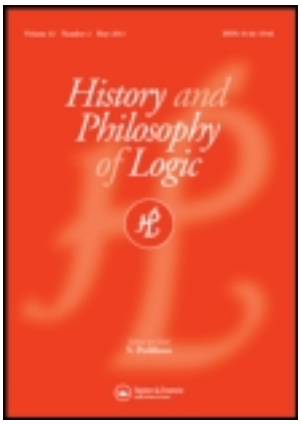
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Dialectic and Dialetheism

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Dialectic and Dialetheism

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In this article, I consider the possibility of interpreting Hegel's dialectic as dialetheism. After a first basic recapitulation about the meaning of the words 'dialetheism' and 'dialectic' and a consideration of Priest's own account of the relation between dialectical and dialetheic logic in 1989, I discuss some controversial issues, not directly considered by Priest. As a matter of fact, the reflection on paraconsistent logics and dialetheism has enormously grown in recent years. In addition, the reception of Hegel's logic and metaphysics has also impressively improved. So I suggest that the discussion about the binomial dialectic/dialetheism should be reopened, on these new bases.

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1. Introduction

Classically, interpretations of Hegel's dialectics either take Hegel's claims against the law of non-contradiction (LNC) as a serious logical argument, and therefore do not take Hegel's philosophy seriously, or consider Hegel's philosophy as a serious enterprise, and therefore deny that his critique of LNC should be taken seriously.

According to a widespread view, whose most authoritative exponent is probably Karl Popper, Hegel's dialectic is unscientific because it implies a refusal of the LNC. Popper writes:

> [Hegel's idea of the fertility of contradictions] amounts to an attack upon the 'law of contradiction' […] of traditional logic, a law which asserts that two contradictory statements can never be true together, or that a statement consisting of the conjunction of two contradictory statements must always be rejected as false on purely logical grounds

For this reason: 'If we are prepared [like Hegel] to put up with contradictions, criticism, and with it all intellectual progress, must come to an end'.[1] And on a similar line Charles Sanders Peirce observes: 'As far as I know, Hegelians profess to be self-contradictory'.[2]

On the other side, many commentators deny that Hegel criticised LNC. In doing so, they generally try to save dialectic from the charge of being irrational and unscientific. According to John McTaggart,

> if the dialectic rejected the LNC, it would reduce itself to an absurdity, by rendering all arguments, and even all assertions, unmeaning […]. In fact, so far is the dialectic from denying the LNC, that it is especially based on it.[3]

[1] *Popper 1965* (pp. 316–17).
[2] *Peirce 1868* (p. 57).
[3] *McTaggart 2000* (p. 15).

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More recently, Robert Brandom claims that 'Hegel radicalizes LNC and places it at the very centre of his thought',[4] while according to Robert Pippin, Robert Hanna and Jon Stewart 'That Hegel rejected LNC' is 'a Myth' which has to be revised.[5]

Significantly, if one adopts Popper's attitude, it is impossible to give an account of Hegel's specific meaning of dialectic as: 'the fundamental tool in order to distinguish truth from falsity'[6] or as 'radically different from sophistic, which merely brings one's ideas altogether into confusion [and does] away with the difference between true and false'.[7] Conversely, by adopting the opposite attitude, asserting that Hegel did not 'really' criticise LNC, or when he spoke of 'contradictions' actually intended something else, it is impossible to give a meaningful justification of some of Hegel's claims, such as famously 'the LNC has no formal value for reason'[8] or 'contradictio est regula veri, non contradictio falsi'.[9]

In this panorama, dialetheism – the perspective according to which the admission of some true contradictions does not imply any 'explosion' of logic and rationality – plays a fundamental role. It may help to understand why the notion of dialectics may imply both, a critique of LNC and the defence of truth in opposition to falsity.

In what follows, I first briefly recapitulate the meaning of the words 'dialetheism' and 'dialectic', then I present Priest's own (*1989*) account of the relation between dialectical and dialetheic logic in *Dialectic and Dialetheic*. In the last part, I discuss some controversial issues, not directly considered by Priest. As a matter of fact, the reflection on paraconsistent logics and dialetheism has enormously grown in recent years.[10] In addition, the reception of Hegel's logic and metaphysics has also impressively improved.[11] So I suggest that the discussion about the binomial dialectic/dialetheism should be reopened, on these new bases.

