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## The Idea of Life as the First Form of Truth and Freedom

**ABSTRACT:** In Hegel's philosophy, both truth and genuine freedom belong to the domain of the Idea. Life, as it is categorized in the *Science of Logic*, is the first form and stage of the Idea, and is therefore essential for a comprehension of truth and self-determination. In this paper, I explore why and to what extent Life is self-determining and true. Considering what Hegel considers to be the three fundamental features of all life, I explain how life is self-determining with respect to its organic unity, relationship with the other, and reproductive process. I explicate how the living individual develops and sustains the collective unity of its objectivity, distinguishes itself from its other, yet sustains and regenerates itself through it, and how it raises its universal identity beyond its particular existence through reproduction.

**KEYWORDS:** LIFE; IDEA; ORGANIC UNITY; LIFE-PROCESS; GENUS

**RESUMEN:** En la filosofía de Hegel, tanto la verdad como la auténtica libertad pertenecen al dominio de la Idea. La Vida, tal como es categorizada en la *Ciencia de la Lógica*, es la primera forma y estadio de la idea, y es por lo tanto esencial para una comprensión de la verdad y la autodeterminación. En este artículo, exploro por qué y hasta qué punto la Vida es autodeterminación y verdad. Teniendo en cuenta lo que Hegel considera las tres características fundamentales de toda vida, explico cómo la vida es autodeterminante respecto a su unidad orgánica, su relación con el otro y su proceso reproductivo. Explico cómo el individuo vivo desarrolla y sustenta la unidad colectiva de su objetividad, se distingue de su otro, pero se sustenta y regenera a través de él, y cómo eleva su identidad universal más allá de su existencia particular mediante la reproducción.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** VIDA; IDEA, UNIDAD ORGÁNICA, VIDA, PROCESO, GÉNERO

## I. INTRODUCTION: LIFE IN HEGEL'S SYSTEM

LIFE, AS A MAJOR DETERMINACY, occurs twice in Hegel's system. It is first derived as a logical category in the section "The Idea" in the *Science of Logic*. Second, it figures as a determinacy of nature in the second part of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, also known as Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature*. Both as a category of logic and a determinacy of nature, exploring life is useful, if not necessary, towards a full comprehension of truth and freedom. This is not because life is the paradigmatic case of truth or self-determination. The truth and freedom of life as a logical category is still limited and inferior compared to the further categories of logic that presuppose life. Likewise, compared to the form of beings that belong to the realm of the mind or spirit, natural organisms are more limited and inferior realizations of truth and freedom. Nonetheless, life is true inasmuch as it brings subjectivity and objectivity into a unity, and it is free to the extent that it determines itself. In the system of logic, life is the first thought determinacy of that which produces its own objective being, and the natural embodiment of life in the domain of nature in the being of the animal organism is the highest level of freedom that nature can possibly embody.

The scope of this paper is limited to *life as a logical category* rather than life as a natural determinacy. Like other categories of the system of logic, life signifies a specific content and organization that both presupposes all the preceding concepts and distinguish itself from them. On the other hand, by virtue of this logical content and organization that lays out what most fundamentally characterizes being alive, the logical category of life serves as a standard for any natural or spiritual determinacy that can be considered as living, although it does so without exhausting what is specific to those universal natural and spiritual determinacies. This means that the *Science of Logic* aims to explicate life irrespective of living things that belong to the domain of nature or spirit.

In this paper, I clarify why life is the first form of truth and freedom in Hegel's system rather than giving a detailed account of its logical presuppositions or distinguishing it from its embodiments in nature.<sup>1</sup> But before examining the relationship of the logic of life to truth and freedom, I should at least state what is common to both determinacies, logical and natural. In both logic and nature, life signifies self-determining subjectivity that pertains to an objective being, and that determines it. To this extent, the logic of life and the natural organism both stand for the simplest forms of the Idea in their

[1] For a detailed discussion of Hegel's account of the natural forms of life, see Ebetürk, 2017 and Winfield, 2011. For other commendable works that examine Hegel's theory of life in the *Science of Logic*, see Winfield 2012, Kisner 2014, Spieker 2009, and Spahn 2007.

respective domains. So, the reason why life comes first in understanding truth and freedom can be put in a nutshell. Both truth and genuine freedom belong to the domain of the Idea, whereas life is the first form or stage of the Idea. In what follows, I explain the basics of what it means for life to be the first form of the Idea.

