

# What Is a Logical Concept of Life? Reply to Critics

Karen Ng

I am very grateful to Karen Koch and Sebastian Rand for their generous and thoughtful engagement with some of the core arguments of my book. Whereas Koch raises a number of questions concerning the purposiveness theme and Hegel's relation to Kant, Rand's questions revolve around the interpretation of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, asking after the status of the a priori, singularity, and death in relation to the logical concept of life. Their critical questions provide an opportunity for me to both clarify and defend one of the central claims of my book, namely, that there is a distinctly logical concept of life at work in Hegel's philosophy that is key for understanding his philosophical method. In the book, I argue that this concept, operative in Hegel's writings from the *Differenzschrift* through the *Phenomenology* to his *Science of Logic*, is primarily inherited from Kant, specifically from problems surrounding the concept of inner purposiveness developed in the *Critique of Judgement*. I will begin by replying to Koch, followed by a response to Rand.

## I. Inheriting the Purposiveness Theme: Reply to Koch

Although I draw on the work of a number of Hegel's contemporaries—including Fichte, Schelling and Hölderlin—in order to understand how a logical concept of life functions in his philosophical system, my point of departure is the concept and problem of purposiveness in Kant's philosophy, and I argue that the core tenets of Hegel's philosophy can be understood through the *purposiveness theme*. I set up this theme in a number of different ways. First, I show that the problem posed by purposiveness for judgement can already be discerned in the first *Critique*, suggesting that this concept plays a larger role in Kant's own philosophy than is generally acknowledged. Second, I argue that Hegel's early account of method and the subject–object relation can be understood as inheriting Kant's problem of the relationship between purposiveness and judgement, recast in part as the relationship between life and self-consciousness. Third, I argue that Hegel's Subjective Logic is best understood as putting forward his version of a critique of judgement, in so far as the form and activity of judgement is ultimately shown to be grounded

in the form and activity of life. It is by working through Kant's concept of *inner purposiveness* in particular that Hegel develops his own, well-known accounts of *Concept* and *Idea*, with the latter representing not only the culminating argument of the *Logic*, but a foundation and method for his entire philosophical system.

In framing my interpretation of Hegel in terms of the purposiveness theme, Koch is concerned that I have perhaps overinflated the significance of this concept. Regarding my interpretation of the Subjective Logic in particular, Koch refers to the oft-cited passage from the introductory section, 'Of the Concept in General', in which Hegel directly praises Kant's account of the synthetic unity of apperception as the key to his own account of the Concept, thus challenging my claim throughout the book that it is internal purposiveness, rather than other familiar Kantian concepts, that is the ancestor and model for Hegel's concept of the Concept (*WL*: 515/6:254).<sup>1</sup> Although I will defend my account of the purposiveness theme here, I should note that interpretations need not be zero-sum games. Indeed, in contrasting my approach to two other prominent accounts in the literature (the apperception approach and the intuitive understanding approach), I acknowledged what I took to be the advantages afforded by these alternative paths. Nonetheless, I will reiterate my stated position in the book, which is that the purposiveness theme is in a better position to capture both the method of Hegel's idealism as a whole, and the all-important concluding argument of the *Logic*, which is the key text for understanding that method. Without wanting simply to repeat what I say in the book concerning the advantages of the purposiveness theme—which Koch herself helpfully reconstructs—let me say something about each of the alternative approaches in question.

Regarding the apperception approach that takes conceptuality as such to be apperceptive spontaneity (most forcefully defended by Robert Pippin),<sup>2</sup> my position is that apperception for Hegel is always understood in relation to and as an actualization of a broader, more immediate form of spontaneous activity associated with life. In all of the key discussions where Hegel attempts to present self-consciousness as a principle of intelligibility, life plays an essential role in the derivation, and nowhere is there an independent account of apperception *without* a concurrent account of life.<sup>3</sup> Although the apperception view consistently privileges Fichte's attempt to establish the absolute, self-positing I as the first principle of all possible intelligibility as the key source of influence for Hegel, my sustained argument in the book is that this is a mistake: without at all denying the importance of Fichte's influence on many of Hegel's core ideas, what the purposiveness theme highlights in contrast to the apperception view is the arguably more important *Schellingian* influence, evident not only in early texts such as the *Differenzschrift*, but present throughout the development of Hegel's thought all the way up to the mature presentation of the *Science of Logic*. This Schellingian influence is important because it explains why Hegel *always* presents the problem of apperception in

connection with life: throughout his writings, he agrees with Schelling, *against* Fichte, that an account of a ‘subjective subject-object’ (self-consciousness as a principle of intelligibility) without understanding its essential relation to an ‘objective subject-object’ (internally purposive, living nature) amounts to a merely subjective idealism. Apperceptive judgement is an actualization of a more fundamental principle of intelligibility, namely, the original form and activity of judgement immediately manifest in life. As Hegel writes, discussing the Idea of life in the final section of the *Logic*:

The original *judgment* of life [*Das ursprüngliche Urteil des Lebens*] consists therefore in this, that it separates itself off as individual subject from the objective and, since it constitutes itself as the negative unity of the concept, makes the *presupposition* of an immediate objectivity. (*WL*: 678/6: 473)<sup>4</sup>

