According to Habermas, Hegel’s early reflections in Jena on labour and language do not bear upon logical categories. In Habermas’s view, the formative model that Hegel proposes in his early texts on labour and language is lost in his mature philosophy. In this paper, I shall propose an intra-systematic reading of Hegel’s philosophy that challenges Habermas’s dualistic reading. I shall point out the dialectical relation between labour, memory, and the logical concept (Begriff). In doing so, I will emphasize the fact that memory and labour are based on the refutation of the use of mechanical causality in the genesis of the subject, the argument for which is illustrated in the Science of Logic. Finally, I will argue that the genesis of the logical concept coincides with a formative process that is grounded in the Science of Logic and yet underlies the genesis of subjectivity as spontaneous capacity of self-determination.

In Arbeit und Interaktion, an essay dedicated to the philosophy of the young Hegel, Habermas argued that language and work play a significant role in the formulation of Hegel’s concept of Geist. In Habermas’s view, the Jena texts are remarkable in that they offer an account of Geist that is not based on the systematic pattern at work in Hegel’s later production. Quite to the contrary, the texts of the Realphilosophie devoted to the philosophy of spirit trace a different configuration with regard to the actualization of Geist. This latter is achieved—in Habermas’s reading—by means of dialectical interconnections between linguistic symbolization, labour, and interaction, which do not appear in the logic.

As is well known, the concept of Geist or spirit covers a variety of distinct, yet unified, aspects in Hegel’s philosophy. In the Phenomenology of Spirit, spirit stands for a distinct shape of consciousness that interacts with an objective world that is no longer perceived as alien, but rather shaped by the very activity of Geist itself. According to the Phenomenology, the development of spirit embraces all theoretical and practical developments of consciousness. This includes the basic forms of consciousness, such as sense-certainty, perception, intellect, and self-consciousness, but also the universal laws of reason with regard to nature and morality. Ultimately, in the Phe-
nomenology, spirit is equated with the ethical life of a nation\(^1\), for it is only in the shared horizon of a historical community that spirit comes to full expression. Similarly, in the *Philosophy of Spirit* of the *Encyclopedia*\(^2\), spirit essentially consists in the process of actualization of subjective capacities as well as objective expressions of freedom (such as right, morality, and institutions). In this sense, the *Philosophy of Spirit* investigates closely the variety of forms through which spirit develops itself both as knowledge and objectivity. The analysis of such forms shows that spirit is not simply a product of nature, but rather a complex development of the concept of freedom, which is rooted in subjectivity and is animated by the drive to know and express itself.

Yet Habermas referred notably to the *Realphilosophie*, i.e., the lectures on spirit and nature that Hegel wrote in Jena in 1805–6. In Habermas’s reading, communicative dialectic can be achieved by specific configurations of mediation that do not require any top-down or bottom-up progression. In this light, it is not spirit, in its absolute movement of self-manifestation, that actualizes itself spontaneously (both subjectively and objectively), but it is rather the dialectical interconnections between language, labour and, interaction that determine the concept of spirit itself. From this point of view, whereas the *Phenomenology* articulates spirit in terms of dialectical progression, Habermas argues, the Jena writings do not present any hierarchy, but rather focus on concrete and formative processes (*Bildungsprozesse*), such as labour and language. With regard to these two spheres, Habermas observes that

The objectivity of language retains power over the subjective spirit, while the cunning that outwits nature extends subjective freedom over the power of objective spirit – for in the end the labour process too terminates in mediated satisfaction, the satisfac-

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tion in the commodities produced for consumption, and in the retroactively changed interpretation of the needs themselves.3

For Hegel, language and labour are distinct moments in which spirit attains concrete reality through a process of objectification. According to Habermas, language parallels labour in that they both demand the liberation of spirit from external constraints, such as the power of representation, in the case of language, and nature in that of labour. While language objectifies the meaning of words, thereby liberating spirit from the contingency of representations, the instruments of work form the existing middle between spirit and nature. However, Habermas also points out that the dialectic of labour does not mediate between subject and object in the same manner as the dialectic of language. The speaker does not establish with words the same relation that she has with her tools. This is due to the fact that words penetrate consciousness and intelligence, while the tools of work involve the existence of an originary struggle between subjectivity and nature. In addition, Habermas maintains that “for this relationship [labour], which by no means corresponds to the teleology of spirit realizing itself, Hegel’s Logic offers no appropriate category.”4

Two main issues are noteworthy in Habermas’s interpretation: (1) he points out the formative character of work and language in relation to the determination of Geist5, and (2) he maintains that practical interactions like labour do not bear upon Hegel’s Science of Logic. In what follows, I shall argue in favour of a different view outlining the connection between formative activities and logical categories. This will lead me to question Habermas’s privileged

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reading of the Jena writings, for I shall refer to the Phenomenology, the Science of Logic, and the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit. Significantly, in these works, the notion of Geist entails a peculiar reference to the logical concept (Begriff), as I shall show in the following.

