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Therefore, I believe that Hegel himself had to live in thought these contradictions in order to construct such a system.

existence, to conceive each as a truth for himself, in fact, to make it a truth, and then in turn to understand himself and what he is to do in this world? I believe it is, and so does Kierkegaard and as such, for the foundation of existential facts, he arrives at an "Either/Or." As Jones says: "Kierkegaard's starting point was the existential fact that men are faced with an either-or" (Jones, 1975: 219). Therefore, in this chapter, we shall see how an individual *lives* dichotomies, which means for Kierkegaard to shout "Either/Or" at mankind.

Hegel, as we saw, resolves contradiction in thought through speculative reasoning, through a process of endless negation. He resolves contradiction through abstracting, which is, according to Kierkegaard, not a difficult task at all. He says,

To abstract from existence is to remove the difficulty, but to remain in existence in such a way that one understands one thing at one moment, something else the next, is not to understand oneself. But to understand extreme opposites together and, existing, to understand oneself in them is very difficult (Kierkegaard, 1992: 354).

In the above passage, Kierkegaard denotes Hegel's idea of "mediation," that is, the relation of a category to its other as "of and from" itself. It is through mediation that the same category is understood one thing at one

moment and something else the next.<sup>24</sup> One mediates and mediates the categories, believing to have understood the movement of thought thinking itself. But obviously this does not imply having understood oneself. The individual really understands himself only when he considers himself in the contradictions he lives.

The interesting thing, as I have previously mentioned, is that the idea of "contradiction" is inherent in both Hegel and Kierkegaard's philosophies. But Kierkegaard does not attempt to resolve it in thought like Hegel, rather he shows how difficult it is to do this in practical or ethical life compared with the same attempt in the theoretical realm. In Hegel's system, there is no unresolvable, absolute contradiction or "paradox." Every set of contradicting ideas is resolved through the mediation of another idea. So the system embraces all opposition in thought (Solomon, 1990: 81). If there is a contradiction, there is also a resolution which is the characteristic of the act of mediation as sublation. Hence to cancel and preserve is an easy process peculiar to abstraction in thought. Kierkegaard says, "for thought, the contradiction does not exist; it passes over into the other and thereupon together with the other into a higher unity" (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 173).

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<sup>24</sup> By "at one moment, and something else the next," we understand that Kierkegaard brings the idea of time to Hegelian "mediation." The reason for that must be Kierkegaard's attempt to understand the individual within life itself which implies to understand the individual together with his past, present and future.

Whenever thought encounters an obstacle, that is, a contradiction, it knows what to do. Thought thinks itself speculatively and so progresses by resolving all obstacles again speculatively. Contradiction is endlessly resolved which in turn implies the cancellation of the law of contradiction. Kierkegaard says,

Now, I assume that philosophy is right, that the principle of contradiction is actually canceled or that philosophers [specifically Hegel] at every moment elevate it into the higher unity that is for thought. Yet this cannot, after all, apply to the future, for the contradictions certainly must be present before I can mediate them. But if the contradiction is present then it is an Either/Or (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 170, 171).

What we can say with respect to the above quotation is that mediation can only be applied to past and not to future. Contradiction can possibly be resolved when thought cancels, preserves, and elevates it into a unity. In order to do this one must not consider anything temporal. As was mentioned previously in the second chapter, we do not have to mention time at all when we consider the laws of thought. After all, is it not this very feature which makes thought "infinite?" When thought is infinite, there is no present and future since these two denote something temporal. But I think according to Kierkegaard, the past denotes something that is not apt to change and thus is easy to mediate. But whenever there is a contradiction present in time, mediation is no longer possible and contradiction is not resolved. On the contrary, it states itself as an "Either/Or." This for Kierkegaard, is an absolute paradox. Hegel's system

is constituted of paradoxes of ideas which are speculatively resolved. But a paradox of ideas, according to Kierkegaard, is not an absolute paradox.

What about the "paradoxes of living"? (Solomon, 1990: 82) As far as Kierkegaard is concerned, resolution for ethical contradictions is not an easy task though it is this that we need to understand in order to conceive man in his existence. He thus challenges the difficulty not through speculative reason but through practical wisdom. In fact, what we need to understand is how the extreme opposites are to be grasped at the same time concerning the same particular situation, in other words, how to understand the dichotomies that individuals live within their lives. Kierkegaard says,

One person will laugh, another will weep, or the same person does it at different times, but simultaneously to see the comic and the tragic in the same thing is difficult...To think one thing and to have forgotten everything else is not difficult, but to think one thing and the very same moment to have the opposite within you and to unite them in existence, that is difficult (Kierkegaard, 1992: 354).