This leads me to the passage—the key passage for the apperception view—cited by Koch to support her claim that I have perhaps given too much weight to the theme of purposiveness in my interpretation of the Subjective Logic in particular. In order to make my case for the importance of purposiveness for Hegel’s concept of the Concept, chapter four of my book takes up the transition from the Objective to the Subjective Logic, showing that the concept of reciprocity or *Wechselwirkung* is the key to understanding the argument for the genesis (or deduction) of the Concept. Unlike Kant, Hegel and Schelling take the category of reciprocity to represent the purposive organization of organic nature, describing this category in terms of the reciprocal relation of cause and effect such that nature is understood as the cause and effect of itself. Hegel states that ‘[i]n reciprocity [...] mechanism is now sublated’, and further, reciprocity is causality in which ‘the cause does not just *have* an effect but, in the effect, refers *as cause* back to itself’ (*WL*: 503, 504/6: 237, 238). Similarly, Schelling describes the organization of reciprocity as one in which nature is ‘at once both producer and product, and this concept is the principle of the whole theory of organic nature, whence all further determinations of organization can be derived *a priori*’ (*STI*: 126/9,1: 193). The category of reciprocity represents the final stage of Hegel’s genesis of the Concept argument, and I show that this purposive form of activity is how Hegel establishes the form and activity of the Concept, triggering the transition to the Subjective Logic and the ‘realm of *freedom*’ (*WL*: 513/6: 251).

Thus, I disagree with Koch that Hegel, at the beginning of the Subjective Logic, is simply concerned with the speculative relation between the particular and the universal expressed in Kant’s concept of the I. Fully acknowledging the importance of apperception for understanding Hegel’s concept of the Concept, my justification of the purposiveness theme relies not only on the foundational significance of the Idea of life, but also on Hegel’s argument for the deduction of the

Concept, which hinges on establishing reciprocity as the Concept's '*relational mode* [Verhältnisweise]' and activity of form (*Formtätigkeit*) (*WL*: 509/6: 246). My claim is that Hegel's identification of the unity of the Concept with the original synthetic unity of apperception needs to be understood against the background of purposiveness, in which apperceptive spontaneity is a further realization and determination of reciprocity. In the second half of the book, I trace the purposiveness theme through the entirety of the Subjective Logic, showing its significance not only for understanding the deduction of the Concept, but for its progression through to the Idea.

Koch also asks after the role of the intuitive understanding in my approach, and at the same time, challenges my interpretation of how best to understand the function of purposiveness in Kant's philosophy. My position regarding the intuitive understanding is that this concept on its own cannot hold the key to Hegel's idealism, and that its explanatory power is limited with regard to the concluding argument of the *Logic* in particular, despite Hegel's continued praise of the concept.<sup>5</sup> As the passages from *EL* §55 cited by Koch show, what interests Hegel about the intuitive understanding is its power to grasp the necessary relation between a concrete universal and a particular that is characteristic of organic unity. In the second passage cited by Koch, Hegel directly associates the representation of an intuitive understanding with inner purposiveness. My argument in the book is that Hegel comes to view the power of the intuitive understanding as the power of a living mind to grasp its own unity and form. In *EL* §55 and §57, Hegel claims that to grasp living organization and inner purposiveness is to grasp 'the concrete Idea', and that purpose (*Zweck*) is 'the active *Concept*'. If the power of the intuitive understanding is associated with living minds, then Kant's original account has been transformed beyond all recognition, and the more important concept at the centre of Hegel's account is, again, inner purposiveness. This is reflected in his choice at the conclusion of the *Logic* to present the immediate Idea simply as life, making no reference to the intuitive understanding in the final section of that text. Thus, although the intuitive understanding is important for pointing us towards the cognitive power that is at stake in Hegel's account of the Concept, his ultimate conclusion is that this power is best understood in connection with the organization and activity of life.

Given that the problems surrounding inner purposiveness play such a central role in my book, Koch questions whether or not the interpretation of Kant I offer is the only or best available option. I should note that the interpretation of Kant in the book is not defended primarily with those aims in view; rather, the interpretation of Kant I offer is what I take to be the most reasonable way of understanding how *Hegel* comes to appropriate the purposiveness theme for his own philosophy, balancing what I take to be fair reading of Kant on Hegel's part in developing his own views with the acknowledgement of their deep disagreement on a number of

important issues. Specifically, I frame my interpretation of Kant in chapter two as a reconstruction of the following passage from Hegel, which appears in the chapter on ‘Teleology’ in the *Science of Logic*:

One of Kant’s greatest services to philosophy was in drawing the distinction between relative or *external* purposiveness and *internal* purposiveness; in the latter he opened up the concept of *life*, the *idea*, and with that he *positively* raised philosophy above the determinations of reflection and the relative world of metaphysics, something that the *Critique of Reason* does only imperfectly, ambiguously, and only *negatively*. (WL: 654/6: 440–41)