### I.1. THE IDEA AS THE DOMAIN OF TRUTH

Given the self-developing character of Hegel's system, in the systematic derivation of thought determinations, it is not possible to speak of truth in its proper sense until we reach the Idea. Strictly speaking, for Hegel, only the Idea and its manifestations can be true and objectively free.<sup>2</sup> This means that even the Concept as such falls short of truth. Thus, not only the culmination of the logical system, the Absolute Idea, but also the Idea as such, is more than the Concept. Although this is a crucial difference for the system, it is not emphasized adequately or frequently enough.

In broadest terms, the Idea is the Concept that has objectivity. Of course, the Concept does have *reality* by virtue of being determinate.<sup>3</sup> The mere fact that it incorporates particularity shows that it is determinate and real. But because the Concept is also the universal, which remains itself in and through its particulars, it is the first to exhibit subjectivity. After all, this is the essential structure of subjectivity: the self remains related to itself in and through its particular predicates. To be clear, in Hegel's system even the One is self-related. In fact, the One, the unity as such, is defined by this very self-relation.<sup>4</sup> But unlike the One, which is only immediately self-related, the Concept's relationship with itself is mediated through its self-differentiated determinacies, which is to say, its particulars.<sup>5</sup> But being the Concept as such, it is just this: subjectivity and the form of self-determination as such. The pure Concept does not yet have objectivity or objective reality.

By contrast, the Idea is the *objective* concept; it is the unification of this subjectivity or the Concept with objectivity. The Idea demonstrates this unifica-

[2] Hegel 2010 [Heretofore abbreviated as "SL"]: 670; Hegel 1970 [Heretofore abbreviated as *Werke* 6]:462: "something has truth only in so far as it is *idea*." See also Hegel 2004 [Heretofore abbreviated as *EL*]: 283 (§213 *Remark*).

[3] "For the concept is as such itself already the identity of itself and *reality*; for the indeterminate expression "reality" means nothing but *determinate being*, and this the concept possesses in its particularity and singularity." *SL*: 673; *Werke* 6:466.

[4] See *SL*: 128–133; *Werke* 5:176–183.

[5] A detailed account of Hegel's theory of the concept is beyond the scope of this paper. For more detailed and alternative readings of Hegel's theory of the concept, I would recommend Moss 2014; Trisokkas 2012; and Winfield 2012.

tion in different and systematically developing forms, more specifically, in life, cognition and will, and finally in and through the Absolute Idea. The reason why ‘unification’ expresses the character of the Idea better than ‘unity’ is that the Idea is a process in all these different forms, although at each moment, we see different versions of this process of unification. Thus, the Idea stands for the kind of process where the subjectivity comes into a unity with its objective counterpart. There is an objective counterpart in the sense that the object is in one way or another determined by subjectivity, by the Concept. In the domain of the Idea, the object is not merely conceptually *determinable* but is actually subjectively determined.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, the subject is not merely objectively *realizable*, but it consists in a realization in objectivity.

It is also worth noting that Hegel opposes the traditional uses of the term ‘Idea.’ He is not using the Idea to designate a quality, or a representation, or an abstract universal. For Hegel, the Idea is not some subjective and contingent content that corresponds to an externally given phenomenon or appearance. Hegel makes a distinction between the correct and the true, and such an external correspondence is what Hegel sometimes refers to as *correctness*.<sup>7</sup> The Idea is not a representation that relates only externally to the object it represents. It is rather the process in and through which the object corresponds to its *concept*. And this makes the Idea the objective concept, which Hegel calls the *truth* as opposed to mere correctness. Thus, that the Idea refers to the objective concept, or the concept objectified, explains why, roughly speaking, the domain of the Idea is the domain of truth. In Hegel’s system, that which is true must be a concept that is not isolated from objectivity or externally relate to it, but that has some form of a unity with its corresponding objectivity.

## I.2. LIFE AS THE FIRST FORM OF THE IDEA

To explain how all the different forms of the Idea achieve the unity between the Concept and objectivity goes beyond the scope of this paper. Yet elucidating

[6] “Now the idea has shown itself to be the concept liberated again into its subjectivity from the immediacy into which it has sunk in the object; it is the concept that distinguishes itself from its objectivity—but an objectivity which is no less determined by it and possesses its substantiality only in that concept. This identity has therefore rightly been designated as a *subject-object*, for it is *just as well* the formal or subjective concept *as* it is the object *as such*.” *SL*: 673; *Werke* 6:466.