Concerning the reality of contradiction, there is the self as a decider confronting with an "Either/Or" in which he is forced to make a choice. It is a crucial moment since the self's whole life will be determined according to that choice. It must be noted that we are talking about a choice made at an important moment that will have a serious effect on one's life, that is, when

one stands "at the crossroads" (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 157) and not about all the choices the self is making at any time in his life.<sup>25</sup> As Jamie Ferreira says, Kierkegaard's conception of choice cannot be considered as "the ordinary model of a selection among alternatives," rather it shows itself as "a paradoxical engaging activity, a transforming" (Ferreira, 1991: 68). Concerning this(these) crucial moment(s), looked from the Kierkegaardian framework, I believe that Hegel's system cannot help the self in choosing. There is no use and even no enough time to reason speculatively upon the choices before any decision. In this respect, Kierkegaard takes the personality of the individual as a base and says,

One sees that the inner working of the personality has no time for imaginary constructions in thought, so that it continually speeds ahead and in one way or another posits either the one or the other (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 163).

Kierkegaard's idea of a "thought-experiment" again shows itself in this sentence. By "imaginary constructions" he again denotes those which do not have application in one's life. Therefore we can say that seen from the Kierkegaardian standpoint, Hegel's speculative system does not take into consideration the "inner working of the personality." Probably, it will consider personality merely as a category and so as a necessary moment

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<sup>25</sup> Robert Solomon held up choice in its ordinary sense when he said "the paradoxes of living—consist in the daily confrontation of the individual with choices, with alternative courses of action" (Solomon, 1990: 81). In fact, with regard the "paradoxes of living" choices are made consciously whereas most of the daily choices are the choices that the personality make "unconsciously" (Kierkegaard, 1990, partII:164).

in the system.

The Hegelian system cannot be applied to the existential individual since the decider cannot attempt to resolve the contradiction by trying to choose both sides for the sake of a speculative unity. He has to decide between the two and only as such I believe the dichotomies can be brought into a resolution. This is true for the self as a decider. On the other hand, there is the self who wants to understand "extreme opposites together" as well as to understand himself "in them." At that moment, he is not confronting a decision but is in the difficult position of uniting the opposites, in other words, the individual in this case, I believe, is living the dichotomy as it is. And "to understand the greatest oppositions together" is the strife to be subjective and as such "existence involves a tremendous contradiction," the "subjective thinker" is responsible for remaining in contradiction and not of abstracting himself from it (Ferreira, 1991: 71). In the case of self as a decider, contradiction is resolved through a decision, in the second case there is the attempt to resolve the contradiction through uniting the opposites in existence. The second case, which refers to the self wanting to understand extreme opposites together, seems to be but is not, an application of the Hegelian system since I think that the Kierkegaardian unity of opposites does not consist of a mediation but of an "Either/Or" understood in unity. Therefore, I claim that with respect to both of the above cases, Kierkegaard shows us the ethical existential reality of contradiction which characterize as an existential logic. Contradiction in

this respect, I believe, becomes the existential logic implicit to the existential facts.

### **3.3 Man Is In His Choice The Wisdom implicit to Either/Or**

#### **3.3.1 Either/Or in Kierkegaard's Own Life**

Existence, according to Kierkegaard, means "the agony of decision." One of the main reasons for this is Kierkegaard's own life-experiences in which he had experienced opposite feelings at the same time and also lived a life in which he particularly confronted challenging "Either/Or"s. Kierkegaard is a philosopher who wrote about what he had lived. This of course contrasts with Hegel's speculative system. Jones expresses this contrast by saying that,

One is characteristic of an observer who contemplates the agony of decision from the neutral vantage point of a thinker, who dispassionately "takes note of" blood, sweat, and tears from outside. The other notion is characteristic of a participant, who shares in and directly experiences the agony of decision—he bleeds, sweats, and weeps with the decider (Jones, 1975: 216).

What Kierkegaard lived constituted the urge in constructing his philosophy and so his philosophical standpoint. I will now use this urge in favor of my argument.



I found Kierkegaard's life interesting enough in the sense that he experienced many "Either/Or"s as well as unity of opposite situations which had great effects on himself and so on his philosophy. He was both melancholic and jolly (Lowrie, 1990: 25) and his soul was both at rest and uneasy with God (Lowrie, 1990: 51). "He both loved and feared his father, both admired and condemned him. He both hoped to marry Regine [his fiancée] and wished to reject her" (Jones, 1975: 216). He experienced conflict in temper with his brother (Lowrie, 1990: 59), as well as a conflict between his soul and his body (Lowrie, 1990: 41). Kierkegaard was aware of the existential facts he experienced and so considered himself as a man with his contradictions. In the *Journals* he states, "as long as I live, I live in contradiction, for life is contradiction," and he claims that the existence of the individual begins with contradiction (Kierkegaard, 1967: 329). This means I believe, that the true existence starts with an "Either/Or," in other words with a dichotomy in life, but we have to determine what kind of an "Either/Or" this is.