This passage raises two questions that I try to answer in my interpretation of Kant on the purposiveness issue. First: given how Kant draws the distinction between external and internal purposiveness, why does Hegel suggest that the latter has primacy, associating it with the concept of life and the Idea? Second: in what sense does purposiveness have a *positive* role to play in the project of a critique of reason in contrast to the supposedly negative work of the first *Critique*? In emphasizing the *positive function* of the concept of inner purposiveness, I take it that Hegel is already moving beyond Kant, and specifically, challenging the various ways in which Kant places limits on purposiveness, whether in claiming that the transcendental concept of a purposiveness of nature is merely a ‘subjective principle (maxim) of the power of judgment’, or in insisting that this principle is ‘regulative (not constitutive)’, even while ‘necessary for the human power of judgment in regard to nature’ (CJ: 5: 184, 404). Instead, Hegel sets out to show how it is that the purposiveness of nature, which for him is best understood as internally purposive self-organization, serves to enable and empower the activity of judgement. Thus, throughout, my interpretation of Kant is aimed at showing how we might reconstruct a path from what Hegel took to be Kant’s most important insight—the positive role of the concept of inner purposiveness for the project of a critique of reason—to his own account in which inner purposiveness is not only a *constitutive* concept, but one that opens up the possibility of intelligibility in so far as it is the *immediate Idea*.

With all that in mind, while I think Koch is absolutely right in suggesting that there are other ways of reading Kant, especially concerning the account of judgement in the Transcendental Analytic and its relation to the principle of purposiveness introduced in the third *Critique*, her insistence on a sharp distinction between, roughly, epistemic questions that the principle of purposiveness is meant to address versus ontological questions concerning the purposiveness of nature itself, simply speaks to the core of the dispute between Kant and Hegel. For Kant, these issues come to a head in the Antinomy of Teleological Judgement, and I argued, following other accounts in the literature, that the distinction between a subjective, regulative

perspective on questions guiding our cognition of nature, and an objective, constitutive perspective on the organization of nature itself, is far too unstable to provide a solution to Kant's antinomy, a position that Hegel maintains in his discussion of the antinomy in the *Logic*.<sup>6</sup> Expressing his dissatisfaction with Kant's solution and speaking directly to the conflict between judging in accordance with the principle of mechanism versus judging in accordance with the principle of final causes, he writes:

Missing in all this [Kant's attempt to resolve the antinomy—K.N.], as we remarked above, is the one thing that alone is of philosophical interest, namely the investigation of which of the two principles has truth in and for itself. On this standpoint, it makes no difference whether the principles should be regarded as *objective*, which means here, as externally existing determinations of nature, or as mere *maxims* of a *subjective* cognition. (*WL*: 655/6: 443)

What this suggests is that for Hegel, very little hinges on the question concerning whether the principle of purposiveness is merely subjective and guides cognition or whether it is objective and manifest in the objects of nature themselves; instead, the only thing that matters is whether or not such a principle is true, for if it is true, then it is surely an objective principle that holds equally for cognition and for nature itself. Since Hegel is committed to the truth of purposiveness, he later states that judging according to the concept of purpose is to judge '*objectively*' (*WL*: 656/6: 443). All this is to say that Koch's reading, while not objectionable as an interpretation of Kant, seems to overlook the fact that the subjective status of the principle of purposiveness is exactly what Hegel contests. I would also add that I disagree with her suggestion that staying within the limitations set by Kant on the principle makes the designer-artifact model of purposiveness less problematic. Again, as Hegel states above, all that matters is whether or not purposiveness is true, which means that what matters is that the concept of purposiveness reflects the truth about the organization of nature. To judge the organization of nature as artifice resulting from design is false, whether we treat this merely as a subjective principle governing our cognition of nature, or as an objective principle that determines the objects of nature themselves. Just as the subjective or objective status of a principle makes no difference to the question of whether or not the principle is true, Hegel is unequivocal that a concept of nature that requires the assumption of an intelligent designer—whether this is subjective or objective—is false. He writes:

The closer the teleological principle is associated with the concept of an *extra-mundane* intelligence, and the more it has

therefore enjoyed the favor of piety, all the more it has seemed to depart from the true investigation of nature, which aims at a cognition of the properties of nature not as extraneous, but as immanent *determinacies*, and accepts only such cognition as a valid conceptual comprehension. (*WL*: 652/6: 438)<sup>7</sup>

Finally, Koch contends that in order to respond fully to Kant's scepticism with regard to purposiveness, Hegel needs to provide a rejoinder to two central problems to which purposive relations give rise: first, the backwards causation problem; and second, the mereological problem of how the form and actuality of parts can be grounded in a whole. As she notes, both of these problems essentially concern the conflict between mechanism and teleology, but she argues that since Hegel's account of mechanism essentially mirrors Kant's in all the important respects, Hegel *must* provide an answer to these two problems in order to claim a constitutive status for purposiveness. Koch is clearly framing the problem in Kantian terms, and moreover, her demand appears to implicitly assume that mechanism has priority over teleology, in so far as the burden falls on teleological explanations to show that they do not conflict with the terms set by universal, mechanistic explanation. Hegel's own view is the opposite, namely that '*purposive connection* has proved to be the truth of *mechanism*', which suggests that mechanistic explanations presuppose teleological ones (*WL*: 651–52/6: 437–38). As Koch notes, others have attempted to respond to the two objections,<sup>8</sup> but my argument in the book focuses on understanding that priority not only by showing that life is constitutive of self-consciousness, but also by showing how purposiveness gives shape to both Concept and Idea. This means that for Hegel, purposiveness pertains not just to questions about how we explain nature, but to questions about our own activity of knowing and judging, to questions about how we can account for the possibility of intelligibility as such. My choice to focus on this level of analysis is driven by my aim in the book to understand how the concept of life functions as part of a science of logic, rather than as part of a philosophy of nature. In focusing on presenting a *logical* concept of life, I disagree with Koch that this level of analysis does not speak directly to Kantian concerns and his scepticism about purposiveness in particular.

