

## The Arcanum of Life – On Hegel's Idea of Life

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**Abstract:** This paper investigates Hegel's idea of life, which is on the one hand significant to the research of the dynamic structure of Hegelian absolute idea and on the other hand provides a relevant philosophical foundation for our current exploration of life. In this paper, the research on the idea of life is mainly based on Hegel's *Science of Logic* and is divided into two parts, namely an argumentative reconstruction of the moments of the life-idea and an interpretation of its role in the inner-logical process of the idea itself. Through the study of these two dimensions, this paper shows that the complex logical structure of the life-idea is, as claimed by Hegel, in its forming activity, in its negative unity, the only one unified process and plays four relevant roles in the inner-logical construction of the idea itself, namely in the core concept of Hegel.

**Keywords:** life, idea, logic, reconstruction, Hegel

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, on the one hand, people marvel at the wondrous, mysterious and incomprehensible phenomena of life, but on the other hand, they usually only consider them from a particular perspective of life sciences. However, life is also in the core subject area of philosophy. From the perspective of Hegelian philosophy, the essence of life can even be grasped only speculatively, because life itself exists in reality as “the speculative”, “the truth”, “the absolute idealism” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 9: 338). As an immediate idea and thus direct manifestation of the speculative truth, life is obviously a relevant concept of Hegel. The analysis of this concept is therefore important both for the understanding of Hegel's speculative philosophy and for the study on the question of life itself.

Although Hegel's exposition of life runs through his entire philosophical system, it is mainly concentrated in his *Science of Logic*. Accordingly, the research of the idea of life in this paper focuses on the

chapter of the idea in *Science of Logic* and is divided into two parts, namely a logical-operational reconstruction of the moments of the life-idea (the idea of life) and an interpretation of the role of life in the inner-logical process of the idea.

## A LOGICAL-OPERATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE MOMENTS OF THE IDEA OF LIFE

Ryosuke Orashi published an article on Hegel's idea of life in which he hypothesises a quite possible revision of the chapter of life: "if he had been given a longer life and had enough time, he would have heavily revised the chapter on 'life' above all" (Orashi, 2015: 521<sup>1</sup>). Regardless of his concrete criticism, one can at least recognise in the strong need for research to reconstruct the important chapter on life according to Hegel's speculative principle and the demand of immanent deduction as well as in a logical-operational manner.

According to Hegel, the complex logical structure of the life-idea in *Science of Logic* is, in the forming activity of the life-idea, in its negative unity, only an unified process, which runs as three "active syllogisms or processes" (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 8: 374). In other words, the inner-logically continuous singular process of life is in principle divided into three moments. In the following sections, we attempt to reconstruct these three moments of the life-idea in a logical-operational manner and to re-examine their immanent continuity or unity claimed by Hegel.

### a) The life process enclosed within the individual

According to Hegel, the first process of the life-idea is the process within the individual life. For the life-idea has, on the one hand, individuality as its form of existence due to its immediacy and, on the other hand, it is first differentiated within itself as "the beginning, automotive principle" (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 475). The self-forming process is, as negativity, the self-determination of the life-idea, which still shows itself as "the setting in itself" (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 474). Through this original differentiation, life is divided into two essentially interrelated aspects. Here, the life itself as the self-forming activity is the soul and the objectivity permeated by it is corporeality. The soul as the negative unity constitutes the real centrality in the structure of life; the objectivity or corporeality is no longer the

totality of the notion (Begriff<sup>2</sup>) immersed in immediacy, but rather the being that is opposed to the notion, differentiated from it, but at the same time appropriate to it and set by it. The previous independence of objectivity, which is irrelevant to the subject, now proves to be the being-positing (Gesetztsein), and the moment of the notion. As “the predicate of the judgement of the self-determination of the notion” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 475), the objectivity has emerged from the notion. The body-soul relationship is the paradigm of the speculative identity of subject-object. This relation can and must be grasped through the preceding logical determinations, which are raised into the negative unity of the life process.

The Living objectivity as corporeality has the notion as its substance, but as subjective substance, which is not only the power and the necessary unity of the object, but also is positively identical with it and maintains itself as “the one and general drive of the specific” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 473). The inseparable, negative unity of the notion-moments, which at first only came about within the scope of its own moments, now extends to the body-soul relationship. In other words, the notion is realised as the soul of life in objectivity, because it “mediates its reality through objectivity” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 471). Here, the immediate self-referential universality is at the same time the particularity, so that the corporeality is identical with the determinations of the notion. And singularity as unlimited negativity shows itself in the dialectic of objectivity, i.e. in the return from the separating existence into subjectivity. So objectivity, as indicated above, is “the predicate of the judgement of the self-determination of the notion”, but this judgement is immediately the syllogistic inference (Schluss) in the self-reflecting unity of life. In the two premises of the external relation of purpose, it is shown that objectivity is principally not sublated (aufgehoben) and the purpose in it is not in and for itself. Conversely, here the premise and the inference unite because of the negative unity of living individuality. Since objectivity is permeated by the notion, it is the means to achieve the purpose. However, because of the complete purposefulness, the means is at the same time the realised purpose, in which the subjective purpose is united with itself.