In my opinion, work and language, besides establishing a direct link to the categories of relation (substantiality, causality, and reciprocity), are also able to shed light on the genesis of the concept in Hegel’s philosophy. The distinctive feature of such process is the refutation of the use of mechanical causality in the genesis of subjectivity. On Hegel’s account, it is not possible to conceive of any form of freedom in abstraction or independently from a self-determining subject. In this sense, the logical concept paves the way for the understanding of the principle of subjectivity, which is at stake in concrete reality through the various shapes of spirit. This, however, does not involve any teleological model, for the logical concept is deduced as absolute capacity of self-determination without any goals that it has not posited by itself. Thus, Habermas is right when he argues that forms of interactions like labour do not bear upon teleology in Hegel’s philosophy. Yet this is due to the fact that Hegel has a different logical form in mind when it comes to explicating concrete processes involving the genesis of the subject. This is not based on teleology, but rather on the refutation of mechanical causality as model of explanation, which coincides—as I will argue—with the deduction of the concept.

In the following, I will concentrate on the functions of work and language in the Jena writings, before investigating their connection to the logical categories of relation. Finally, I will explicate in what sense the logical concept underlies a formative process that is essentially involved in the Realphilosophie.

I. The Place of Causality in Relation to Spirit in the Jena Writings

In the Jena lectures given in 1802–3, Hegel establishes a close relationship between memory and work, claiming that memory is the first work that the Ego exercises on itself. Memory is the ability to retain representations as imageless signs. Contrary to Locke and to the empiricists, Hegel does not regard memory as a deposit, but rather as the power that transforms representations into universal meanings, that is to say, into linguistic signs. Two years later Hegel restates this argument, confirming that memory is “the first work of
the awakened spirit *qua* spirit.\(^6\) The Self retains names, as if they were his own "slaves,"\(^7\) for the Ego orders them necessarily. However, there are no *a priori* rules according to which names are arranged. On the contrary, Hegel frequently stresses the implicit contingency and arbitrariness of name creation. In this light, necessity does not refer to the particular relation established among names, but rather *to the fact that* the self has been established as a linguistic relation.

More precisely, Hegel arguably conceives of memory as the general faculty that justifies the double being of intelligence, which is, at the same time, passive and active. Intelligence is passive in that it receives the manifold of experience within itself and lets himself be made into a thing, e.g. intuitive signs such as words. But intelligence is also active insofar as it brings itself forth by means of language. The issue tackled by Hegel is that sign creation *causes* a differentiation of intelligence *in-itself*, thereby allowing for self-intuition. It is worth noticing that this process reflects an extensive use of the notion of causality. Apparently, memory exercises an efficient force over intelligence, for memory causes the reification of intelligence into signs and words. Since the work of memory is the "primary inner effect [*das erste innere wirken auf sich selbst*]\(^8\) of spirit upon itself, it can be said that the reification of intelligence in linguistic signs is underpinned by the category of causality. Nonetheless, Hegel acknowledges that linguistic signs allow spirit to articulate and express itself. Thus, as soon as intelligence is *forced* to be the empty and necessary order of many different names, memory enables the thinking activity. Hegel suggests that, by routinely using word to convey meanings, our capacity for thinking is developed. Intelligence acquires the capacity to think, *i.e.* to transform its experience into thought, by engaging in language learning and expression. In this regard, language is the abstract power through which intelligence retains a pre-reflective relation to itself while being engaged in the process of meaning creation. By means of language, spirit becomes


\(^{7}\) See *Hegel and the Human Spirit*, 91 (Gesammelte Werke, Band 8, 192): "The I is first of all in possession of names; it must preserve them in its Night—as serviceable [*als dienstbare*], obedient to the I. Not only must it regard names in general, it must also look at them in its space as a fixed order—for this is their interrelation and necessity, the intrinsic relation of many different names."

\(^{8}\) *Hegel and the Human Spirit*, 93 (Gesammelte Werke, Band 8, 194).
objective to itself without yet knowing itself as individuality. In other words, spirit experiences itself as thinking activity without having the concept of itself as self-determining subjectivity. Which kind of process is then at work in thinking?