First, as I argued, it is already the case for Kant that purposiveness addresses questions about how we can account for the possibility of intelligibility and is not only concerned with questions about causality in nature. Kant claims that the employment of teleological principles always 'concern[s] the method of thinking', and that purposiveness is the 'condition of the possibility of the application of logic to nature' (*TP*: 8: 160; *EE*: 20: 212n). If purposiveness is a *condition* for applying logic to nature and not simply another category or a priori concept subject to rules of application, then it must play a role in constituting the original synthetic

unity that is ‘the ground of the unity of different concepts in judgments, and hence of the possibility of the understanding, even in its logical use’ (*CPR*: B131)—i.e. *qua* condition of applying logic to nature at all, it must play a role in constituting the act of spontaneity that Kant identifies with the original synthetic unity of apperception. This, at least, is what I take Hegel (along with Schelling) to be arguing in his various discussions of the necessary, essential relationship between life and self-consciousness as a principle of intelligibility.

Second, considering purposiveness at this higher level of analysis (as the condition of applying logic to nature and not just another category or a priori concept) provides a way of understanding Hegel’s claim about the priority of teleology over mechanism that dissolves the force of the two objections raised by Koch. The purposive relation has priority because purposiveness is constitutive of the act of spontaneity that is the condition of all judging, and thus, is the condition for applying the distinction between purposive and mechanistic causality to nature at all. To use Fichtean language, life is an act of spontaneity that posits itself in opposition to non-life, and it is only in and through that act that there arises an intelligible distinction between purposive (living) and mechanistic (non-living) causality. Operating with this priority of purposiveness in view, Hegel comments on the ‘*inadmissible application*’ of mechanistic causality to ‘*the relations of physico-organic and spiritual life*’, claiming that it is part of the activity of living things and living minds ‘not to let a cause continue itself into it but to break it off and to transmute it’ in accordance with self-determined aims and ends (*WL*: 496/6: 227–28). Purposive relations are thus required for and constitutive of *self-explanations*, which lie at the heart of the project of the critique of reason.

## II. A Logical Concept of Life: Reply to Rand

Whereas many of Koch’s critical comments attempt to bring the discussion back to Kantian terms, Rand’s critical comments begin by pushing against my employment of Kantian terminology, and in particular, my characterization of the concept of life as a priori. I should begin by noting that I found Rand’s careful treatment of my use of this term to be incredibly helpful, and he is correct that I do not spend enough time in the book clarifying this controversial Kantian terminology. However, I ultimately found myself agreeing with much of what Rand says concerning how the a priori functions in my account and, most importantly, I take his point about the unrevisability of the concept of life to be an adequate characterization of my account, rather than a criticism of it. Indeed, it is not evident that any of the thought-determinations in the *Science of Logic* are revisable—at least not in any ordinary understanding of that term. What I take to be non-controversial is not the association of the *Logic* with the a priori *per se*, but that the system of logic is



‘the realm of shadows, the world of simple essentialities, freed of all sensuous concretion’, which suggests that in treating the determinations of ‘*thought as such*’, these determinations are not to be treated as empirically revisable concepts (*WL*: 37, 41/5: 55, 60). In this respect, the bark of Rand’s criticism concerning life being ‘speculatively dead’ and ‘immunized’ is stronger than its bite: none of the thought-determinations of the *Logic* are straightforwardly revisable in light of experience, and life is no exception. Regarding what Rand calls non-experiential or dialectical transformation, I would contend that the development of the thought-determinations in the *Logic* is best understood holistically, rather than as a claim about the fundamental revisability or transformation of *each* category. Without any stability in the meaning of each individual category, it would be difficult to understand, first, the genuine *plurality* of thought-determinations in the *Logic* (in contrast to thinking of the *Logic* in terms of the dialectical development of one, all-encompassing category); and second, how Hegel can employ specific thought-determinations (such as infinity, essence, actuality or Concept) in expositions of other parts of his system, something that he does with great frequency.