The self as a decider experiences ethical paradoxes like a crisis in life. The source of these paradoxes is "choice" and choice is "the transition to the ethical"; it is a "leap," that is, "a qualitative decision" (Ferreira, 1991: 67). The self unfolds itself through three stages which are the aesthetical, the ethical and the religious. The self in these stages is respectively a self as the person he is, the person who becomes and the person who repents himself (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 178, 225, 241, 249, 253). In all these

realms, man realizes his existence but as far as choice is concerned, the self makes a genuine choice, in the ethical realm.

### 3.3.2 Either/Or Implying A Deadlock

In the aesthetical stage, the individual cannot make a genuine choice because he lives "instantaneously," in a sense choosing arbitrarily in his daily life. Besides these daily arbitrary choices, he also confronts "Either/Or"s, but is not in a position to decide. On the contrary, he does not choose at all since he discovers that whatever choice he makes, he will regret it either way and so emerges the agony of decision. Kierkegaard says that when you face an "Either/Or," "your view of life is concentrated in one single sentence," in other words, in such a situation one just says "Either/Or." He states,

This is my motto, and these words are not, as grammarians think, disjunctive conjunctions; no, they belong inseparably together and therefore ought to be written together in one word, since in union they form an interjection that I shout at mankind (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 159).

I think the reason why "Either/Or" is now written in one word has become explicit. Kierkegaard thinks that "the whole wisdom of life" is contained in this apparently simple utterance (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 158). My attempt was to differentiate it from the "either...or" of the understanding of Hegel's *Science of Logic*. The Kierkegaardian "Either/Or" is not a kind of

reasoning belonging to the understanding, in fact it does not belong to any kind of mindlike operation. At least I believe that Kierkegaard is not concerned with that at all. After all, would that be your interest if you dealt with practical, not discursive and subjective philosophical issues? Maybe yes, but as far as Kierkegaard is concerned, this interest does not go beyond accepting a kind of understanding that is necessary before taking action.<sup>26</sup> What characterized the Hegelian "either...or" was its one-sidedness, its fixed determinations. Here, we are confronted with "no choice" at all, which implies that there is even no case of fixing, determining anything. Moreover, the individual in fact regrets because he understands the vanity of choosing both sides of the "Either/Or," in other words, he finds that there is no use of fixing anything.

Kierkegaard shouts "Either/Or" at mankind to demonstrate one's deadlock since there is no choice to be made. Usually one chooses, especially in daily affairs, in order to get rid of the state of indecisiveness but what makes the deadlock a deadlock is this state of indecisiveness itself that leads unavoidably to regret. Since whatever you choose, you will regret it, you desperately shout "Either/Or."

Marry, and you will regret it. Do not marry, and you will also regret it. Marry or do not marry, you will regret it either way. Whether you marry or you do not marry, you will regret it either way. Laugh at the stupidities of the world, and you will regret it; weep over them, and

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<sup>26</sup> See page 53 of this study.

you will also regret it. Laugh at the stupidities of the world or weep over them, you will regret it either way. Whether you laugh at the stupidities of the world or you weep over them, you will regret it either way (Kierkegaard, 1990, part I: 38).

It is, I think, as such that your view of life becomes concentrated on "Either/Or." And so as far as the aesthetical stage is concerned, the individual is not in a position to unite the opposites, since uniting the opposites implies a resolution of contradiction. But even if there is no resolution of contradiction, one nevertheless seems to free himself from contradiction by merely uttering "Either/Or" (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 162). From this, I think that here "Either/Or" can be taken as the same with "Both/and." Kierkegaard himself says that the aesthetical life is "built upon that which can both be and not be" (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 225) and as such I believe he demonstrates the possibility of an existential logic. Hence we see that this simple utterance "Either/Or" appears in different ways and here it appears as that which can "both be and not be." Marriage can both be and not be, it does not matter (since you will regret it either way); laughing at the stupidities of the world can both be and not be, etc. This is the reason why the individual simply says in despair "Either/Or." But his utterance in fact implies "eternity." Kierkegaard says that "the true eternity does not lie behind either/or but before it" (Kierkegaard, 1990, part I: 39). So we find that contrary to Hegelian logic, the maxim "Either/Or" is not a limiting obstacle implying finiteness in thought, but just the contrary, what is eternal lies in the very nature of "Either/Or" itself. Therefore it seems that Hegel sees only the limiting aspect of "either...or" thinking

whereas Kierkegaard discovers the very opposite, that is, he discovers the dialectic peculiar to this "Either/Or," in other words, the wisdom implicit to "Either/Or."