The dialectic of thinking is modeled upon the categories of causality and reciprocal action, for the efficient power of memory turns out to be the reactivation of a deeper relation between thinking and language. As long as the activity of memory is reduced to a mechanism, it is marked by efficiency, i.e. as outlining a distinction between activity and passivity. By contrast, the dialectic of causality underlying memory shows that the effect cannot be conceived in isolation from the determination to act. To put it differently, the capacity of memorization is not entirely passive, for it is instrumental in the generation of meaning, whereby nexuses between words and objects are established spontaneously and in accordance with the rules of a given language. Thus, what Hegel calls attention to is whether causal activity entirely consists in the product of the action, or whether it depends on the nature of both the action and the entities involved. The notion of reciprocity captures the latter by indicating that activity and passivity depend on each other in order to generate an actual process.

The account I have given of Hegel's view of memory is necessary abbreviated, for I will return to this point later. My aim here is to show that the formative process involved in human expressivity is based on the reciprocal action taking place within spirit between memory and thinking. There would not be any thoughts without language, just like linguistic signs would be meaningless if they did not serve the purpose of generating thoughts. Thus, the reciprocal action between memory and thinking determines a more fundamental process, i.e. the genesis of the subject as spontaneous activity of thought. Yet, the notion of reciprocal action is marked by the externality between memory and thinking, which do not totally coincide. Hence, reciprocity does not capture the intrinsic self-relation acquired by spirit by means of thinking. This requires a different category, as I will show in the following by discussing the genesis of the logical concept.

So far I have argued that memory provides the ground for a preliminary account of the relation between logical categories and formative activities. This challenges Habermas's reading in that, already in the Jena writings, as I argue, the exploration of language underpins a logical scheme based on the refutation of mechanical causality as model of explanation of subjective expressivity. A crucial development of this line of reasoning can be detected in the Gestalt
of mastery and servitude of the *Phenomenology*, as I shall demonstrate in the next section.

II. Labour and Causality: The Dialectic of Lordship and Bondage

Hegel’s phenomenological discourse takes place at the abstract level of consciousness, yet the fourth chapter of the *Phenomenology* is one of the richest in offering practical situations and theoretical principles that are reciprocally intertwined. As is well known, the fourth chapter of the *Phenomenology* sets the stage for the development of self-consciousness. In Hegel’s view, self-consciousness represents a crucial advancement with respect to understanding. In the third chapter dedicated to “Force and Understanding,” Hegel has actually explored how understanding rises above perception and posits its own certainty as true. Taken as understanding, consciousness seeks to provide a scientific image of the world that resists the ontological fragmentation brought about by sense-certainty and perception. While sense experience reproduces the world of common sense, which treats universal properties as sensuous instances, understanding discriminates between the essence of objects and their appearances. For Hegel, the world of common sense “is always at its poorest where it fancies itself to be the richest.” (PhG, §131) This has to do with the limits of perception, which cannot provide a stable and universal determination of experience. By contrast, understanding articulates the difference between the unitary essence of phenomena and their external manifestation.

However, a significant limit marks the activity of understanding. In this attitude, consciousness can describe the unfolding of various phenomena, but it lacks the criteria to justify its own procedure. Hegel’s claim is that understanding is not able to validate the ontological commitment of its knowing, since the activity of understanding is fundamentally opaque. To put it in other words, understanding is not aware of being the source of normativity regulating nature and experience. What understanding attains is a universality that is not self-referential in nature. The “movement of knowing” has not been appropriated by consciousness as its own (PhG, §166), for understanding fails to conceive of its relation to the object. Understanding falls prey to an opposition between the concept and its existence, *i.e.* between the nature of the object in itself and the universality of the law posited by understanding to explain the nature of the object (being for itself).
The fourth chapter of the *Phenomenology* seeks to offer a solution to the antinomy of understanding by developing the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness. I shall focus on Hegel’s allegory of the master-servant relationship, which represents the intertwining of consciousnesses before the actual development of self-consciousness. Here again the reader is confronted with a causal model, wherein the efficient causality of the action turns out to be one-sided and merely apparent. The master plays the role of the causal agent, as she achieves satisfaction through the work of the servant. As such, she is the “pure negative power for which the thing is nothing.” (PhG, §191) On the other hand, the servant is “forced back into itself” (PhG, §194); he feels the fear of death and the “absolute power” (PhG, §195) of the master. Hegel identifies the master with an unlimited power, that is to say, with an absolute causality exercised over the servant, who seems to be merely passive.