[7] “The idea is the *truth*; for the truth is this, that objectivity corresponds to the concept—not that external things correspond to my representations; these are only *correct* representations that *I, this person [Ich Dieser]*, have. In the idea it is nor a matter of an indexical this [*Diesen*], it is a matter neither of representations nor of external things.” *EL*, 283 (§213 *Remark*); *Werke* 8:368.

in this respect the first form of this unification, that is to say, Life, will prove to be useful for an understanding of the more developed forms of the Idea.

The first forms or stages of every domain in the *Science of Logic* are characterized by immediacy with respect to what comes after them in the order of the systematic derivation. Life is accordingly the immediate form of the Idea.<sup>8</sup> As every other stage of the Idea, it involves both subjectivity and objectivity. Because life is the first and the simplest form of the Idea, it signifies their *immediate unification*. This unification is an ongoing process. In other words, the process in which life consists is already and always the unification of subjectivity and objectivity. The unity of life is thus, at least at first, not mediated by something other. It is a process in which its constituting objectivity is perpetually unified as an individual subject. Life cannot fail to be this unification and remain what it is. In other words, when life fails to be the unification of its objectivity, it is no longer life, but death.

To put it another way, Life is a self-realization in objectivity. Subjectivity partakes in the character of the concept by virtue of remaining a unity in its differentiation, as the concept is the self-differentiating unity of the universal in and through its particulars. Now in Life, subjectivity realizes itself in objectivity, which amounts to say that objectivity serves as the subject's particularity.

Nonetheless, this would be an insufficient description of the subjectivity that is characteristic of Life, as it also pertains to the subject of an external teleological process, as Hegel calls it. Both external teleology and Life involve processes that realize in objectivity a certain subjective end. But, in external teleology, which is the logical structure of the process of making objects or artifacts, the particular objectivity that realizes the subjective end is given externally and exists independently of the process of realization. Matter is transformed into an artifact if it is given beforehand, and it is formed from without. By contrast, in life, the objectivity is immediately bound up with life; it is always already realized in objectivity. Indeed, the subjectivity of Life is the self-realization of the unity of objectivity. In both kinds of teleological processes, external and internal, there is a means-end relationship. But in Life, the end is never given independently of its means. It is, Hegel writes, "as self-directed purpose, has its means within it and posits it as its means, yet is immanent in this means and is therein the realized purpose identical with itself."<sup>9</sup> Life consists in the coincidence of the means and the end. It is the end as well as the means to that end. Its logical character lays out the fundamental processes

[8] As Hegel puts it, "[t]he concept of life or universal life is the immediate idea, the concept that has an objectivity corresponding to it." *SL*: 679; *Werke* 6:474.

[9] *SL*: 673; *Werke* 6:468.

in and through which Life sustains and continuously produces itself as a unity of subjectivity and objectivity.

## II. THE THREE MOMENTS OF LIFE

There are three fundamental moments or features of the process that is Life. And all three are themselves processes. The first moment of Life can be construed as the internal process, as it constitutes the organic unity of life. Hegel calls this moment “the living individual.” The second moment is the external process, which concerns the living individual’s relation to its other. This stage is named “the life-process.” The third moment is the reproductive process, the process in and through which life produces life from within itself. Hegel calls this stage “the genus.”

The logic of life demonstrates self-determination and the ideal unification that is the characteristic of truth in each of these fundamental moments. It develops and sustains the collective unity of its objectivity; it maintains and regenerates itself in the face of and by means of its other; and it raises its universal identity above and beyond its particularity through reproducing itself. In other words, Life is determinative over its internality, over its other, and over its relationship with other life.

### II.1. INTERNAL PROCESS AND THE ORGANIC UNITY OF LIFE

The first moment of the logic of Life is the internal process and the organic unity that this process continuously realizes and maintains. The living individual has a distinctive internal constitution. Although it is possible to think of this constitution as a basic *form* or *structure* of life, it actually consists in a self-sustaining *process*.