When we look at Kierkegaard's *Either/Or*, we discover the dialectic intrinsic to the stages stated above, that is, the aesthetical, ethical and religious stages. In this work, Kierkegaard tries to determine these different dialectics through some commonly known characters in the history of music and literature. One of them is the tragic character Antigone. The dialectic peculiar to her issues due to her conflict with the king's order. She faces a dilemma according to which she has to decide either to bury or not to bury her brother (Kierkegaard, 1990, part I: 156). I think that Kierkegaard discovers that through this dilemma, Antigone confronts with what is "eternal" intrinsic to her profound sorrow and although in the end she does make a choice, "the eternal" lies in just before making that choice, that is, in the confrontation with an "Either/Or." This confrontation of life is determined by Kierkegaard as "passion." And almost every passion has its own dialectic (Kierkegaard, 1990, part I: 159). Every case described in *Either/Or* is thus unique, and so reflects the truth of that peculiar case. Therefore, Kierkegaard's "dialectic" is not objective like Hegel's but subjective. He says,

Ordinarily, dialectic is thought to be rather abstract—one thinks almost solely of logical operations. But life will quickly teach a person that

there are many kinds of dialectic, that almost every passion has its own (Kierkegaard, 1990, part I: 159).

Thus, throughout the whole book, Kierkegaard attempts to discover (most of the time through comparisons) the dialectic involved in many different characters of history. Another remarkable character is Marie Beaumarchais of Goethe's *Clavigo* according to which Marie is in conflict due to her fiancé's leaving her (Kierkegaard, 1990, part I: 177). She questions whether her lover was a deceiver or not and she finds good reasons for both sides and so the interrogation never finishes (Kierkegaard, 1990, part I: 185-188) and so we can say that she *lives* a dichotomy as it is without bringing it to a resolution. She lives an existential contradiction, a contradiction within life which I believe give rise to an existential logic. The fact that Marie's interrogation never finishes is, according to Kierkegaard, a dialectic peculiar to a woman. He says,

A woman's dialectic is remarkable, and only the person who has had the opportunity to observe it can imitate it, whereas the greatest dialectician who ever lived could speculate himself crazy trying to produce it (Kierkegaard, 1990, part I: 199).

In this passage, "the greatest dialectician" I think refers to Hegel who, through his speculative philosophy, is unable to grasp the dialectic peculiar to individuals' lives but merely occupies himself objectively with a dialectic common to everything without exception. I believe that Kierkegaard thinks that these particular cases can never fit in the speculative objective dialectic developed by Hegel.

Another passage in *Either/Or* describes the unhappiest person.

He cannot grow old, for he has never been young; in a sense he cannot die, for indeed he has not lived; in a sense he cannot live, for indeed he is already dead...he has no passion, not because he lacks it, but because at the same moment he has the opposite passion (Kierkegaard, 1990, part I: 226).

It seems as if the unhappiest person is the one who has "both grown old and not grown old," or "neither grown old nor not grown old;" is "both dead and not dead," or "neither dead nor not dead;" "both passionate and not passionate," or "neither passionate nor not passionate." The resolution of contradiction seems to lead to nothingness. Dialectic seems to resolve itself into nothingness. Yet a few pages later, Kierkegaard concludes in a different way. He says, "see, language breaks down, and thought is confused, for who indeed is the happiest but the unhappiest and who the unhappiest but the happiest" (Kierkegaard, 1990, part I: 230).

There are two things to be considered in this passage. The first one is that Kierkegaard thinks that the resolution of contradiction is to be found beyond language and thought. So it seems that neither common language nor reason can grasp the unity of opposites. The resolution is to be found somewhere else.<sup>27</sup> Hence the opposites are demonstrated in the aesthetical stage as unity yet without a resolution.

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<sup>27</sup> I am referring to a kind of practical wisdom.

The second thing to be considered is that the dialectic no longer seems to lead to nothingness since the unhappiest is in unity with the happiest. The same dialectic still holds, that is, "one is both happiest and unhappiest" or "neither happiest nor unhappiest", but this time with a positive sense since it no longer describes the opposite features of the unhappiest person, but demonstrates that the same person, as he himself, is apt to unite with its opposite so that the descriptions of the unhappiest person becomes interwoven with the happiest one. I think that this dialectic denotes again an existential logic and that it is similar to the Hegelian dialectic since like the Hegelian one, it can be formulated as "both and neither". But we must take into consideration the fact that we have still not arrived at this formulation through a true resolution of contradiction. Therefore even though we can formulate the dialectic peculiar to the aesthetical stage as "both and neither," there is an indifference and vanity involved in its expression. In other words, saying "Either/Or, it does not matter," I believe, is the same as saying "it can be both and it can be neither, it does not matter." So it is I think an expression coming from indifference, vanity together with despair and not from a true resolution.