That being said, Rand does capture an ambiguity in my use of the term ‘*a priori*’, an ambiguity that speaks to the difficulty (and hazards) of adopting this Kantian term for a reading of Hegel. Although Rand identifies a number of different ways in which this term is employed, let me reduce this to two for the sake of clarity. First, when I say that the logical concept of life is *a priori*, I am referring to, as Rand suggests, ‘necessary, constitutive elements, structures, and processes’. Life is *a priori* in the sense of being a necessary condition: in the context of the *Logic*, Hegel presents life as the immediate Idea, making it a necessary condition for cognition and truth.<sup>9</sup> Although I do not agree with Rand’s contention that life is the *only* *a priori* concept in the *Logic*, the *a priori* status of the concept of life is notable for a number of reasons. First, the *a priori* status of life is emphasized simply due to the fact that unlike the other categories in the *Logic* which are philosophically abstract (quality, ground, actuality, etc.), all with a history of being considered as distinctly philosophical categories, the category of life is an outlier, where the default assumption is that life is an *empirical* concept. Hegel himself notes the apparently anomalous status of the category of life when he introduces the topic, suggesting that the proposal of a logical, non-empirical concept of life is noteworthy in and of itself (*WL*: 676/6:469). Second, although I nowhere suggest that life is the *only* *a priori* concept, I do argue at length for what I claim to be the special status of the Idea within the context of the *Logic* and for Hegel’s philosophical method more broadly. In brief, I argue that the determinations of the Idea—life, cognition and the absolute Idea—should not be treated on a par with the other categories of the *Logic*; instead, the Idea is best understood both as the ground of the thought-determinations of the *Logic* as a whole, and as the ground and method of Hegel’s entire system.<sup>10</sup> It is thus primarily due to its status *as Idea*, rather than as

a priori, that I claim a special role for the concept of life. It is *qua* Idea that life functions as the necessary condition and presupposition of cognition, and I refer to the determination of life here as a priori in so far as it enables and constrains the realization of cognition via three processes: corporeality, the relation to externality, and the genus process. So although Rand is of course correct that Hegel himself rejects the language of the a priori, nearly everything of import in my use of that term concerns the special status of the Idea in the *Logic*, rather than the status of the a priori *per se*.

The second way in which I employ the term ‘a priori’ in reference to the concept of life concerns its *immediacy*. Along with Schelling, Hegel consistently presents life in terms of its immediacy: our awareness, experience and knowledge of life is something immediate, and life is the immediate manifestation of a form of activity that represents reason in its primitive form. Here I agree with Rand that the problem of the immediacy of life outstretches the terminology of the a priori and a posteriori. Hegel presents life’s immediacy in both logical and experiential terms: logically, the form of activity of life immediately manifests the Idea; experientially, the distinction between life and non-life strikes us immediately, life is the object of immediate desire, and the immediate encounter with and awareness of life ignites self-consciousness. In so far as the immediacy of life has both logical and experiential dimensions, it appears to undermine the clear distinction between a priori and a posteriori. However, I would note two ways in which the term ‘a priori’ may still be helpful in clarifying Hegel’s thought on the concept of life. First, even in its experiential, phenomenological dimension, there is necessity involved in the immediacy of life and the establishment of a relation of conditioning between the awareness of life and the emergence of self-consciousness. Phenomenologically, life places genuine constraints on experience, and the necessity involved here is what I meant to track in relation to Bernstein’s ‘material a priori’. Second, there is a logic of presupposition at work in the relation between the immediacy of life and self-conscious cognition. Life is a necessary presupposition of cognition that cognition posits for itself, a presupposition that is actualized through the activity of being posited. Admittedly, this dialectical logic of presupposition alters Kant’s original understanding of the a priori significantly, but hopefully not to such an extent so as to make the term unusable.

Before turning to the question of the singular and the individual, let me make one final point concerning the issue of unrevisability and what I meant to convey in referring life as a priori. Rand states: ‘The living individual can alter its genus, but not its status as living; all the variation and alteration it is capable of, whether merely vital or cognitive or otherwise, happens within the bounds, within the normative limits, of the concept of life’ (Rand 2021: 7). I take this to be exactly right, and it is an elegant statement of what I meant to argue. If this is all it means for the concept of life to be ‘speculatively dead’, then I accept this characterization, and

wonder what it would mean for a living individual or living mind to alter its status as living. Again, one of my goals was to show how life places genuine constraints on experience and self-conscious thought, while at the same time enabling both. To avoid the impression that dialectical transformation plays no role in my account, my concluding argument in the book is to show that the ongoing dialectic between life and cognition is the best way of understanding absolute method. But as Hegel himself remarks, dialectical thinking and dialectical logic *without* the presupposition of life would be nothing but ‘an empty affair devoid of determination’ (*WL*: 677/6: 470).

Rand also raises questions concerning the distinction between singularity (*Einzelheit*) and individuality (*Individualität*) in my interpretation of the Subjective Logic, arguing that this distinction is essential for understanding both the chapter on ‘Life’ and the transition from ‘Life’ to ‘Cognition’. In Rand’s reading of this transition, death also plays a central role in understanding how cognition fundamentally transforms life. Against my claim that the a priori concept of life outlines three processes that at once enable and constrain the activities of self-conscious cognition, Rand argues that the development of cognition fundamentally transforms the logical structure of life, bringing us from ‘the living individual as a singular existence governed by a universal *Gattung* to cognition as a universal existence governed by a universal *Begriff*’ (Rand 2021: 15). However, one of the central arguments in the book is that *Gattung*-concepts (genus or species concepts) provide the model for understanding *the* Concept (*der Begriff*).<sup>11</sup> In particular, Hegel’s understanding of concrete as opposed to abstract universality depends upon grasping the specific universality of a *Gattung*, and the unity of the three moments of (concrete) universality (*Allgemeinheit*), particularity (*Besonderheit*), and singularity (*Einzelheit*) in the Concept is modelled on the unity of an organism or species (or so I argue). Thus, I disagree with Rand that there is a transformation of *logical structure* in the transition from life to cognition. Hegel claims that the immanent universality and determinateness of the Concept has ‘the character that belongs to the *Gattung*’, and moreover, that the Concept ‘comes on the scene’ with ‘[ ]life, or organic nature’ (*WL*: 533, 517/6: 257, 278). Life ‘constitutes itself as the negative unity of the Concept’, so it cannot be the case that the *Begriff* develops only in the transition to cognition (*WL*: 678/6: 473). What changes in the transition from life to cognition, then, is not the logical structure of the Concept (which I take to be unrevisable), but the self-awareness of that fundamental structure as an act of self-determination.