2. Dialetheism

The terms 'dialetheia/dialetheism' were coined by Priest and Routley in 1981, and result from 'di-' (two/double) and 'aletheia' (truth).[12] A dialetheia is a true contradiction (a double truth), that is: a true proposition whose negation is also true. Dialetheism is the view according to which there are some dialetheias (true-and-false propositions) and this does not imply any destruction of logic.

There is no need here to explore the technical implications of the perspective. It is possibly useful only to take into account some basic points: (1) the difference between contrariety and contradiction, (2) the notion of 'true contradiction', (3) the nexus between contradiction and self-referential paradoxes, (4) the way in which dialetheic logic tries to avoid trivialism.

(1) Contradictory propositions are mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive (they cannot be both true, and cannot be both untrue), whereas contrary propositions are only mutually exclusive (they cannot be both true, but can be both untrue). This is an obvious distinction, but, as a matter of fact, many authors misunderstood Hegel's dialectic arguing that when Hegel talked about 'contradictions', he actually meant 'contrariety' (Adolf Trendelenburg);[13] or claimed that Hegel confounded the two concepts (Benedetto Croce, Theodor

[4] *Brandom 2002* (p. 179).
[5] See the chapter about *The Myth that Hegel Rejected the Law of Non Contradiction* in *Stewart* ed., *1996*, pp. 238–84.
[6] Hegel in dialogue with Goethe in *Eckermann 1920* (374f).
[7] *Hegel 1971 Werke 19* (p. 61).
[8] *Hegel 1971 Werke 2* (p. 230).
[9] See note 8 (p. 533).
[10] See *Priest, Beall and Armour-Garb 2004*, *Priest 2006*, *Beall 2007*, *Beall 2009*, as well as Priest's comments to the second edition in *Priest 2006*.
[11] See *Schick 2010*, *Han 2007*, *Berto 2005*, *Redding 2007* as well as the papers collected in *Nuzzo (ed.) 2010*.
[12] For a brief and clear overview, see *Berto and Priest 2008*.
[13] *Trendelenburg 1840* (50ff.), see also *Überweg 1874* (23ff.).

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Adorno, Gilles Deleuze).[14] According to *Priest 1989* instead, when Hegel spoke of 'Widerspruch', he generally meant the relation between contradictories, that is, contradictions properly intended.

(2) The expression 'true contradiction' should be intended, epistemically, as an effective contradiction: 'a contradiction we cannot eliminate'.[15] Contradictions may occur, evidently, but very often we can get rid of them. In everyday or scientific language and thought, there can be lots of only apparent cases of contradictions. For instance, one of the two terms is in fact false. Or it may happen that the contradiction can be 'dissolved', through 'parametrisation',[16] or that the two sentences are not true 'at the same time' or 'in the same respect' (like Aristotle said). The typical way of getting rid of a contradiction in logic is the reductio ad absurdum, according to which from a certain premise α I draw $\beta \wedge \neg\beta$, so I get rid of α, and consistency is restored. When none of these procedures and devices is applicable, we say there is a 'true' (effective) contradiction.

(3) In the specific, logical meaning of the term, a contradiction is thus an irreducible couple of sentences one of which is the negation of the other, that is a sentence of the form $\alpha \wedge \neg\alpha$ (where the negation works as a contradiction operator).[17] Classical cases are paradoxes, such as Liar-like or self-referential paradoxes. Given the sentence β which says: 'β is false', if we ask: is β true or false? We have that if it is false, then it must be true (as it says to be false), and if it is true, what β says must be the case, and so β is false. The occurring of such kind of contradictions represents one of the main motivations for endorsing dialetheism.[18]

But are Liar-like paradoxes cases of irreducible, true contradictions? The classical argument is that we can avoid the occurrence of such anomalous cases simply by distinguishing levels of language, so eliminating self-reference and self-predication (this is the Russell–Tarski hierarchic strategy, but also the core of Aristotle's critique of Megarian paradoxes).[19] 'Truth value gap' theorists have argued that Liar-like paradoxes are rather neither true nor false sentences: so β is not true, and it is not false either. In the dialetheist perspective, both hierarchical and truth value gap strategies fail in virtue of different kinds of Liar's 'revenge'.[20] Thus, dialetheism admits that trying to solve paradoxes is the wrong strategy. Better is to accept the simple evidence that 'there are' true contradictions. An evidence that is otherwise confirmed by many other cases (see here Section 5).