### **3.3.3 Either/Or As the Base for Genuine Choice**

It looks like Kierkegaard's aesthetical stage denotes a primary unity of opposites but without any resolution of contradiction and so not a genuine unity. This also implies that the esthete does not make a genuine choice.



In this regard, the "esthete" and the "speculative philosopher" have something in common in that "they have not discovered the reality of the fact of choice" (Thulstrup, 1980: 331). This is rather discovered by the ethical individual who, by choosing genuinely, develops his personality; Kierkegaard says, "through the choice the personality submerges itself in that which is being chosen, and when it does not choose, it withers away in atrophy" (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 163). In other words, through choice the individual starts to "become." He no longer is the person "who is what he is" as was the case with the esthete. He starts to develop such a personality that with regard to an "Either/Or," his self "posits either the one or the other" (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 163). He no longer remains in the indifference of the esthete with respect a choice. All the same, it may be misleading to say that the esthete does not choose at all. In fact, he chooses but,

the esthetic choice is either altogether immediate, and thus no choice, or it loses itself in a great multiplicity. For example, when a young girl follows her heart's choice, this choice, however beautiful it is otherwise, is no choice in the stricter sense, because it is altogether immediate. If one does not choose absolutely, one chooses only for the moment and for that reason can choose something else the next moment (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 167).

To choose "absolutely" is to choose between "good" and "evil." This is, according to Kierkegaard, "the only absolute Either/Or" (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 166, 167). Therefore, genuine choice means "Either the good or the evil" and the real fact of this genuine choice emerges when

one stands "at the crossroads." If at such a moment, the individual has no other choice but to choose, then Kierkegaard claims "he will choose the right thing." This means the individual knows "how to choose" and ipso facto is happier than the esthete (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 168) who, in despair, is only able to shout "Either/Or." To break free the deadlock that is characterized as the agony of despair, the self must choose, but choose absolutely.

Kierkegaard also says that to choose absolutely is not to choose between "this or that" but to choose oneself in one's "eternal validity." He says, "something other than myself I can never choose as the absolute, for if I choose something else, I choose it as something finite and consequently do not choose at all" (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 214). Whatever choice you make, if you choose between this or that, you choose something finite. Therefore on the one hand we have an absolute "Either/Or" which is the choice between good and evil, leading the individual in turn to choose the right thing at the crucial moment. On the other hand, we have an absolute choice which is characterized as choosing oneself. It seems that choosing the right thing at the crucial moment implies that the individual in turn chooses himself absolutely. Therefore, if one chooses the right thing, one at the same time chooses himself absolutely.

According to Kierkegaard, agony or despair is needed if one wants to understand life. Even if one's life is beautiful and happy, he must experience "the bitterness of despair" (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 208). Because despair is the individual's "true salvation" (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 221). But one cannot remain in this agony or despair, and so as soon as the self wants to become what he can become, he chooses, and when he makes a genuine choice, he chooses between the right and wrong and in turn chooses himself absolutely. In the end he understands that he has to commit himself to what he has chosen and this constitutes the transition to commitment.

The individual overcomes agony only through commitment to what one has chosen, but the "ultimate" resolution is one's commitment to God, in other words to "choose God" and "repent oneself." This is characteristic of the religious stage. In the aesthetical stage one does not choose; in the ethical, he makes a genuine choice; and in the religious, an absolute choice. "Repentance" is, in the end, to choose oneself absolutely. So when the ethical self wants to choose himself absolutely, he can no longer remain in the ethical stage: It is this that constitutes the transition to the religious stage. Kierkegaard says,

He repents himself back into himself, back into the family, back into the race, until he finds himself in God. Only on this condition can he choose himself. And this is the only condition he wants, for only in this way can he choose himself absolutely (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 216).

According to Kierkegaard, if you choose to love a human being, then you are continuously deceived and live contradictions throughout your relationship. The most important contradiction is between "right" and "wrong." There are times in your relation you believe you are right, but you wish to be "in the wrong" and not "in the right." Even if you try to deceive yourself, you still cannot escape that contradiction. However, the case with one's love of God is, according to Kierkegaard, different. With your love of God, there cannot be such a contradiction (between right and wrong) because you know that with regard to your relation with God, you are always in the wrong (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 348, 349). You are always in the wrong because you are "guilty." Kierkegaard says, "only when I choose myself as guilty do I absolutely choose myself" (Kierkegaard, 1990, part II: 216, 217). So, with regard to one's relation to God, to choose the right thing is to choose that you are guilty. Thus when you commit yourself to God by choosing yourself as guilty, that is, when you know that you are always in the wrong then ultimately all contradictions are resolved.