However, fear awakes the servant from his passivity and reactivates his formative power. This is the reason why Hegel distinguishes between fear (*Furcht*) and anxiety (*Angst*), when he states: “If he [the servant] has not been tried and tested by absolute fear but only by a few anxieties, then the negative essence will have remained an externality in his eyes, and his substance will not have been infected all the way through by it.” (PhG, §196) Whereas anxiety frightens and blocks, fear prompts a reaction. As noted by Russon, the servant is subjected to multiple pressures insofar as he represents an embodied, expressive self that recognizes other centres and is vulnerable to their activity. Accordingly, the need to do service for the master gives rise to the specific need to recognize objectivity. In fact, consciousness transforms its passive attitude toward the master into activity. The servant’s labour “cultivates and educates” (PhG, §195); it is a “formative activity” by means of which the object does not disappear in the consumption, but rather persists as durable existence. By means of labour, the servant achieves “a mind of his own” (PhG, §196), and this gives him “the consciousness of himself as consciousness of the essence.” (PhG, §196) In other words, the servant refers to himself *mediately* through the object: “the working consciousness comes to an intuition of self-sufficient being *as its own self*.” (PhG, §195)

Indeed, it would be wrong to consider the self-awareness achieved by the servant in terms of a solitary engagement with the world. Quite to the contrary, the servant develops his own freedom.

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9 See John Russon, *Reading Hegel’s Phenomenology*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 2004), 89.
because he understands that the middle term connecting his existence with that of the master is not an asymmetric relation of power, but rather an essential realm wherein they are reciprocally connected and yet independent:

Through this rediscovery of himself by himself, the servant realizes that it is precisely in his work wherein he seemed to have only an alienated existence that he acquires a mind of his own. For this reflection, the two moments of fear and service as such, as also that of formative activity, are necessary, both being at the same time in a universal mode. (PhG, §196)

Being with the other is a fundamental feature of the process that leads the servant to be free. On the one hand, there is the “hermeneutical pressure” highlighted by Russon, i.e., the attempt at a compromise: one gives the other the right to be the one for whom things are defined in order to escape the struggle of desires. In this sense, fear keeps the servant focussed on his subjection in a way that prevents him from seeing anything but his own service. On the other hand, labour allows the servant to shape a horizon in which both he and the master are equally independent and free. In fact, they both depend on the fruits of work, that is to say, their existence is grounded on the being that labour brings to light. Accordingly, the sphere of work is a middle ground in that it transforms fear in reciprocity and finally in freedom.

Such an outcome shares many similarities with memory as here at stake one finds again the categories of causality and reciprocity. Labour is the effect of fear, but labour is also the cause of the master’s being, for the master achieves satisfaction only through the servant’s activity. Furthermore, as memory enables the thinking activity, work equally allows for the self-relation of consciousness, which can finally be acknowledged as thinking: “For us, a new shape of self-consciousness has come to be,...the pure movement of consciousness which thinks, that is, free self-consciousness.” (PhG, §197)

It is worth remarking that this passage establishes the distinction between representations and thinking within the *Phenomenology*. Here, Hegel contrasts thought and representation, since the latter implies the externality of the content of thought to consciousness, whereas the former is the unity of myself and the object:

Within thinking, I am free because I am not in an other; rather, I remain utterly at one with myself, and the object, which to me is the essence, is in undivided unity my being-for-myself; and my
moving about in concepts is a movement within myself. (PhG, §197)

As Hegel remarks, the distinctive feature of thinking is a dynamic form of self-relation. In thinking we are free, because we are not beside ourselves, but rather we freely move in thoughts that allow us to understand reality and to become subjects of our own actions. By means of thought, the appropriation of the manifold of experience is such that subjectivity retains its own self-identity while engaging in a process of interaction with the world. Both memory and labour culminate in thinking because they represent formative processes by means of which spirit achieves the intuition of itself as capable of freedom and self-determining activity. From this point of view, labour and memory share significant similarities insofar as they rely on the same process of self-development.

One might object that Hegel, in the Phenomenology, does not address the parallel between memory and labour. Still, both memory and labour underpin a dialectical refutation of efficient causality, hence they share the same underlying dialectical process. Not by chance, violence, which is distinctive of the dialectic of labour in the Phenomenology, also appears in the Addition to §465 of the Psychology of the Encyclopedia of 1830 in relation to memory:

At the standpoint of representation the unity of the subjective and the objective is effected partly by imagination and partly by mechanical memory – though with the latter type of unity I do violence [Gewalt antue] to my subjectivity – and the unity still remains something subjective. In thinking, by contrast, this unity acquires the form of a unity that is both subjective and objective, since thinking is aware of its own self as the nature of the thing.10

The act of memorization indicates that the Ego lets himself be subjugated by the concrete presence of language. By contrast, thinking determines the free development of human intelligence.11 Hegel

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10 Hegel, Philosophy of Mind, §465, Addition.
points out that there is a relevant difference between having representations and having thoughts. On a general level, language implies the incorporation of a set of rules by means of which the speaker is able to reproduce meaning. In fact, everyone gets used to the language spoken in a given country, but this does not mean that everyone is aware of the difference between language and thought. Therefore, mechanical memory is an act of violence insofar as it forces intelligence to mechanically follow given rules, the nature of which is alien to spirit unless it is appropriated by thought. For this reason, the functioning of memory does not guarantee objective validity, for the rules that memory follows are marked by contingency, hence they are subjective.