Like any individual, the living thing is a unity of multiplicity. But its multiplicity does not consist of externally aggregated or assembled parts. The living individual is constituted of a system of members or organs.<sup>10</sup> This system is unlike an aggregate of objects whose principle of unity exists outside of it. Like objects, organs interact with one another. But their interaction is unlike mecha-

[10] “As for its externality, the organism is a manifold, not of *parts* but of *members*. (a) These members exist as such only in the individuality; they are separable inasmuch as they are external and can be grasped in this externality, but as thus separated they revert to the mechanical and chemical relations of common objectivity. (b) Their externality is opposed to the negative unity of the living individuality.” *SL*: 681; *Werke* 6:476.

nical relationships that are indifferent to their terms or chemical relationships that bring about a further product at the expense of the interacting objects.<sup>11</sup>

Organs do enter into mechanical and chemical relationships with one another, but thanks to the external determinability of these relationships, all organic interactions are specifications of the universal character of the organism. For these interactions take place, ideally speaking, only as long as they are conducive to the perpetuation of the entire organism.<sup>12</sup> Organs sustain and reciprocally determine one another in content in accordance with their universally pervading identity, while this identity proves to be nothing but their own collective doing. The subsistence of each organ depends on this communal network of means-ends relationships. Although all organs operate purposively to realize and maintain one another, in contrast with external teleology, the end they individually or collectively realize is not an externally imposed concept that exists independently of the organs' workings. The end continually proves itself to be the unity and concept of this entire process, which itself happens to serve as the means to maintain each constituent organ.

The living individual achieves what Hegel calls *ideality* because the interdependence and cooperation of organs go beyond mechanical indifference and externality. To some extent, organic unity may still look like a mechanical system of bodies which interact and operate in ways that collectively express regularity and lawfulness, which figure in the behavior of the system's components. However, the living individual, even when considered merely with respect to its organic unity, is still different from a mechanical system as it can maintain, develop, and further differentiate its organic constituents, and unlike mechanical components, organic constituents cannot be what they are independently of the system of life.

Because organs comprise a network where each constituent needs to continuously sustain the rest, their complementary activity in its entirety is self-driven. Furthermore, each organ is also driven to differentiate its function from the functions of other organs in a way that is conducive to the needs of the

[11] In Hegel's system of logical categories, mechanism and chemism figure as other logical determinacies that precede the concept of life and express distinct processes. Hegel shows that the processes that define life are irreducible to mechanical and chemical processes. For more detailed expositions of Hegel's account of the logical categories of mechanism and chemism, Winfield 2012: 287–97, Kisner 2014 :77–95, Burbidge 2007: 106–16, and for an account of life's irreducibility, see Ebetürk 2017: 40–62.

[12] "Life ... is in and for itself absolute *universality*; the objectivity which it possesses is throughout permeated by the concept, and this concept alone it has as substance. Whatever is distinguished as part, or by some otherwise external reflection, has the whole concept within it; the concept is the soul *omnipresent* in it, a soul which is simple self-reference and remains one in the manifoldness that accrues to the objective being." *SL*: 678, *Werke* 6:472.

system.<sup>13</sup> In the domain of the Concept, the particulars of the universal cannot but differentiate from one another, as otherwise they would collapse back to their universality. The differentiation of organs is the repetition of this character of the Concept in the domain of the Idea, where organs also have objectivity. This self-differentiation of particular organs is that which provides the living individual with its ideal character. Without such an internal differentiation, organs could not be distinguished from one another, and there would not be a real complementariness. The means-end relationship between organs entails that each organ is realized by means of other organs. Even though the end of the entire organism is its self-sustaining process, each organ also serves as a specific means to particular ends. This requires that organs are determined distinctly, and given that the activity of each organ makes up its determinacy, it also means that each organ has to perform a different function through which it can provide for the others what the latter cannot provide for themselves. On account of this differentiation of functions, organs exhibit the complementary that sustains the entire organism, thereby rendering the system as a whole the organic unity of the living individual. This is why organic differences that constitute the living individual are not extrinsic or relative, but intrinsic and permanent.

The organic unity and the internal process of the living individual thus exhibits the self-differentiation of the concept in and through objectivity. The living individual determines its own conceptual content, which is inherent in the content and workings of each of its objective constituents. This immediate coincidence of the concept and objectivity explains why organic unity is the first moment to exhibit the truth of the Idea, while the complementariness of the self-differentiated organic constituents demonstrates the self-determination of Life in its first moment.