Subsequently, the logical ideal type of the living individual is presented. This type has the sensibility, irritability and reproduction as essential determinations, which correspond respectively to the universality, particularity, singularity of the notion<sup>3</sup>. Since the objectivity of the life is

already permeated by the notion as soul, its determinations necessarily correspond to the triadic structure of the notion.

The first determination, which is in accordance with the notional universality, is the sensibility of the corporeality of the living. It is not only the abstract simplicity, but also the absolute negativity in itself (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 487). The difference dissolves in this simplicity and returns to it as self-feeling. Sensibility, as “an unlimited determinable receptivity” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 478), is the capacity to return the manifold and external determinations to the simplicity of the self-same universality.

The second determination, which corresponds to the notional particularity, is the irritability of the corporeality of the living. The irritability of the living is, as the moment of the set difference, “the opening of negativity” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 478), which, however, is not yet real determinateness, but only ideational, enclosed in the inner life process. Because of its abstract negativity, it is the drive (Trieb) to determine itself as negation. In the drive, the living in itself separates itself. It is directed on the one hand against the determinable objectivity and on the other hand against itself. From the irritability, the living refers to the objective world and the other subjects (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 479), while it is so far still the outwardly-going repercussion as an ideal determination.

The third determination, which is parallel to the notional singularity, is the reproduction of the organism. The first two moments in this reproduction are the abstract determinations, whereas this reproduction itself is a unity of the preceding moments and the process of reflection-in-itself. This reflection-in-itself is divided into two dimensions, namely the theoretical reflection, which represents negativity as a simple moment of sensibility and the actual reflection, which at the same time turns to the living itself. Thus, reproduction as unlimited negativity is the process in both directions, i.e., making the external into the living itself and, in reverse, making the living into the external. Here, the immediacy of sensibility and irritability is sublated in reproduction as the self-referential negativity of the notion. Because of the inseparability and the negative unity, every moment can represent the totality of all the three moments. Their difference consists only in the ideational determination of form. But reproduction as the completion of the inner process of life articulates especially the meaning that constitutes the notion set as concrete totality, the reality (Wirklichkeit) and the basis of all moments.

Through reproduction, the connection of different organs and limbs is restored as the totality. The living individual is thus essentially the continually renewing process within itself. With reproduction, the living determines itself as the concrete totality and the self-referential being-for-itself, which, however, at the same time essentially refers to its other, namely the objective world. Hereby, the inner process of living individuality transitions into the life process towards the outside. Just as the formation of the living is divided according to the three moments of the notion, the transition of the inner process to the outward process of the living is parallel to the same transition from the notional singularity to the judgement. Moreover, in the transition to the outward process of the living, “the moment of its [sc. the living individual - note G. Y. Guo] determinateness as a relation to externality” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 480) is further developed. Indeed, the living is necessarily confronted with the objective world because of its immediacy and its finite individual form. For this point, it is to be remembered that “every determination is a negation” (“*omnis determinatio est negatio*”) (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 5: 120). In this context, the Spinozist dictum received and transformed by Hegel means that the determinate and individual living thing contains its otherness as negation within itself from the beginning and is thereby limited. The relation of the living to the objective world was already implicitly included in his moment of “irritability against another” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 480). Now this relation is made explicit in the continuation of the logical process.

#### b) The outward life process

The first syllogistic inference, i.e. the basic structure of the inner life process, is followed by the second. The second syllogistic inference is the life process that is in continuity with the first, but it goes outwards. The living, as already shown, refers in its self-determination as self-negation to the objectivity, whose relationality and processuality represent mechanism and chemism in general. Since the moment of the determination of the living develops into concrete totality, and the objectification of particularity, the living momentarily splits in its primordial division<sup>4</sup>. However, this is the living's own divisiveness, and the living has at bottom the negative identity with itself as its nature, wherefore it now stands in contradiction (*Widerspruch*) with itself. The real philosophical

counterpart of this contradiction is pain, which Hegel describes as the “prerogative of living natures” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 481). Nevertheless, the contradiction must not be understood merely as the negation of the living, but as what is set by itself in an immanent way. Further, the deficit and contradiction of the living contain at the same time the sublation (Aufhebung) and dissolution in itself. To bear the contradiction within oneself and to make it immanent precisely constitute the unlimitedness of the living subject. For the contradiction, the drive of the living begins to sublimate the otherness confronting it, bringing it into correspondence with the living and objectifying itself (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 481). So he presents not only the negation of the subject, but also the negation of this negation as the truth of certainty. The drive rooted in the inner contradiction is the starting point of the outward life process.