What I call the existential logic or the logic of life first involved any kind of contradictions involved within life, then it involved more specifically the contradiction between the good and the evil and in the end it involved the contradiction between the right and the wrong which in turn brought the contradictions of living into resolution. Basically, it is through the love of God that contradictions are resolved. In the same way, the contradiction Kierkegaard lived regarding, for example, whether to marry or not to marry

his fiancée resolves through his choice of God. So he chooses not to marry Regine and avoids his agony through his commitment to God. But before that, unable to choose and experiencing the crisis of choosing, Kierkegaard first revolts against God. However, his revolt later on becomes his commitment. At first sight any paradox of living is resolved through a passionate commitment to one side of the "Either/Or". Therefore when one passionately and deliberately commits himself to the choice he has made, contradiction disappears, but Kierkegaard thinks that ultimately the only way for man to resolve all the ethical paradoxes is the religious commitment since man can alleviate his agony completely only through committing himself to an infinite being which is God. As can be now understood, Kierkegaard resolves all paradoxes, crisis, agony through an infinite being which in turn resolves at the same time "man's existential problem" (Jones, 1975: 218).

Hegel stops his process of endless negation to resolve the contradictions with the "Idea" or the "Absolute" which does not involve any contradiction in itself. Kierkegaard, however, puts an end to contradictions with commitment to God. Although he starts by stressing the importance of the "Either/Or"s, ultimately his philosophy reaches a point in which there is no longer an "Either/Or" but an infinite commitment stopping all these "Either/Or"s. Kierkegaard seems to arrive at the same point as Hegel: an absolute point where there no longer are any contradictions but only absolute resolution or as Kierkegaard believes, man's salvation. Together

with these ending points, Hegel resolves the contradictions in thought and Kierkegaard resolves the contradictions in life. I believe that the Kierkegaardian attempt of resolving the contradictions in life demonstrates a possibility of an existential logic, in other words of the logic of life, implicit in the existential facts.

### **3.4 Summary**

The core of this chapter has been the introduction of existence in relation to the existing individual human being and so no longer as a mere "idea." Kierkegaard's antisystematic existential standpoint led him to quite different sometimes opposed assertions to that of Hegel's. The first opposition was Kierkegaard's refuting a "system" of existence, given the fact that such a system can never explain one's individual existence in this world, since it only aims at objective truth based on the relation between categories of thought. This being true, there is no place for choice in system due to the dialectical-speculative determination of everything. This system implies a self as a knower rather than a self as a doer, the latter one being Kierkegaard's main interest. Hegel, as a knower, makes himself responsible for showing the objective, discursive, absolute truth unfolding itself through speculative reason whereas Kierkegaard, as a doer, or as an acting self, lives his life with the passion of finding out the idea which will be the explanation for what he is to do in this world, which I called the life of life. In pursuit of this idea, the existential individual falls into

contradictions, that is, in situations in which he says "Either/Or," and accordingly in which he is forced to make a decision. Otherwise he remains in contradiction. This directs us to the second opposition between the views of the two philosophers. The distinction is based on Hegel's "either...or" and what Kierkegaard calls "Either/Or." By this word, Kierkegaard does not understand a disjunctive conjunction, but a motto written in one word which as such reflects the existential fact that man is faced with. This I called the logic of life or the existential logic. The existential logic reflects the practical wisdom implicit in "Either/Or," and no longer the negative tendency of the logic of the understanding. It is the practical wisdom because it reflects what the individual should do in life, especially when faced with contradictions. The individual has to understand himself "in" the contradictions and has to grasp opposites together in existence itself. To resolve the contradictions in thought is not much difficult, but to do the same in existence is very hard. The most important evidence for this is that mediation can only be applied to the past and not to the present or future. The outcome of this mediation applied to the past is that the paradoxes of ideas are not absolute at all whereas the paradoxes of living are absolute due to the agony of decision. The individual faces an "Either/Or" but is not in a position to decide since he is aware of the fact that he will regret the choice he will make either way. Therefore the individual, by simply saying "Either/Or" reflects the whole wisdom of life. With this "Either/Or," we no longer talk about the Hegelian "either...or" of the understanding which fixes and determines things

absolutely. There is nothing to fix since there is no choice at all. Since the individual does not choose, how would one determine something absolutely? In short, there is nothing to determine. This is characteristic of the aesthetical stage. Man frees himself from contradiction by desperately shouting, "Either/Or." This, I find, is the same as saying, "Both/and," and "Neither/nor" because the individual is indifferent to either choice. In other words, both sides can both be and not be, or neither be nor not be, it does not matter. This is the dialectic implicit in "Either/Or." In other words, the dialectic peculiar to the dichotomies of life according to which there arises a possibility of an existential logic.

The aesthetical stage is without a true resolution since the esthete does not yet make a genuine choice. This is discovered by the ethical individual who, by choosing genuinely, develops his personality. His self posits either the one or the other of the sides of opposites. A genuine choice is the choice made between the good and the evil in such a way that when one is at the crossroads in his life, he definitely chooses the right thing. The individual knows how to choose and applies it to his personal existence. Choosing the right thing also implies that the individual chooses himself absolutely. When, in the end, he commits himself to what he has chosen, he transposes to the religious stage.