## II.2. EXTERNAL PROCESS OF THE LIVING INDIVIDUAL

The Idea of Life demonstrates truth and self-determination not only through the workings of self-differentiated organs but also in actively distinguishing itself from its other, that is to say, from inorganic objectivity. The internal process of the living individual already marks out the organism as an individual organic unity over against all the rest that can externally relate to it. However, this implies that the living individual is still limited by this other of itself, and accordingly, that its internal process is conceived only in abstraction from its relationship with what is external to its objective being, that is, its

[13] See *SL*: 681; *Werke* 6:476–77 where Hegel also writes that “it is *impulse* [*drive*], more precisely the *specific impulse of particular* difference, and no less essentially the one and universal impulse of the specific that leads its particularization back to unity and holds it there.”



body. Because the living individual has its own external being, its body, which is always susceptible to being affected from without, its self-sustaining and self-determining activity cannot be carried out or fully conceived independently of its relation to its other.

Hegel calls this outward relation of the living individual its life-process, and its explication shows that in its relationship with its other the living individual is also self-determining and it further demonstrates truth. This other of the living individual is that which the latter treats as nonlife or inorganic objectivity. The living individual strives to determine its other in accordance with its own concept and constitutive identity. The inorganic objectivity that stands over against Life involves mechanical and chemical objects and their processes, which are indifferent to the ends of Life. Those objects can mechanically and chemically affect the living individual to such a degree as to impair or destroy its organic unity. Unlike mechanical objects, however, as an objectivity immediately presided by subjectivity, the living individual is not indifferent to the character of its external relations. To sustain itself and remain as the self-determining unity that it is, the living individual needs to demonstrate its unity over against those external processes. In order not to succumb to their determinative and destructive power, the living individual needs to overcome the otherness of externality. To this end, it transforms inorganic objectivity, provides it with its own character, thereby making it a constituent of itself.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, the living individual exhibits self-determination, the moment it is subject to external influence. It determines its own determinacy, simply by registering stimuli and being affected by them in ways that are specific to its own purposive character. Thus even the reception of the external effect is already determined in terms of the determinacy of the organic unity. Likewise, the living individual responds to external stimuli in equally specific ways that arise from its character and conduces to its end of self-perpetuation. However, the form of assimilation that most clearly demonstrates the self-determining character of Life consists in its ability to transform inorganic objectivity into the living *objectivity* of the Idea. The organic unity of already demonstrates how the living individual manipulates mechanical and chemical processes to its own end of self-perpetuation by exploiting the indifference and susceptibility of these processes to external determination. The life-process demonstrates the same power of Life in a different way. It employs the same kind of processes to assimilate inorganic objects in such a way that they conform to the determinacy

[14] "The living being is thereby the impulse to posit *as its own* this world which is other than it, to posit itself as equal to it, to sublimate the world and objectify itself. Its self-determination has therefore the form of objective externality." *SL*: 684; *Werke* 6: 481.

of life.<sup>15</sup> In this way, the living individual generates from inorganic objectivity its self-determined, objective content.

Thus, the life-process demonstrates that the living individual produces and sustains itself by appropriating into itself the objects of its external world. As the organic unity already entails, the internal constitution of the living individual consists in a common identity that permeates and determines its differentiated constituents. When assimilated, external objects acquire this same universal character of the organism. On the other hand, because the living individual can maintain itself in and through different kinds of objects that it assimilates, it proves in its dealings with its externality that its universality is not limited to the common character of its internally differentiated organs. The life-process shows that the unity and universality of Life retains itself also in confrontation with what is not itself.

Thus, through the life-process, Life re-produces its organic unity and content again by means of its own activity, although this time it goes further than the immediacy of the internal complementarity of organic unity. By actively determining itself through determining its other, it further demonstrates self-determination, and thus, freedom. Moreover, by transforming external objectivity into its own objective concept, and thus, unifying concept with objectivity, the life-process exhibits the second form of truth that Life entails in the domain of the Idea.

### II.3. LIFE IN RELATION TO ITSELF: GENUS AND REPRODUCTION

The third and the final moment of life is reproduction, or what Hegel calls the genus process. In the logical account, the living individual's production of itself and its universal identity through what is not itself brings forth the unity of the internal process and assimilation, which, for Hegel, is genus in its first and immediate form in the domain of the Idea. Nevertheless, this form of self-production does not yet go beyond the self-renewal of the *individual* organism through other beings. In other words, even though Life demonstrates its universality through its own transformative activity, as long as it remains within the bounds of the life-process, its universality is still restricted to the life of a single individual. Hegel seems to think that the universality of life that is still bound up with the self-perpetuation of a single individual is genus only implicitly.