The interaction of the living subject with the objective world opposed to it is explained in more details. On the one hand, the object mechanically affects the living as an indifferent otherness. Although the mechanical and chemical powers can strongly influence the living, and even cause its violent death, their mode of effect is nothing other than an external finite mode, which in the progress of speculative logic proves to be lower than the mode of purposive activity. In this way, the indifferent object cannot set the living subject as its moment. According to Hegel, the speculative meaning of the mechanical effect on the living lies only in the fact that it excites the subject and activates the appropriateness of its externality with the subject. On the other hand, in the outward process of life, the living assimilates the otherness opposed to it, sublates it as its own moment and thereby sustains itself. This process can again be viewed under two aspects. On the one hand, the indifferent otherness in it cannot maintain itself against the living. This otherness is, as already indicated, indifferent to the determination, to the purposefulness of the living. However, this indifference of the object constitutes its mechanical determination, its “external ability” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 482) to be appropriate to the living. Through the process of assimilation of the living, the original objectivity is integrated in an inner way into the organic nature of the same. It cannot resist the organic power and thus manifests itself as a conceptless (begriffslos) and non-essential reality, which has the living subject as its subjective substance. On the other hand, from the perspective of the subject, the living as drive and purpose subordinates the otherness as its

means and thereby unites it with the organic process of reproduction shown earlier. The drive of the living relates to the objective world as to the phenomenon. At the beginning, the activity of the living is still the power over the object and appears to be an external purposeful activity. In the further course, the living subject interrupts the mechanical and chemical processes of the objective world and transforms their exteriority into interiority, i.e. into the inner-teleological process of the living. In this way, external purposefulness is sublated and united with the reproductive process of the living. The living unites with itself in its otherness and proves to be an inner-teleological structure, which is a free and active syllogistic inference. This inference has the living and its renewal as extremes, and the indifferent object, namely its environment, as its middle term.

At this position, it is noteworthy that the otherness of the living is not only integrated into the inner-teleological or living process of the organism, but has it as the substance and the immanent purpose. In the outgoing process of life, it turns out that the objective world is in itself the same thing that life is for itself (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 8: 376). To legitimate this inner-teleological conception, the following two points must be made. First, the self-sublation of the external purposive activity is emphasised by Hegel. The indifferent object is not a substance against determinateness. The overarching (übergreifend) subjectivity of the living not only gives it the external form, but constitutes its essence, as “immanent, pervading determination” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 483). The hidden or potential purpose of the object is precisely exposed by the purposeful activity of the living. Secondly, this teleological view is based on the previous logical process from mechanism via external teleology to the idea of life. The determinations of this logical process re-appears as the sublated in the assimilation process of life.

#### c) The genus process

For the transition from the outward life process to the genus, Hegel refers back to the doubling of the individual, which represents a pre-setting (Voraus-Setzen<sup>5</sup>) of the objectivity identical with the living and a behavior (Verhalten) of the living towards itself as another living (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 484). In this behavior, the genus is introduced as a synthesis of the first two processes or the third process of life, insofar as in the first process the living individual behaves solely as being-in-itself (Insichsein) and in the

second process it relates to its otherness. In fact, the process of genus, similar to the outward process of life, has already been implied in the preceding existential form of the life-idea and in reproduction as the moment of completion and concrete totality. To put it concretely: if life has singularity as the form of its existence, it is already necessarily related to its individuality, plurality and, more closely, its genus. In the further determination of reproduction, it is not only about its outgoing extension and the assimilation returning into reproduction, but also about the “inter-subjective” reproduction, i.e. the reproduction of the genus.

This transition to the genus should also be studied from the overall perspective of the developmental process of the life-idea. In the beginning, the living individuals were only brought forth from the development of notional logic, which means that the emergence of the living individuals was initially the pre-setting, which was not yet produced by its own process of mediation. The immediacy or externality of the precondition (*Voraussetzung*) was not initially overcome as an immanent moment of life. Since in the process of assimilation, both the one-sided subjectivity of the drive of the living and the indifference of the otherness opposed to it are sublated, the identity of the notion and objectivity that exists for itself and the universality that unites with it result from this (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 483-484). In this way, life now proves itself to be its own production and its self-mediation as the basis of itself. In the context of this meaning, the transition from the outward life process to the generic process takes place. The previously hidden relationship of genus now comes into our view. For the genus is based on the developmental result and manifests itself as a continuation of the identity and universality that has just been reached.