This brings me to the distinction between singularity (*Einzelheit*) and individuality (*Individualität*). First, in my discussions of the Concept generally and especially in my discussion of the chapters on ‘Concept’, ‘Judgement’, and ‘Syllogism’, I am quite clear that what is at stake in understanding these forms of thought is *Einzelheit* and its relation to a concrete universal.<sup>12</sup> In fact, for most of the Subjective Logic and the *Logic* as the whole, especially when what is under discussion is the form of

the Concept, the general term and philosophical problem under discussion is always *Einzelheit*. Since the philosophical importance of *Einzelheit* far outweighs that of *Individualität* or *das Individuum* in the *Logic*, I think there is no ambiguity in my account concerning the relevant term under discussion (since I note this in all the relevant places), and moreover, I think the distinction, while important to take note of, is less philosophically important than Rand suggests.<sup>13</sup>

Here is a passage where Hegel himself is less than precise in using the two terms, discussing the importance of the *Gattung*-concept for the determination of the individual (below, both *Einzelne* and *Individuum*), emphasizing that such immanent *Gattung*-concepts should not be treated on a par with other predicates:

[T]he nature, the specific essence, that which is truly permanent and substantial in the manifold and contingency of appearance and fleeting externalization, is the Concept of the thing, the immanent universal [das in ihr selbst Allgemeine], and that each human individual [jedes menschliche Individuum] though infinitely unique is so primarily because he is a human, and each individual animal [jedes einzelne Tier] is such an individual primarily because it is an animal: if this is true, then there is no saying what such an individual [Individuum] should still be [noch sein sollte] if this foundation were removed, no matter how many other predicates with which the individual would still be otherwise adorned—if, that is, such a foundation can equally be called a predicate like the rest. (WL: 16–17/6: 26; translation modified).

In this passage, Hegel is clearly drawing a parallel between an individual human and individual animal using *Individuum* and *Einzelne* interchangeably, where the point is that the singularity and uniqueness of each is possible on account of, grounded in, and normatively governed by their *Gattung*-concept, which operates differently from other predicates. In other passages, the distinction is more clearly demarcated and meaningful, for example, in the section on ‘The Living Individual (*Das Lebendige Individuum*)’. He writes:

This subject is the Idea in the form of singularity [der Form der Einzelheit], as simple but negative self-identity—the living individual [das lebendige Individuum]. (WL: 475/6: 475)

Both in this passage and throughout the chapter on ‘Life’, Hegel does differentiate between *Einzelheit* and *Individualität*, but the distinction is very clear from the context: whereas *Einzelheit* is a logical term referring to a moment in the form of the Concept, *Individualität* is the more concrete development or realization of *Einzelheit*, referring generally to concrete, existing individuals and not just to logical individuals.<sup>14</sup> This is consistent throughout the chapter on ‘Life’, evidenced

through the fact that the living *Individuum* as a singular individual who is a member of a species is itself presented as having three determinations: *Allgemeinheit*, *Besonderheit* and *Einzelheit*. The terms *Individualität* and *Individuum* also appear in Hegel's *Realphilosophie*, where he refers to states, citizens and historical individuals as *Individuen*. *Individualität* is just the concrete existence of logical *Einzelheit*, so although I certainly do not conflate the terms, I also did not comment on the distinction (beyond noting it where it occurred) because I do not think it is particularly important for the arc of Hegel's argument in the 'Life' chapter, nor for the transition to 'Cognition'.

The deeper philosophical problem seems to fall on a disagreement between Rand and me on how to read the distinction between Concept and Idea. Rand claims that the problem that I argue is solved through the Idea of life via the three processes of primitive logical synthesis (corporeality, the relation to externality and the genus process) is already solved in the Concept, namely, the problem of the determination of singulars or *Einzelne* (I'll follow Rand in using 'singular' to avoid confusion in what follows, although I think 'individual' is a perfectly fine translation also). This problem has already been solved because Hegel presents the very structure of the Concept in terms of the unity and relation between universality, particularity and singularity, which means that singularity is always already determined in relation to and dialectically unified with universality, so there is no need for 'a mysterious process of schematization, or a self-conscious process of apperception to bring such unity about' (Rand 2021: 11). Rand argues that this problem of unity 'has already been covered earlier in the SL' (presumably in the discussion of Concept, judgement and syllogism, before the Idea), which 'blocks Kant's problem [of the heterogeneity between concepts and intuitions—K.N.] from arising in the first place' (Rand 2021: 11, 12).