(4) Stated this, the problem is to avoid *trivialism*, that is: the thesis that everything is true. The classical pseudo-Scotus argument, consisting in saying that given a contradiction everything is true (so everything is contradictory), is the most relevant argument against any criticism of LNC (and was used by Popper against Hegel). Paraconsistent logics contrast this classical assumption, also traditionally known as 'ex contradictione quodlibet' (ECQ): for any α and β: $\alpha, \neg\alpha + \beta$. Dialetheists call the classical account of entailment 'explosive' as the presence of a contradiction implies this sort of explosion of the theory or system.

[14] *Croce 2006* (59ff.), *Deleuze 1994* (pp. 50–51), *Adorno 1975* (139ff.), *Ficara 2009* (87ff.).

[15] For an interpretation of 'true contradictions' in terms of 'irreducible contradictions', see *D'Agostini 2009a*, (137ff.) and *D'Agostini 2009b* (33ff.).

[16] On parametrisation, see *Priest 1995*, Chapter 10.

[17] See *Priest 1999*.

[18] Even if it does not represent the primary motivation for the development of a dialectical logic, the analysis of paradoxes plays an important role also in Hegel's philosophy. Hegel considered paradoxes (in particular, the Megarian ones he examined in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*) exactly as a dialetheist would do, as cases of true contradictions. For a detailed consideration of Hegel's analysis of Eubulides' arguments, compared with contemporary reflections on paradoxes, see *D'Agostini 2009a* (pp. 203–23) and *D'Agostini 2011*.

[19] See *Aristotle Metaphysics IX*, 3, 1047a 17–22 as well as *Aristotle Metaphysics IV*, 5 and *Berti 2004* (pp. 195–207).

[20] See *Priest, Beall, and Armour-Garb 2004*, *Beall 2007*, *Field 2008*.

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Accordingly, entailment is paraconsistent if and only if it is not explosive.[21] This is basically obtained by assuming that disjunctive syllogism (which is a capital rule for the ECQ) works in classical cases, but it does not work when a contradiction is involved. As a matter of fact, you may have that α is true and false, and β is false, so: $\alpha \vee \beta$, $\neg\alpha + \beta$ fails, as $\alpha \vee \beta$ will be true, $\neg\alpha$ will be true as well, but β, the conclusion, will not be true.

3. Dialectic

Hegel's dialectic has been the origin of endless discussions in the whole history of its reception, since the last years of Hegel's academic activity in Berlin. A typical misunderstanding is exemplified by the dialogue between Karl Ludwig Michelet and his friend Henri Tollin. Michelet observed: 'In Hegel one can find the most severe monotheism unified with pantheism, idealism fused in one with materialism'. Tollin reacted: 'Ah, yes, he turns the coat as soon as the wind turns'. 'Oh! No!' replied Michelet: 'He rather has one coat for every wind!'[22]

The problem is that Hegel applied dialectic everywhere, in his published and unpublished works. But he did never write a monographic study on the subject, and what is more, he only sporadically defined what he meant by the concept.[23] This may be the reason why many commentators have even denied that the development of a theory of dialectic was what Hegel really wanted, arguing that dialectics has to be understood as somehow a primary concept, to be accepted by fiat, and only considering the concrete cases of dialectic development; or definitely claiming that trying to determine the unitary meaning of dialectical method does not make any sense.[24]

Against these claims, there is the evidence that Hegel actually mentioned dialectic in many crucial passages, and what he says reveals the extreme importance of the concept for his thought. In Hegel's writings, dialectic is always connected to three aspects: (1) the notion of 'pure', 'reflexive' thought (dialectic, Hegel says, is 'the logic of reason', insofar as it deals with reflection, that is, self-referential thought); (2) the notion of 'necessary contradiction' (in virtue of which, according to Kant, the logic of reason is a logic of contradiction); (3) the 'movement' of pure thought, that is the movement of thought when it deals with pure, reflexive concepts. In what follows, I will consider these three aspects in more detail.