The second syllogistic inference is now followed by the third. The third inference is the process returning to itself from the outward life process, namely the genus. As the third stage of the life-idea, it is the process of an individual referring to itself. Compared to the first self-referential process, which, as the process enclosed within the individual, expresses only abstract inwardness, and the genus is a real (*wirklich*) concrete process, “real universal life” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 484). In the genus process of the living, external immediacy constitutes its immanent or essential moment. Because of this immediacy, the universality achieved through the sublation of particularity is particularised again in the particular individuals. This



means that the universality of the genus is not yet the abstract universality that exists for itself, but the “substantial universality” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 8: 376) that individuality has as its real form. In the relationship of the genus, a living individual has not only the negative behavior against others, but also the affirmative relationship with them. The living relates to itself as another living and vice versa. Here the other is another self. The living has therefore still the determined, particular, one-sided nature and has the other as its counterpart. As an immediate notion, the living doesn't have the complete form of the notion as its object, but another individual, which corresponds to the notion, is immersed in immediate objectivity. The reciprocal relation between the individuals determined against each other builds the logical foundation for the preconception of self-conscious intersubjectivity<sup>6</sup>. However, in the reciprocal form still lies the contradiction of the individuals, whose sublation is revealed in the following.

While in the former second life process the identity of the living and its otherness is discussed, now the inter-subjective identity as the identity of itself in the way of genus viewed. The progress from the subject-object relation to this subject-subject relation is the setting of the external self-relation and the ascent of the inner-logical unity, but the achieved unity is still deficient and does not fulfill the request of truth. The living is in its relation with its others just as much an independent, so that it is driven by its self-contradictory nature and starts its self-sublation process.

From the view of the monistic idealism, the self-contradiction exists between the immediate existence of the living and its only inner the genus-being (*Gattungswesen*), which now causes the inner tension and the drive to set the identity of the individual with its other and to realize the only inner universality of the genus process. The realization of the universality, i.e. the resolution of this contradiction, happens through the reciprocal sublation of the individualities which are special against each other. More precisely spoken: the reproduction process at bottom is the representation of the previous categories of interaction, chemism and syllogistic inference, which are, as formal basic building elements, now raised to the autopoietic level. The diremption (*Besonderung*) of the genus, namely the relation of one subject to another of their genus, continues here through interaction, alternating negation and alternating determination, i.e. the reproduction, re-organisation of its own vital elements, to the reunification of the active form of syllogistic inference as uniting-with-itself (*Sich-mit-*

sich-selbst-Zusammenschließen). Here, the fluid integration and mutual negation of the individuals being for themselves are also the affirmation and the abstract self-determination of the substantial generic universality. To have an easier access to this sublation of individuals determined against each other, reference is made to organic natural lives (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 9: 516-520). This process of sublation is familiar to us in the context of the sexual relationship and mating of natural lives and is now to be rethought in the speculative-logical way, and to be raised to the determination of the life-idea. The result of this process is not quite the same as the chemical process, namely a merely neutral product. As a return to the original unity of the living, it is again the immediate totality of self-determination, and the germ of the inner form of the notion. In its further development, the germ is the individuality of life itself, which emerges from the realised identity as the unity of the genus reflecting in divisiveness (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 485), which means that the basis of production of the living changes in that the self-mediation of the same is set here. For the living is no longer produced directly from its notion, but from the real idea. Consequently, the genus process is the third teleological structure, the third syllogistic inference, in which the founding genus and the immediate individual are grasped as two extremes and the tension of the genus-being of the individuals against the inadequacy of their real individual form is the mediation, which is the middle of the syllogistic inference.

However, through the sublation of particularity, only a singularity is produced again and again. The process of genus thus represents nothing other than a repetition or a bad infinite progress. In the constant vicious circle of the genus, the idea cannot go beyond the finiteness of its immediacy. Even death, in which the genus proves itself to be the substantial power over the living, does not express the sublation that sustains the individuals, but the abstract negation that annihilates them. While the genus, as the completion of life, at the same time points to the sublation of the immediacy of the idea: the negative unity set in the process of the genus shows itself not only as a cycle of emergence and death of the individual, but also as the return of the genus to itself, namely simple equality with itself (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 486). Hereby, the immediacy of the idea is sublated by the already demonstrated self-mediation and self-referentiality of the genus process, and this in turn results in a new closed and self-referential structure. In the idea as life, objectivity is indeed

appropriate to the notion, but it is not yet a free notion that exists for itself. Through the movement of sublation, the existence of the idea, which was still immersed and imprisoned in the immediate objective form before, now attains “the notional form liberated to universality” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 487). The substantial genus, and the universality that is in itself, therefore transitions into the “genus that unites with itself, and the universality of the idea that becomes for itself” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 486). The idea now has universality as its determination and determinate existence (Dasein), and has itself as its object (Gegenstand), from which the idea of cognition is raised.