As a result, Hegel stresses that memory is only the “external mode, the one-sided moment of thinking’s existence,” but it is not identical to thinking as such. It is only when intelligence fully develops the capacity of spontaneously generating meaning that the apparent passivity of memory turns out to be an intrinsic and permanent feature of thought. Thanks to the activity of the latter, intelligence inhabits a world that is shaped by its own theoretical activity. In fact, thinking produces universal connections that expand the intelligibility of reality, allowing the self to recognize the work of reason in the world. In this sense, the structure of labour in the *Phenomenology* shares significant similarities with memory. Both labour and memory allow subjectivity to inhabit a world that is made intelligible by thought, but this is the result of a process in which subjectivity risks its attachment to contingency and immediate reality. Thus, Hegel explores both memory and labour in order to elucidate the process involved in the genesis of the self as capable of thought and freedom.

Still, why is violence recurrent in Hegel’s treatment of subjectivity? As Hegel suggests, memory implies a form of violence in that the subjective expressivity of intelligence is forced to follow the rules of a given language, thereby constraining poetic imagination and symbolic production. Therefore, in this context, violence should neither be confused with authority (*potestas*), nor equated *tout court* with power (*Macht*). On the contrary, violence identifies the tension of subjective expression that is forced to be objectified. In Hegel’s

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terms, violence means that something gets lost in the development of both consciousness and intelligence, that is, our subjective attachment to immediate reality. In this respect, Hegel points out that each experience carries a substantial change. If we take violence to be the concrete manifestation of efficient causality, we realize that it is a limit inherent in each formative process. Violence represents an objective force that causes the differentiation of the self, thereby grounding the possibility of self-intuition. One might say that Hegel's view is not necessarily optimistic, for he conceives of the generation of self-determination as a process requiring changes and transformations. Above all, it implies to let oneself be affected by the loss of contingency. Following this argument, based on the relevance of causality and reciprocity within formative processes, I can now take into account the treatment of these categories in the *Science of Logic*.

### III. The Logical Form of Memory and Labour

The deduction of the concept is presented in the final section of the "Doctrine of Essence" of the *Science of Logic*. As is well known, this latter is intended by Hegel to be the speculative science that articulates and describes the genesis and unfolding of the logical idea through different levels of logical relations. Such relations are ordered according to a progression that makes explicit the development of the idea itself. With regard to this, Hegel distinguishes between the Objective Logic ("Doctrine of Being" and "Doctrine of Essence") and the Subjective Logic ("Doctrine of the Concept"). While the Objective Logic presents the genesis of the concept out of objective categories (quality, quantity, relation, and modality), the Subjective Logic traces the universalization of the concept up to the idea. Thus, there is an important connection between the concept and the idea, since this latter is defined as the unity of the concept and objectivity, which is the logical expression of truth:

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It is not merely that the object, the objective and subjective world in general, ought to be congruous with the idea, but they are themselves the congruence of concept and reality [Realität]; the reality that does not correspond to the concept is mere appearance [Erscheinung], the subjective, contingent, capricious element that is not the truth.” (WdL II, 464/756)

For Hegel, the idea is neither a subjective product nor a kind of metaphysical “beyond.” The concept and the idea are not criteria to measure the truth of thoughts and statements, because their meanings depend on their genetic development. Thus, what Hegel arguably suggests is that each form of reality has, according to its own nature, its own concept. It is by looking at the development of such rationale that we make explicit the truth of a situation, an object, or a proposition. Accordingly, truth is determined by the corresponding development of conceptual actuality. As Hegel says,

wholes like the state and the church cease to exist when the unity of their concept and their reality is dissolved; man, the living being, is dead when soul and body are parted in him; dead nature, the mechanical and chemical world—taking, that is, the dead world to mean the inorganic world, otherwise it would have no positive meaning at all—dead nature, then, if it is separated into its concept and reality, is nothing but the subjective abstraction of a thought form and a formless matter.” (WdL II, 464/757)