As Rand correctly notes, I of course recognize that in presenting the unity of the Concept as the internal relation between universality, particularity, and singularity, Hegel is arguing that *Einzelheit* is simply unintelligible on its own without determining its relation to the other moments of the Concept.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, I argue at length, discussing the passage quoted above regarding the individual human and individual animal, that the singularity of some individual thing can *only* be determined in relation to, and is normatively governed by, its *Gattung*-concept (it is always a *this-such*). However, in chapter five, I also show that the story is more complicated, and argue that there is an under-appreciated line of argument in the arc from Concept to judgement to syllogism. First, the distinction between Concept and Idea is important. Hegel writes: 'But the *adequate* Concept is something higher; it properly denotes the agreement of the Concept with reality [*Realität*], and this is not the Concept as such but the *Idea*' (*WL*: 542/6: 290). I took this to mean (i) the Concept is *inadequate* in being *unequal to* reality, Concept and reality do not *immediately* agree or correspond; and (ii) the *adequate* Concept, the Concept that is equal to

and agrees with reality is *not* Concept but Idea. This shows that the unity of universality, particularity and singularity in the Concept does not immediately correspond with or determine reality (including a singular *this*), *unless* what is under discussion is already Idea. Hegel himself thus refers to the first section of the Subjective Logic as the subjective or formal Concept, and chapter five of my book takes that claim seriously, asking after the *limits* of the subjective Concept in determining singularity, especially in contrast to its realization in the Idea.

Second, in my reading of the three chapters that make up the subjective Concept, I argue that what Hegel calls ‘the judgment of the Concept’ (*das Urteil des Begriffs*)—the highest form of judgement that is ‘*truly* objective’ or ‘the *truth* of the *judgment* in general’—is modelled on reflective, teleological judgements (*WL*: 585/6: 349). This argument is complicated and involves a discussion of the asymmetry between the forms of judgement and the forms of syllogism, but the key is to show that the problem of determining *actual singularity* is not fully resolved in the presentation of the subjective Concept and requires the transition to the Idea. *Only* in the Idea is there an immediate unity and correspondence of Concept and reality, which means that the determination of actual singulars via the unity of the Concept is manifest only in the Idea, and not in the subjective Concept alone. Since life is the immediate manifestation of the Idea, this was my point of departure for the argument that the problem of individuation or the determination of singulars is ultimately resolved in the chapter on ‘Life’. To avoid the worry that I have simply ‘pushe[d] the problem of the Kantian schematism down to the level of the body’ (Rand 2021: 12), I want to emphasize one of the central themes of the book, namely that life for Hegel is a ‘subject-object’. The three processes of life not only enable a living subject to be presented with and determine singular things; they are also the manifest form of activity of a particular kind of object in the world, the real shape and form of actual objects. Since only in life is the Idea *immediately* manifest, I argue that, properly speaking, only living things are *Einzelne*.<sup>16</sup> Living things *are actual Einzelne* (as objects), but they also have the power to *determine Einzelne* (as subjects). This avoids the worry that I have simply pushed back the Kantian problem of heterogeneity down to the body, since life resolves the problem of the identity of subject and object. It also blocks an earlier concern raised by Rand that my interpretation simply reproduces the problem of subjective idealism at the level of the life-form, such that ‘the world as it truly is threatens to slip out of view’ (Rand 2021: 3). Since the logical concept of life as the immediate Idea manifests *at once* the form of activity of living subjects as both knowers and agents *and* the unity of form of actual objects that are genuinely *Einzelne* (these objects are the real, manifest reality of the Concept and hence Idea), the very distinction between subjective and objective idealism loses its meaning, or better, is sublated.

Finally, on the issue of death, I do indeed claim that the transition from life to cognition reveals a fundamental dissatisfaction with *mere* life, namely, that the ongoing reproduction of mere life is only ‘repetition’ and ‘infinite progress’, one in which the ultimate end for all individuals as members of species is simply death (*WL*: 688/4: 486). Moreover, mere life is tightly governed by the genus-process such that the possibilities for transforming those processes are limited, especially in comparison to the possibilities available to self-conscious life. If I understand him correctly, Rand however is claiming that death has a deeper logical significance, namely, that it marks a *logical transformation* in the Idea itself, bringing us from the Idea of life as singular to the Idea of cognition as universal (Rand 2021: 15). This is what allows him to contest my claim that life and cognition share the same logical form, since life does not ultimately manifest the true universality of the Concept. But as I noted earlier, the universality of the Concept is modelled on the concrete universality of the *Gattung*. Although Hegel does claim (and as I acknowledge) that nature only attains to a weak universality and remains full of contingency, I argue that the contingency of *empirical nature* poses no problem for the *a priori, logical concept of life*, which seeks to identify the general form of living activity as a condition for intelligibility as such.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Rand’s distinction between the Idea of life as singular and the Idea of cognition as universal introduces an odd division of labour in the Idea given that the Idea as the adequate Concept (whether *qua* life or cognition) is the manifest reality of the unity of universality, particularity and singularity, a unity that he insisted on as part of an earlier objection. To reiterate a point I made above, what changes in the transition from life to cognition is not the logical structure of Idea as the realized Concept (which I take to be unrevisable), but the self-awareness of that fundamental structure as an act of self-determination. Far from abandoning dialectical transformation, I show that what *drives* dialectical transformation at the level of method is the identity and opposition between life and self-conscious cognition. In positing life as its own presupposition, life places genuine constraints on the universal, free activity of self-conscious cognition. Without those constraints, universal free activity would be nothing more than a philosopher’s fantasy, or, in a familiar turn of phrase, nothing but frictionless spinning in a void.