### THE ROLE OF LIFE IN THE INNER-LOGICAL PROCESS OF THE IDEA

For a systematic research on the idea of life, its role in the inner-logical process of development of the idea itself can and should be exposed on the basis of the above reconstruction. Obviously, the life as an immediate idea is the starting point of the entire logical process of the idea. First and foremost, this point will be interpreted in the following with reference to the idea’s own characteristic.

#### a) Life as the starting point and the immediate stage of the idea-logic

Before we go directly to life as the starting point of the idea-logic, the basic character of the idea itself is briefly indicated in two dimensions as follows. First, according to Hegel, the idea is “the adequate notion, the objective true” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 462) or “the unity of the notion and objectivity” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 464). This constitutes the basic characteristics of the idea. This expression in the history of philosophy has existed for a long time, but it used to stop only at the level of the ordinary representation (Vorstellung). Although the notion of the idea has been vindicated in Kant’s concept of reason, it is nothing more than an empty regulative principle for the use of the categories of understanding. Hegel forgave this traditional expression of the innovative connotations. In Hegel’s view, the idea shows itself neither as the abstract, still, neutral unity, nor as the one-sided subjective unity in the sense of the ordinary representation, but rather the negative unity of the notion with itself in its objectivity (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 462-465). In this unity, the unlimited encroaches on the

limited, and the notion encroaches on its objectivity, in which “overarching subjectivity” (übergreifende Subjektivität) is articulated instead of one-sided subjectivity (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 8: 373). The overarching subjectivity is the negative return of the notion in itself, in which all relations of the reflection are contained and sublated. Now, the other important dimensions of the fundamental characteristic of the idea are elucidated, that the idea itself is the dialectic and essentially has processuality in itself.

On the basis of the meaning of life-idea and the fundamental characteristic of the idea itself that has just been indicated, the opportunity is now opened up to examine, whether life can be built into the inner-logical process of the idea as the starting point, the first or immediate stage. First, the body-soul structure of life expresses the appropriateness of the notion and objectivity. In concrete terms, the notion as soul penetrates corporeality and returns to itself from it. While in life, the soul sets objectivity as a means and is immanent to it. In that objectivity is ensouled by the notion, it is thoroughly purposive and immediately the realized purpose is identical with itself. Thus the inner-teleological structure of life can be understood as the demonstration of the negative unity of the notion with itself and the overarching subjectivity. Moreover, all parts in the organism are means and at the same time ends, causes and effects, etc. All preceding opposing determinations of thought merge into each other in a dialectical way because of the double negativity of life. Finally, the processual nature of life is equally clear. The negative unity of life as the process of its uniting with itself is again divided into three processes that have already been shown above, namely the life process enclosed within the individual, the outward life process, the genus process. Therefore, the concept of life undoubtedly has the characteristics of dialectics and processuality.

Thus it can be seen that this life possesses the basic characteristic of the idea and thus belongs to the logical process of the same. However, is the life actually on the *immediate* step of the idea-logic? It will be briefly examined. On the foundation of the interpretation in the second part of this paper, the characteristic of immediacy of all three moments of life is not difficult to demonstrate. The first moment, namely the body-soul relationship of the living individual, is indeed presented as a paradigm of the negative unity of subject-object, but in the sense of being-in-itself

(Ansichsein). Though the notion is appropriate to external objectivity, it is not for itself as the notion. The notion as soul does not yet grasp itself as soul and exists here in an immediate way (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 468). The immediacy of the second moment, i.e. the outward process of life, is clearly manifested in the fact that the living is confronted with an objective world opposed to it. Therefore, no further explanation is needed here. The third moment is the genus as truth and completion of the life process, but through the restoration and self-mediation of the genus, it does not go beyond immediacy anyway, insofar as its result is again only an individual. The genus process does not appear as a concrete universality. In contrast to the death of the living individual, it manifests itself as the substantial one. Altogether, all three moments of the life-idea show the adequacy of the notion with objectivity, but they are still imprisoned in immediacy. This is why the life corresponds to the characteristic of the immediate stage of the idea-logic and must be embedded as the starting point in such a logic.