It is true that the agony of decision is resolved only when one commits himself to what he has chosen, but ultimately, the resolution



constitutes one's commitment to God and so to repent himself. Repentance is to really choose oneself absolutely. Therefore, it is only by choosing God that one makes an absolute choice. Through that choice, all contradictions in turn are resolved. Unlike God, you as an individual, are always in the wrong and guilty and as such there no longer remains any contradiction between the right and the wrong. In sum, it can be said that the ethical paradoxes are resolved and that man can alleviate his agony only through an infinite being.

What I called the existential logic or the logic of life first involved any kind of contradictions involved within life, then it involved more specifically the contradiction between the good and the evil and in the end it involved the contradiction between the right and the wrong which in turn brought the contradictions of living into resolution.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

What is the outcome of this study? Where does the discussion lead us? In Chapter II we have seen how contradictions *in thought* are resolved through a reasoning behind “either...or” and how a logic of logic could be constructed whereas in Chapter III we have seen that contradictions *in life* are resolved only through grasping the wisdom implicit in “Either/Or” as well as the way in which a philosophy of life, that is a life of life could be constructed. Earlier on, the reader might have said that these two approaches are completely separate because the former applies to the logical context whereas the second applies to life itself and since their application field are different, these two cannot be considered together. However, after having taken this determination as a possible objection, I preferred to formulate the question, “What is the relation between the logical sphere and the sphere of life?”

Hegel seems to make no distinction between the realm of logic and that of life since everything *is* only in so far as it involves thought or that it is itself a thought, in other words the truth consists of the whole relation between categories. In such a case, life becomes a category or thought

and so as Kierkegaard objects, life itself together with my individual existence, is considered only as a category and not as an existential fact. To deduce the category of life is not to explain life itself. Life considered as such is in harmony with logic and so all distinctions disappear, but the distinctions vanish only with respect thought. Before the distinctions, there are no two realms distinct from one another. So the prima facie distinctions disappear because we discover that there is only one world involving both logic and life on the basis of thought. Therefore it will be more appropriate to say that in fact there is no distinction at all.

Kierkegaard at the very beginning of his philosophy, starts by positing a distinction between the two realms. He claims that to resolve contradictions in thought is not difficult at all whereas the contradictions of living are not that easily resolved. This is the reason why he thinks that system and existence are incompatible. My existential life considered as such is not in harmony at all with logic. In other words, my existence has nothing to do with logic.

I believe that there is a way to consider these two approaches together and that they complete each other. Using the Hegelian reasoning, what I claim is that the realm of logic and the realm of life are both in unity and distinct from one another. They are one but two and two but one. What does this mean? This means that there is a way to consider them together but that they are also separate realms. Therefore, in contrast to the

attempts in the history of philosophy according to which there was a gap between logic and life, I tried to resolve this gap by an attempt to demonstrate the relation between these two spheres.

Hegel's system implies that logic and life come together on the basis of thought in the sense that life is deducible as a category within the Science of Logic. But I think that there is also another sense according to which the existential life itself has a kind of logic. I really do believe that looking from the meta-level, we can talk about the logic of logic, the logic of life, the life of life and the life of logic. First of all, I tried to demonstrate that the Hegelian logical system was a good example for the logic of logic due to the logical categories deduced from one another. It was also an example for the life of logic since the movement of thought thinking itself gave life to the whole Science of Logic. These two meta determinations belonged to the Hegelian system, the other two, that is the life of life and the logic of life belonged to the Kierkegaardian framework. I believe that the life of life really denotes Kierkegaard's existential individual who bleeds, sweats, weeps, sorrows, rejoices, etc. Therefore, the life of life was the existential life. Although Kierkegaard opposed to systematicity and although he believed for system and existence to be incompatible, I believe that to assert individual ethical existence does not necessarily imply the cancellation of system. I believe life itself has a system, a kind of logic and not only in the sense that there lies for example the laws of physics behind it, but also in the sense that the individual ethical choices

comprises a logic. I do not think that choice is irrational, on the contrary, one chooses or may choose reasonably so that together with all the choices he makes, he constructs his own life together with a kind of logic. So in my opinion Kierkegaard's philosophy can also be considered or read from the framework of an existential logic, though he would certainly object to it. Hence, I believe that the Kierkegaardian Either/Or denotes to this existential logic.