Hegel’s claim is that there cannot be anything real without its own inner principle of development, which latter is the concept. Thus, he arguably suggests that there is a logical (i.e. pure) exposition of the concept, which cannot be applied as such to concrete phenomena, and yet thought and concept do permeate reality in a more subtle way. My interest here lies precisely in the genesis of the concept as it is developed in the final sections of the “Doctrine of Essence.” By exploring the genesis of the concept in the logic, I wish to argue that the dynamics underlying formative processes like memory and labour is justified, from a logical point of view, by the concept itself. This is because the logical concept plays a key role in Hegel’s philosophy, and it basically coincides with the logical form of self-reference that is necessary in the Science of Logic to argue for the transition from substantiality to subjectivity. More precisely, the logical concept accounts for the possibility of conceiving of self-determination in terms of spontaneity rather than efficient causality.
To be sure, the passages of the *Science of Logic* concerned with the genesis of the concept articulate the coming-to-be of the concept as in line with the transition from substance to subjectivity. The central aim of the “Doctrine of Essence” is to demonstrate that the concept is generated spontaneously in light of the logical evolution of substance and not in virtue of any external conditions. To this end, Hegel has to prove that the categories of relation (substance, causality, reciprocity) do not constitute a set of distinct and separate notions, but rather unfold a peculiar process of their own, which connects the whole Objective Logic with the Subjective Logic. Hegel begins by arguing that causality is not a feature of substance, but rather the form through which substance develops and elicits its own principle. In order to elaborate this claim, Hegel has to show (1) that the categories of substance and causality are not separated, and (2) that efficient causality does not suffice to explain the evolution of substance.

Initially, the reader of the *Science of Logic* is confronted with the following situation: The totality of being is comprised by the category of substantiality, which represents the general ground of ontological subsisting. Importantly, by focusing on the activity of substance, Hegel argues that substance gives rise to its own accidents, that is to say, substance is the actual power to create and destroy, which entails the capacity to produce a causal action. Thus, the relation of causality is introduced via the power of substance to posit its own differentiation. Hegel proceeds by exploring the different implications of causality. With regard to this, Hegel insists that causality should not be understood as an analytical relation between cause and effect; otherwise it would lead to a tautology. (WdL II, 223ff/558ff) Indeed, both notions of cause and effect imply a reference to the other. In order to make explicit the actual meaning of causality, Hegel points out the significance of causality as determined capacity to bring about a change in something else. Thus, Hegel maintains that substance interacts with other substances that bear the effects of its actions.

At this level, the dialectical relation between causality and substance turns into the relation of action and reaction. In fact, the

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power to act is only possible by virtue of the passivity and weakness of the other: “to this extent it [the passive substance] suffers violence. Violence is the manifestation of power [Macht], or power as external.” (WdL II, 235/567) Violence indicates that substantiality undergoes a process of radical change in order to actualize itself. The changes brought about by the causal action are effective in that they modify substance. However, as long as substance is conditioned by causality, the duality between activity and passivity constitutes a limit. The passive member of the relation is just a *caput mortuum* that serves the purpose of being acted upon by the other. This reflects back on active substance, which does not turn into a more developed form, but it is rather defined only in relation to the passive other. Thus, as long as substance is determined by the relation with another that is simply posited as passive, “broken within itself” (WdL II, 235/567), there cannot be any actual development. In this sense, in the treatment of conditioned causality (action-reaction), Hegel outlines a dialectical situation that shares significant similarities with the cases of labour and memory.

Both in the *Science of Logic* and the *Realphilosophie*, Hegel argues that asymmetric relations based on causal activity do not produce any effective development despite the fact that a change is brought about by the causal action. The problem here has to do with the nature of causal relations. Efficient causality presupposes that both the agent and the passive other have no determinations of their own. In this sense, efficient causality isolates active and passive, and this prevents the transformation and potential development of the passive element. This is the case of the servant in the *Phenomenology*, when he loses the fight and accepts to fulfill the desire of the master. But this is also the case of memory, when intelligence is limited to passive memorization without active thinking.

At the same time, Hegel suggests that there cannot be any absolute passivity. A thing can act under the condition that the nature of the other allows the former to do so. 18 Both in the *Realphilosophie* and in the *Science of Logic*, the passive other “comes into being as a causal substance as a result of its being acted upon [entsteht diese durch die auf sie geschehene Wirkung als ursächliche Substanz].” (WdL II, 237/569) In other words, passive substance resists the causal power with another action. As a result, causality is “bent around and becomes an action that returns into itself, as infinite reciprocal action.” (WdL II, 237/569) It is important here to notice that reciprocity is crucially different from reaction. While reaction is a me-

chanical relation that leaves aside any further development regarding the nature of the entities involved, reciprocity concerns the mutual awakening of substances. Reaction applies to objects and individuals that respond automatically to a stimulus, as it happens when the doctor hits the patient’s knee with a tiny hammer. Instead, reciprocity is brought about by the individual disposition to cope with a certain situation. The patient that undergoes hip surgery, for example, goes through some basic training to learn to move her leg again. In this case, the patient is no longer passive, but rather develops those skills that are essential for her recovery.