b) Life as the necessary precondition of the idea of cognition

Life, as the immediate stage of the logic of the idea, is also the precondition of the idea of cognition (Erkennen). However, why does the idea of cognition require such a precondition? What is the necessity of this precondition? To understand life as such a precondition, which can help us to dispel the suspicion of its arbitrariness, we shall first consider which specific presupposition is demanded of the inner-logical course of the idea and especially of the idea of cognition. First, the idea of cognition is not the cognition that is for itself in the concrete real figure of the spirit (Geist), but it is contained in the simple logical idea, which means that the cognition in this idea has nothing to do with anthropological, phenomenological and psychological phenomena (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 469). Consequently (begrifflich), this cognition necessitates a purely conceptual precondition, not the one that is still dependent on such concrete figures of the spirit. Secondly, this precondition is not already contained as an existence (Vorhandensein) in the concept of the idea, but emerges from the logical execution (Vollzug) of the idea itself. As the result of the self-determining idea, it is a determined idea, i.e. one of the specifications of the singular idea. In contrast to the idea of cognition as a phase of mediation, it can only be an immediate specification of the idea

itself. Thirdly, this precondition is demanded by the “concrete concept of cognition” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 470). Started from this presupposition, cognition must not become an abstract being. Conversely, it must gain from this the unequivocal, concrete and fundamental determination that essentially belongs to it. To be more precise: from this precondition, cognition must emerge as a subjective but self-referential structure, namely the “grasping of the notion itself” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 470).

Based on the research results so far, it is readily apparent that the three conditions posed above have already been fulfilled by life as an idea. The fulfilment of the first condition, namely the legitimacy of the purely logical property of life, has already been satisfied at the beginning of Hegel's logical system. The execution of the second condition, according to which life must be conceptualised as the immediate phase of the idea, has just been indicated in the above paragraph. Likewise, the third condition has already been accomplished in the transition from the genus process of life to the universality itself, namely to the idea of cognition.

Furthermore, the necessity of the life-idea as a precondition of the cognition-idea (the idea of cognition) lies especially in the inner-logical continuity of the idea itself<sup>7</sup>. This logical continuity presents itself as an ongoing process of adequacy and adequation. In this process, the idea from life, i.e. from the immediate adequacy of the notion and objectivity, passes over into an idea opposed to it, namely the cognition-idea, and once again it leads to a stage of adequation that is already freed from the substantial form of the life and proceeds on the new modified basis (Fulda, 2004: 91). Consequently, it is obvious that the adequation-process of the processual idea and the progressing to the idea of the cognition must begin from the life as a precondition. This also refers to another reason for the priority of the life-idea over the cognition-idea, namely the defence of scepticism, according to which the cognition is understood merely as a special function of the specific living being, i.e. of human life, can be refuted on the basis of the life-idea alone (Fulda, 2004: 91). For while the other theories of epistemology, such as those of empiricism and realism, stand still only in the external phenomena of life and cognition, according to Hegel, the immanent deduction of the cognition from the life is understood on the background of the ongoing process of adequation of the idea. Finally, it should be noted that - from the perspective of the history of philosophical concepts - there is no alternative for the

precondition of the cognition-idea. Life alone has the right to be the precondition of the idea of cognition.

c) The idea of life as the logical correlate and the truth sought in the stage of the idea of cognition

Besides the shown roles for the precondition of the idea of cognition, life also makes the logically necessary correlate in the reflection structure of the same. In the inner-logically continuous process of the idea itself, life and cognition are not externally related. Concretely, from the genesis of the cognition-idea, it is achieved as the “free genus for itself” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 8: 377) or “the universality of the idea becoming for itself” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 486) through the genus process of life. The elevation that occurs here generates immediately a twofold meaning: on the one hand, the idea is the judgement or self-differentiation (Ur-teil), whereby the differentiated is no longer the object, but the notion with the subjective form; on the other hand, it is the further judgement to repel itself from itself as totality and to presuppose itself initially as an external universe (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 8: 377).

Through this logical movement, the idea of cognition gains simple abstract universality as its determination and existence (Dasein), but at the same time loses its original substantial connection with objectivity. In the idea of cognition, the notion is therefore no longer submerged in its objectivity. However, as the subjective, it is still in relation with the objective and refers to the idea to be presupposed or immediate, namely the idea of life. In this relation, the idea as the finite cognition allows the life to shine in it (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 8: 393). For the subjective idea, “the objective is the found immediate world or the idea as life in the phenomenon of individual existence” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 8: 377-378). The two ideas thus stand in the relation of reflection, which represents their relativity to each other, and the determination of finitude. They are indeed “identical in themselves or as life” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 8: 377), but not yet set to be identical. Consequently, the idea of cognition must not be understood as another larger totality outside of life. Rather, it is itself the totality which is the unique idea in the phase of the liberated being of its objectivity. In this phase, the idea of life is neither lost from our view nor fully sublated, but reflected as an external moment.