**Karen Ng**  
Vanderbilt University, USA  
[karen.ng@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:karen.ng@vanderbilt.edu)

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Abbreviations used:

CJ = Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. P. Guyer and E. Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)/*Kritik der Urteilskraft*, in *Werkausgabe in zwölf Bänden*, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974), vol. X.

CPR = Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. P. Guyer and A. Wood (Cambridge University Press, 1998)/*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, in *Werkausgabe in zwölf Bänden*, vols. III–IV.

EE = Immanuel Kant, First Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, in *Critique of the Power of Judgment/Erste Fassung der Einleitung in die Kritik der Urteilskraft*, in *Werkausgabe in zwölf Bänden*, vol. X.

EL = G.W.F. Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic, Part I of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris (Hackett, 1991)/*Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundriss 1830. Erster Teil. Die Wissenschaft der Logik. Mit den mündlichen Zusätzen*, in *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1969), vol. 8.

TP = Immanuel Kant, *On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy*, in *Anthropology, History, and Education*, ed. G. Zöllner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

STI = F.W.J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism (1800)*, trans. P. Heath (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1978)/*System des transzendentalen Idealismus (1800)*, in *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, ed. H. Baumgartner, W.G. Jacobs, J. Janzen, and H. Krings (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1976–), vol. I: 9,1.

WL = G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. G. DiGiovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)/*Wissenschaft der Logik*, in *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, vols. 5–6.

<sup>2</sup> See Pippin 2019 for the most recent statement of the apperception view and my detailed account of that view in Ng 2019.

<sup>3</sup> In the book, I focus on five key discussions: the relation between the subjective subject-object and objective subject-object in the *Differenzschrift*; the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*; the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness in the *Philosophy of Mind*; the transition from the Doctrine of Essence to the Doctrine of the Concept in the *Science of Logic*; and the transition from life to cognition in the *Science of Logic*.



<sup>4</sup> See also *EL* §219 where Hegel discusses life as judgement and Concept in similar terms.

<sup>5</sup> In addition to the passages cited by Koch, Hegel also praises the intuitive understanding in the section ‘Of the Concept in General’, *WL*: 522–23/6: 264–66.

<sup>6</sup> See my discussion in chapter two, pp. 58–59.

<sup>7</sup> See Cooper 2020 on problems with Kant’s inflationary view of teleology that relies on an artifact analogy and how Hegel’s position is better suited to understand internal purposiveness as a natural cause.

<sup>8</sup> See Kreines 2015 and Lindquist 2018. For other excellent accounts of how to interpret Hegel on the priority of teleology over mechanism, see DeVries 1991, Yeomans 2012, and Kreines 2004.

<sup>9</sup> ‘The Idea is the *adequate Concept*, the objectively *true*, or the *true as such*. If anything has truth, it has it by virtue of its Idea, or *something has truth only in so far as it is Idea*’ (*WL*: 670/6:462).

<sup>10</sup> See my discussion at pp. 247–48 and 287–93.

<sup>11</sup> See chapter five in particular. As I note on p. 166 n. 2 (and as is noted similarly by Rand, see Rand 2021: 21 n. 49), Hegel uses the term *Gattung* broadly to refer to something’s genus, species or kind.

<sup>12</sup> See p. 162, where in introducing the transition to the Subjective Logic, I make very clear that *Einzelheit* is what is under discussion. At p. 200, it is very clear that what has been under discussion for the entirety of chapter five is *Einzelheit* (my gloss, ‘individuality or singularity’, reflects the fact that these terms are often interchangeable in English, as well as the shift in the translation of *Einzelheit* from the Miller to di Giovanni translations). At p. 225, I simply note once again that what is under discussion is *Einzelheit* and at p. 226 n. 8 I very clearly note the distinction between *Einzelheit* and *Individuum* in the passage under discussion. So none of the examples cited by Rand are in fact examples of my having conflated these terms. I also note the relevant term under discussion on p. 261.

<sup>13</sup> It is also not at all uncommon to translate *Einzelheit* as individuality; indeed, this was the standard until the di Giovanni translation, and even after the publication of that translation, many scholars have very clearly and helpfully continued to discuss the problem of *Einzelheit* in terms of individuality. See, for example, Deligiorgi 2017 and Ostritsch 2021. Redding 2007 helpfully discusses the problem of singular judgements about individual substances (see esp. chap. three on the problem of individuation in Kant and Hegel). As he notes, the philosophically and logically important distinction is between *Besonderheit* and *Einzelheit*, not between *Einzelheit* and *Individualität*.

<sup>14</sup> Ostritsch 2021 also argues that *Individuum* is just a ‘richer, more developed concept of “*Einzelheit*”’, and that the logical properties of *Einzelheit* suffice for understanding *Individualität* (in his case, he is interested in Hegel’s account of the state as an individual) (202).

<sup>15</sup> See for example pp. 183–86, 258–59, 261.

<sup>16</sup> See pp. 225–26.

<sup>17</sup> See pp. 115–16, 184 n. 30, 283.

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