As Schick has pointed out, reciprocity cannot be understood either by identifying the players of the relation in terms of their roles or by pointing to a higher *explanans*. On the one hand, the distinction of the players would lead us back to the relation of cause and effect. On the other hand, pointing to a higher *explanans* would introduce the problem of an infinite causal chain. Thus, Schick rightly notices that the only available alternative is that the connection of reciprocity is between the two items “in terms of what they are.”¹⁹ In reciprocity, the efficiency of causality is overcome, for both substances are at the same time active and passive. Reciprocity is not about reacting to a given circumstance or to an external power, but rather it indicates that the meaning of causal action is not independent from the nature of the entities involved. In other words, by connecting the meaning of causal action to reciprocity, Hegel argues that actual change is irreducible to the dualism between activity and passivity, because the latter is not a *caput mortuum*, but rather a different form of activity.

In the master-servant relation, such outcome is achieved in virtue of labour, for this establishes the mutual dependence of servant and master on the products of work. The same is true for memory, for thinking arises through language when intelligence penetrates the meaning of words and sentences, and produces its own thoughts. In all these cases, not only has the asymmetry vanished, but also the conditioning effect of causal action has gone.

It is by means of the category of reciprocity that the concept is eventually deduced. (WdL II, 240/571) This certainly represents one of the most demanding passages of the entire *Science of Logic*. What is exactly the moment that determines the deduction of the concept? Is the concept already given with reciprocity, or is it fundamentally different from reciprocal action? Hegel remarks, in the *Encyclopedia*, that reciprocity is not the same as the concept:

What is unsatisfactory in the application of the relationship of reciprocity consists in the fact that this relationship, instead of being able to hold as an equivalent of the concept, first needs to be comprehended itself, and this happens, not by leaving the two sides of it as something immediately given, but instead (as was shown in the two previous sections) by coming to know them as moments of a third, higher [dimension], which is precisely the concept."20

As long as active and passive are considered from the point of view of understanding, they stand for distinct causal relations, that is to say, they are mutually related insofar as each one exercises the power to affect the other. Instead, once reciprocity comes to light as a process and not as a twofold movement, there lies the concept. To be sure, the concept is achieved after a process of substantial development. The concept is not presented as a distinct logical form, but rather as a coming-to-be, i.e. as a process that stems directly from the consummation of the relation of reciprocity. In this sense, the concept is not a determinate content, but rather it is the fact that it unfolds through the dialectical development of substance. It is in the course of reciprocity that substance finally actualizes its power of determination, for it is no longer constrained by the opposition between activity and passivity. On the contrary, by going through the dynamics of reciprocal action, substance passively refers to itself by standing in relation to the other. Such development marks the genesis of the concept. In other words, the transition from reciprocity is neither a shift of perspective nor a mere result of reciprocity. The transition is rather the moment of actual development that occurs in substance in virtue of all the preceding logical moments. Thus, the concept coincides with the totality of being that has finally achieved its permanent and dynamic form of self-relation.

It is noteworthy that the concept cannot be equated with the character of self-consciousness. While the distinguishing feature of self-conscious agents is developed in the Subjective Logic, the Objective Logic concerns a more fundamental and yet difficult character of freedom, i.e. self-acquaintance.21 To be self-acquainted means to be free from any external necessity, and to be able to develop spontane-

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ously according to one’s own principle of determination. For Hegel, such capacity grounds everything that falls under the Logic of Subjectivity, that is to say both logical reasoning (concepts, judgments, syllogisms) and objective processes involving inorganic and organic life. In this regard, the type of self-relation that characterizes substance mirrors the dynamics of memory and labour insofar as they all rely on a self-determining process that does not require any external rules. While memory paves the way to thinking, labour allows for the development of self-consciousness. In all these cases, freedom corresponds to the demonstration of the inconsistency of efficient causality, because this lacks explanatory power when it comes to justify effective changes that involve spontaneous self-determination. Not by chance, Hegel identifies the concept with freedom and power to create, as the concept stands for the principle of spontaneous activity that is the condition of possibility for more developed actions and processes. In this sense, the concept entails a form of ontological openness that lies at the core of any process implying a self-referencing activity, such as memory and work.