Furthermore, the life-idea can be seen as the sought truth in the reflection structure of the idea of cognition. The idea of cognition as the grasping of the notion itself represents a self-referential and closed structure. In this structure, the unitary notion constitutes both the subjective side, namely the cognizing subject, and the objective side, namely the object. However, in this cognition, the idea has not yet fully accomplished its task. It is not the highest formation of self-relation, but “the absolute idea itself still in its phenomenon” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 497), i.e. in the immediate, subjective, and limited form. Since the substantial vital connection of the subjectivity with the objectivity, as shown above, is excluded from the outset of this stage, the cognition-idea has its reality only in the abstract universality. Therefore, the lost life as truth, i.e. the unity of the notion and objectivity, is sought again (Fulda, 2004: 94). However, life as the focused truth is not simply to be returned to the earlier logical course in this seeking, but to be restituted on the new basis of the subjectivity of the cognition-idea. Altogether, the life-idea plays the role in the stage of the cognition-idea itself for the external moment, the logically necessary correlate and the sought truth in the reflection structure of the limited cognition.

d) The sublated life-idea as imperishable life of the absolute idea

The above-mentioned process of the idea of cognition, in which life is sought as the true, is again doubled into two special processes, i.e. a theoretical process of cognition under the idea of the true and a practical process of cognition and realization under the idea of the good. For the sublation of the one-sidedness of cognition, the two processes stand in diametrically opposite direction to each other: one process is to sublate the one-sidedness of the subjectivity of the cognition-idea by means of the acceptance of the given objective world in itself in the representing and thinking, and to fulfill its abstract certainty with this objectivity, which is regarded as true (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 8: 378); the other process is to sublate the one-sidedness of the given objectivity, which, in opposition to the former process, is only considered as the essence-less phenomenon, the empty aggregate of coincidences and void forms that exist in themselves, to determine it through the interior of the subjective, which is here regarded as the truly existing objective. Through this doubled process, the universal limitation of the idea of cognition, i.e. the duality of the given



objectivity and the subjectivity of the activity of cognition, is overcome. The result of this movement of sublation is “life that has come back to itself from the difference and finiteness of cognition and has become identical with it through the activity of the notion” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 8: 387), namely the absolute idea as the absolute knowledge.

Hereby the absolute idea, namely the notion of the idea as “the unique object and content” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 549) of this monistic idealism is attained. The absolute idea is not only the unity of the theoretical and the practical idea, and of the life-idea and the cognition-idea, but also the united system of all determinations of thought, as the speculative method of notional (*begreifend*) cognition. Notwithstanding the rich connotations of the absolute idea, our discussion about it must be limited to its relation to life. The absolute idea, as already indicated, is the sublation of the duality of finite cognition, and the merging of the notion with itself in its objectivity, which represents “the return to life” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 549). The immediate impetus of this return lies in the last stage of finite cognition, namely the idea of good, which determines the objective world according to its own purpose and is identical with itself by virtue of its purpose realization, implying the insight in favor of its sublation, and the idea in its otherness has its own objectivity as its object (*Gegenstand*) and thus shows its free essentiality as well as its overarching subjectivity (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 546-547). However, it doesn't yet step beyond the limitation of the subjective idea. It still reproduces the subjective attitude of the objective notion, appears as an action and leads again and again to the repetition of the precondition of the unrealized purpose. The logically inevitable return to the life, which results directly from the overcoming of the bad infinite progress of the purpose realization of the good, is “the inner recollection of the precondition of theoretical behavior” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 8: 386), and the object in itself is the substantial and true life. By means of this Platonic terminology - recollection (*ἀνάμνησις*), which according to Hegel has a deep sense of thought for the cognition of universality and the insight of cognition itself (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 19: 44-45), the backward foundation (*Begründung*) of the circular movement of the idea, which, however, is at the same time identical with the forward continuation of the same, is demonstrated in the context of the sublation of the opposition of the subjective and objective idea.

The emergence of the “imperishable life” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 549) of the absolute idea represents the restoration of the unity of the notion and objectivity, which is initially presented in its immediate form, namely in the idea of life. In the statement about the return to life, the dimension of the immediacy of the notional objective identity is emphasized, which no longer emerges as the individualized (*vereinzelt*) form of existence from the living individuals, but rises to the the speculative idea that is universal with free existence. However, this form of immediacy is also sublated in accordance with the former logical course. In the generative development of speculative logic, the unity of immediacy and mediation is continuously carried out. The sublated life as the new mediated immediacy of the idea can be understood as follows: it is the execution of the absolute purpose and the truthful objectivity, “as objective world, whose inner reason and real existence is the notion” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 6: 548). As immediate reality and substance, it determines itself as the free subject, which knows itself as the notion determined in and for itself. In contrast to the previous idea of finite cognition, such an idea also shows that the cognition in the absolute idea unites with the practical idea and is both analytical and synthetic as the speculative procedure.