[15] "By seizing hold of the object, the mechanical process passes over into an internal process by which the individual *appropriates* the object in such a manner that it takes away from it its distinctive make-up, makes it into a means, and confers upon it its own subjectivity as its substance." *SL*: 685–6; *Werke* 6: 483.

The genus becomes explicit when Life produces distinct individuals of the same universal. The reproduction of the living individual is thus the genus-process proper. Hegel characterizes this process of reproduction only in terms of a relationship between different living individuals. Through their reproductive relation, different living individuals overcome their mutual externality with respect to one another, assume specific roles in accordance with their differences, and bring about a common product of their own kind. The genus process thus reiterates the internally differentiated organic unity of the living individual in terms of the complementary functioning of different individuals that sustain their kind. However, this reiteration happens on the level of a higher universal that embraces different individuals of the same kind, that is to say, the genus or the species being. Again the main idea is that by generating a distinct individual through their relation, living individuals that differ from one another make explicit their mutual identity without losing their complementary differences.

For Hegel, the product of the genus process, the germ, contains the concrete concept of life.<sup>16</sup> It is again the Idea produced solely by the activity of Life itself and demonstrates truth to the extent that it embodies its concept in individuals that are necessarily bound up with it. But together with this product of reproduction, the universality of Life also acquires a higher level of freedom as self-determination. Because through the reproductive relation, the genus of life sustains itself by means of the activity of its own constituents and independently of the contingent features of reproducing individuals. As Hegel puts it, “in the process of the genus, the isolated singularities of individual life perish.”<sup>17</sup> Life thus achieves a higher level of autonomy by releasing itself from an attachment to specific individuals. In the internal process of the living individual, the minute constituents of organs may continually change while the universal character common to all organs sustains itself. Similarly, in the life-process, the living individual is able to uphold its identity by assimilating a variety of individuals. Now in reproduction, because the genus is independent of any particular individual’s organic unity and life-process, the freedom of the universal that pertains to Life rises to a higher level. This independence becomes more explicit together with the death of the reproducing pair, or the parents, as death makes it clear that the genus continues and perpetuates itself despite the vanishing of its presuppositions. It is in this sense Hegel writes that

[16] “For the germ of the living being is the complete concretion of individuality: it is where all the living being’s diverse sides, its properties and articulated differences, are contained in their *entire determinateness*; where the at first *immaterial*, subjective totality is present undeveloped, simple and non-sensuous. Thus the germ is the whole living being in the inner form of the concept.” *SL*: 687–88; *Werke* 6:485–86.

[17] *SL*: 688; *Werke* 6:486.

“the death of this [individual] life is the coming to be of spirit.”<sup>18</sup> That is to say, death signifies the universal that exists independently of individuals and is nevertheless explicit to itself.

Of course, Life does not amount to the highest form of truth or freedom. Even at its culmination, in the genus, Life is still limited in its freedom. Even though it can sustain itself independently of the contingent features of its individual members, Life as genus is still reliant on *some individuals* that reproduce with one another. Moreover, what is brought about is yet another individual with all its contingent features. In all these relationships, the universal’s self-relation is mediated by its individual instances. Although the perpetuation of the universal at the expense of individuals render the being of the universal explicit, it is nevertheless not yet the universal that can *explicitly relate to itself as a universal*. That, Hegel tries to show, is the feat of thinking. Thought can relate to itself as a self-relating universal, although how it does so without renouncing objectivity and reverting back to the mere subjectivity of the Concept as such can only be addressed by the more developed forms of the Idea. Here it suffices to note that as long as the genus of life still relies on the workings of certain living individuals, the life of the genus will remain dependent on a givenness that is not produced by the activity of the self-determining subject. This theoretically infinite recurrence of the universal in its particulars without directly relating *to itself as a universal* points to the limits of Life as the first form of the Idea.<sup>19</sup>

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[18] SL: 688; *Werke* 6:486.

[19] “The idea, which as life is still in the form of immediacy, thus falls back into actuality, and its reflection is now only the repetition and the infinite process in which it does not step outside the finitude of its immediacy.” SL: 688; *Werke* 6:486.

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