In the light of the above considerations, it can be said that logic and life are completely separate realms when considered as the logic of logic and the life of life. And when considered as the life of logic and the logic of life, they come together. I believe Kierkegaard cannot object to the Hegelian system for not having explained what the existential individual is to do in this world. After all, this is not the proper place for ethical facts to be discussed. In other words, Kierkegaard cannot accuse the Hegelian system for not having explained the life of life, that is the existential life. In the same way, Hegel cannot object to Kierkegaard just because he has no system and that his philosophy is not constructed on the basis of the logic of logic. Because Kierkegaard does not have such an aim. These determinations together imply how can logic and life can be considered as distinct from one another.

In order to unite the Hegelian and the Kierkegaardian approaches, we may emphasise the meta determinations, the life of logic and the logic of

life. In Chapter II, I said that the Hegelian movement of thought thinking itself could be considered as an example for the life of logic. Now I think that there is more than that. What I do believe is that the Hegelian concept "identity-in-difference" which lies at the basis of the Hegelian dialectical-speculative reasoning, is not only a mere abstract concept belonging to the logical sphere alone, but that it can well imply a philosophical perspective pertaining to life in the Kierkegaardian sense.

I think that when we make the connection between Hegel's notion of understanding which has the one-sided "either...or" as its basis, and life, we can reach a Kierkegaardian "Either/Or" which reflects itself as "choice." This is the most important notion that Kierkegaard together with the other existentialist philosophers brought to philosophy. "Man is in his choice," is the existential sense of truth. This implies that man continuously makes choices and as such he constructs himself. There are moments in life and sometimes crossroads in which one faces a dilemma. In such a situation, one has no other choice but to choose in order to break through the dilemma. And that is sometimes really difficult.

To sum up, we have to choose. This means, as in the case of the Hegelian logic of understanding, choosing one side of the dilemma. For instance, you may face a dilemma of either leaving Turkey or not leaving Turkey. Obviously you cannot do both at the same time. So you have to choose between the two. Does this imply that in life we are supposed or

obliged to live one-sidedly? I think that being one-sided has a positive meaning in relation to the individual's choice, since one cannot become if one does not choose. It seems that the one-sidedness of the logic is different from the one-sidedness of choosing. But I am asking, can the act of choosing not have a logic on its own; a logic which carries the individual beyond the act of choosing to an attitude according to which the dilemmas are no longer a problem? This may be possible through the application of the Hegelian logic to life. When we think of the concept "identity-in-difference" which lies at the basis of speculative reason in relation to the Kierkegaardian existential life, I believe that Hegelian logic gives us a third view which can have application in life. Together with this third view, to choose between the two sides, to get caught in "Either/Or" will no longer be a problem. Since one will then have a general attitude of thinking and living beyond the oppositions (this always makes me remember Nietzsche's "Beyond Good and Evil"), one will no longer experience the act of choosing as a deadlock but will transform it into a wisdom of embracing life as it is. Kierkegaard reaches God. But I am thinking of a humanly wisdom according to which the individual no longer suffers due to his way of polar thinking. I claim that the logic of "either...or" applied to life, gives suffering to the individual. So "either...or" is more than one-sided, it is the most important source of unhappiness. Why? Because the individual, when used to thinking in "either...or," also has the tendency to live in "either...or," or vice versa. This means to see every phenomenon one-sidedly, and to get used to judging yourself as well as others. For example,

when the individual wants to achieve something, s/he usually progresses towards his/her goal and during the process, s/he faces many obstacles. If s/he does not have a third view beyond the oppositions, s/he will find himself continuously in failure and success. S/He will judge him/herself when s/he cannot do something that s/he had previously fixed as a purpose. This is the negative side of one-sidedness in life. If you see phenomena through fixed determinations, in other words without "identity-in-difference," you will not be able to see phenomena as they are but only from a fixed side. You will either determine yourself as successful or judge yourself to be in failure; you will either love someone because you think s/he is good or hate him/her because s/he is bad. This, I think, is a shallow and unhappy way of living based on a shallow logic. I am not implying a perspective according to which there are no value judgements. This would be ridiculous. But to determine phenomena through these value judgements as absolute values, is for me, not to see things in their becoming and also to kill one's progress in life. After a certain experience, if you think someone is jealous and determine him/her as absolutely jealous, this means you are looking at life through fixed determinations. Similarly, if you want to dance but think you are incapable of dancing (for example after a certain trial), this means you are killing the idea of progress and becoming within your life. Or again if you possess an ideal in your mind but suffer because of not having reached that ideal yet, this simply means you are suffering because of your fixed determinations.



To conclude, I think the Hegelian “identity-in-difference” opens up a way for a third view in which the individual no longer suffers from facing dilemmas. He chooses in the Kierkegaardian sense, but in peace by embracing life through a humanly wisdom. This implies a kind of logic that is applied to the Kierkegaardian sense of life, a logic that is not constituted of abstract logical operations, but of a third perspective to life according to which dichotomies in life are resolved. This, I believe, implies the possibility of a logic of life.



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