Besides, attention must be drawn to the fact that the imperishable life of the absolute idea is neither a metaphorical expression, nor a pre-Kantian (*vorkantisch*) cosmological concept, but such a concept of life is significant both for ontology and for the epistemology of speculative idealism. From the view of Hegel's new-model ontology, this imperishable life plays the role of the support and substrate of the absolute idea, wherein all achievements gained through logical development are preserved and “no transition” (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 8: 388) takes place longer within the speculative logic. In the sense of speculative epistemology, the imperishable life of logical idea offers the life the spirit, in which the spirit is not taken as the medium of appearance (*Erscheinungsmedium*) of natural life, but as the subject of life itself, the conceptual origin and the logical foundation (Fulda, 2006: 33-35)<sup>8</sup>. From the whole perspective of the Hegelian system, the connection between the two concepts of life lies in the fact that the grasped (*begreifend*) knowledge of the spirit returns to the logical absolute idea and the core structure of the spirit in its pureness unites with the logical idea. Accordingly, for the imperishable life of the absolute idea, the life of the spirit is its successor notion and the roof beam

of real philosophical knowledge that is built on it as a foundation. Thus, the imperishable life of the absolute idea is significant in the above several respects, and the genesis of this relevant notion is inevitably to be traced back to the idea of life.

## CONCLUSION

The above logical-operational reconstruction of the three moments of the life-idea shows that the three processes of life as active syllogistic inferences are essentially permeated by the life-idea itself as an inner-logically continuous notional movement, a forming activity and a moving purpose within itself. Accordingly, the result of our re-examination of the immanent unity of life-idea is: the transition points of its moments are continuous, corresponding to the principle of speculative idealism and the requirement of immanent deduction. On the basis of the above reconstruction, the role of life in the inner-logical development process of the idea itself can be summarised as follows: the idea of life is the starting point and the precondition of the idea of cognition, then it turns into the idea of cognition. Finally, in the sense of sublation or elevation, with the self-modified content, it becomes the imperishable life of the absolute idea. Such a concept is therefore significant for comprehending the structure of Hegelian idea, i.e. his core concept and principle, which is why it is considered as one of Hegel's most important philosophical heritage.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Ohashi's original sentence reads: "Wenn ihm noch das längere Leben geschenkt worden wäre, und er die genügend Zeit gehabt hätte, hätte er vor allem das Kapitel, das Leben stark überarbeitet". Cf. Ryosuke Ohashi: *Das Problem des "Lebens" in der Hegelschen Logik*. In: *Hegel-Jahrbuch 2015, Hegel gegen Hegel II*, ed. by Andreas Arndt, Myriam Gerhard, Jure Zovko, Berlin: Akademie Press, 2015, p. 521.

<sup>2</sup> On the notion and its relationship with the idea of life, cf. Klaus Düsing: *Aufhebung der Tradition im dialektischen Denken. Untersuchungen zu Hegels Logik, Ethik und Ästhetik*. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Press, 2012, p. 192.

<sup>3</sup> It is obvious that a figure of the organism valid for all life phenomena is not conceptualized by Hegel. Hegel has already noticed, that there are animals that only have the moment of reproduction, and that the sensibility and irritability are not yet separated in lower living beings (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 9: 438). Thus, instead of an abstract universal conception, Hegel rather designed an ideal type of organism to which the

lower organisms in the trend of their development go forward. The lower organisms and the higher ones constitute a stepladder to realize the life-idea (Hegel, 1986 Vol. 9: 503-505).

<sup>4</sup> There is a play on words here: the German word Urteil (“judgment”) connotes a “parting”, and primordial division = Ur-teil.

<sup>5</sup> What should be kept in mind is that “presupposing” in German is “voraussetzen”, i.e. “prepositing”. The connection between “presupposing” and “positing” is lost in English.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Klaus Düsing: *Die Idee des Lebens in Hegels Logik*. In: *Hegels Philosophie der Natur - Beziehungen zwischen empirischer und spekulativer Naturerkenntnis*, ed. by R.-P. Horstmann and M.J. Petry. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1986, pp. 286-287.

<sup>7</sup> This aspect is closely related to the third condition mentioned above and can be seen as its complement.

<sup>8</sup> For an analysis and re-examination of the conditions of the aforementioned imperishable life as the conceptual foundation for the life of the spirit, cf. Hans Friedrich Fulda: *Das Leben des Geistes*. In: *Hegel-Jahrbuch 2006, Das Leben denken* (Erster Teil), ed. by Andreas Arndt, Paul Cruysberghs, Andrzej Przylebski, Akademie-Press, Berlin 2006, pp. 33-35.

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