This aspect is especially relevant to explain the absence of teleology in the deduction of the concept. Indeed, the main feature of the reciprocal actions described above is precisely the absence of a distinct aim: reciprocal interactions perpetuate spontaneously but not in line with a given end. Hence, Habermas is right in pointing out that formative activities do not reflect the conscious self-realization of spirit. However, this does not entail, as Habermas assumes, that there would be a gap between formative interactions and logical categories. On the contrary, the analogy between the concept and subjective phenomena like memory and work shows that self-referring activity is not identical to conscious self-relation. One may say that the concept is analogous to a process of habituation, as suggested by the previous comparisons with memory and work. We enter a world that it is entirely our own by means of language and work, that is, through formative and durable processes that ground our relation to the world. For Hegel, our passive having of the world can be made intelligible in light of the coming-to-be of the concept, because the latter provides a non-mechanical model for the explanation of unconscious processes related to spontaneous acts of self-determination. In this sense, the absence of teleology is motivated by the fact that Hegel has a different model (i.e. corresponding to the concept) to justify the rationality of our pre-reflective experiences involving self-determination, such as memory and labour.

In brief, my point is that formative activities can help clarify the significance of logical categories. But, in order to understand the
Science of Logic, one must be engaged in the exploration of concrete interactions. Thus, such program compels us to find systematic interrelations between categories and concrete phenomena. To this end, I have investigated the role of memory and labour as concrete manifestations of the concept. In my view, the significance of labour does not consist—as Habermas holds—in the satisfaction of human needs, but rather in the genesis of the subject as spontaneous activity of self-determination. This, however, does not imply that the self is an abstract and isolated realm, for its genesis is rooted in concrete experiences, where spirit experiences its attachment to reality. Two main consequences can be drawn: (1) For Hegel, the genesis of the concept mirrors the processes at stake in both memory and work, for they all imply a specific dialectic between activity and passivity, whereby passivity is a different, nonconscious form of activity. (2) The formative activities that underlie the genesis of the concept indicate that there cannot be any freedom without independence from external constraints, and yet such independence is strictly connected to changes and transformations. The recurrence of violence is a symptom of the radical power of differentiation of the concept. This involves, in turn, the capacity to evolve as well to change. It is in virtue of such a capacity—what I have called “the ontological openness of the concept”—that the concept can be investigated in and for itself, that is, as universality grounded within itself in the Science of Logic and yet at stake in concrete reality as well.

If we are looking for a way to think of the relation between concrete reality and the logical structure of the concept, we might think of it in terms of levels, as it has been suggested by David Kolb, according to whom “even in the most self-transparent part of Hegel’s account we are dealing not with a single language system but with movements among many related systems, and those movements are not describable by a single set of inference rules.”

Logic, spirit, nature can then be understood as different sets of meaning, each one having its own structure and development, but they do not relate reciprocally as if the logic should dictate the principle that is embodied in the other fields. Furthermore, categories are embedded in connections “none of which have the strict necessity of dialectical transitions.” Therefore, we cannot expect from the Realphilosophie the same necessity as the one that is at stake in the logic. At the same time, the relation between logical categories and concrete existence

23 Ibid., 187.
is such that the movements described in the *Science of Logic* do pass into the *Realphilosophie*, and it is the task of philosophy to single out and understand each process in and for itself.

**IV. Conclusions**

Understanding the relation between the notions of *Geist* and *Begriff* is crucial to dismantle Habermas’s dualistic reading of Hegel. While the Jena writings should not be necessarily read as an anticipation of the *Phenomenology*, the logical forms at stake in the mature writings also entail a formative process. An intra-systematic reading of Hegel’s philosophy shows that spirit is not a monolithic subject taking over as absolute power. Quite to the contrary, Hegel argues that all forms of practical interactions outline a conceptual development in that it is the concept—not spirit—that comes to manifest through them. In other words, the concept stands for the *rationale* of concrete phenomena such as language and labour.

At the same time, it is important to notice that Hegel does not conceive of the concept as an absolute structure that fulfils its goals regardless of the sphere in which it comes to be. For Hegel, the concept fulfils itself only within the *Science of the Logic*, that is to say in the field of pure and logical thought. Yet the *Science of Logic* also provides a systematic thread to investigate the development of freedom, and the variety of its manifestations in the *Realphilosophie*. In my view, Habermas fails to acknowledge the role of causality and its significance for the *Realphilosophie*, therefore he maintains that no logical structure underlies concrete phenomena. In doing so, Habermas overlooks an important aspect that is inherent in Hegel’s treatment of freedom, *i.e.* the awakening of self-referring activity within passive (*i.e.* not self-conscious) dimensions. In this sense, on Hegel’s account, violence does not only represent the cunning of humans over nature, but also a distinct form of crisis in the structure of both reality and subjectivity. Thus, the parallel between memory, labour, and the concept encourages a reading of Hegel’s philosophy as *open system*, the central and distinctive aim of which is the coming-to-be of free self-determination in the actual world.

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