(1) In the Introduction to the *Encyclopaedia* (Section 11) Hegel defines philosophical thought platonically as dialogue of 'thought with itself', and observes that 'while thus occupied, thought entangles itself in contradictions'. Philosophy consists, so Hegel, in going on thinking, despite the emergence of contradictions: 'Thought, even in this loss, continues, true to itself […] To see that thought in its very nature is *dialectical* and that […] it must fall into contradiction – the negative of itself – is the essence of the philosophical consideration'. In this passage, dialectics is defined as connected to the contradictory nature of reflexive thought (thought thinking about itself), and it is linked to philosophy, as the 'exercise of rendering thought its object'. In Section 48, Hegel specifies the connection of dialectic to philosophical rationality, by focusing on Kant's notion of 'necessary contradictions' of reason. 'The essence of philosophical consideration' is thus to know that antinomies arise not only – as Kant wanted – in the four cosmological concepts, but rather 'in every object, representation, concept and idea' and being aware 'of this property of objects'. 'This

[21] More specifically, paraconsistentism means a family of logics for which contradictions do not imply trivialism, while dialetheism is a theory about the effective existence of some contradictions, which therefore has epistemological, metaphysical, and metalogical upshots. See *Berto and Priest 2008*.

[22] *Nicolin 1971* (pp. 230–31).

[23] See *Schäfer 2001* on the plurality of meanings of dialectics in Hegel's philosophical development.

[24] See *Marconi 1979* (10ff.).

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property can be defined as the dialectical moment of logic'.[25] Also in this passage, Hegel underlines that the philosophical consideration (which implies thought's 'purity', that is, thought's being referred to itself) reveals that every reflexive concept is contradictory.

(2) In Section 81 of the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel explains the meaning of dialectical logic by distinguishing it from scepticism and sophistic. 'The dialectical aspect of understanding/intellect taken in its isolation is identical to scepticism; it contains the mere negation as the result of dialectics'.[26] The 'dialectical moment of understanding/intellect' means 'the intellectual way of dealing with the contradictions arising from thought thinking about itself', a way which is 'merely negative' and as such identical to scepticism. In the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* as well as in the *Essay on Scepticism* and in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel defines ancient scepticism as the insight into the necessarily contradictory nature of pure thought. Ancient scepticism (in Hegel's view) was based on the idea that for every valid statement of reason, 'there is an opposite one which is equally valid' ('pantì lógo lógos ísos antíkeitai'). This view was right, according to Hegel, but the consequences that sophists and ancient sceptics drew from it were fundamentally wrong. They thought that the contradictory nature of reason must lead to a general failure of reason, and to the dismissal of any theoretical inquiry. On the contrary, Hegel holds that the awareness about the 'necessary contradictions' of thought rather implies the individuation of philosophy's specific method.[27] So scepticism is the method, and not the end, of reason.[28]

(3) Dialectics should also be distinguished from a mere 'technique which arbitrarily produces confusion in particular concepts and a mere appearance of contradictions'.[29] In the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel calls this technique 'sophistic' distinguishing it from philosophy and dialectic, and writes: 'This is not a dialectic such as we met with in the Sophists, which merely brings one's ideas altogether into confusion […] this is the dialectic which moves in pure concepts – *the movement of the speculatively logical*'. Coherently, in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel often defines dialectics in terms of 'movement of pure concepts' or 'movement of pure thoughts'.[30] The three phases of this 'movement' are variously characterised.

> Reflection means first of all going beyond their isolated determination putting them [pure concepts] in relation with each other, while through this putting them in relation to each other they are initially maintained in their isolated validity. In contrast, dialectics is an immanent going beyond, where the intellectual determinations' univocity and limitation reveals to be what it is, namely: its negation.[31]

Thus 'dialectic has a positive result […] The rationality of dialectic is therefore, though something thought, and abstract, also concrete.' Differently from intellectual reflection, which considers pure determinations separately, and is therefore abstract, dialectic is both abstract, insofar as it presupposes the reflexive activity of separating and isolating determinations from the flux of thought thinking about itself, and concrete, insofar as it implies a certain critique of this separation and isolation, a critique which makes abstract thought concrete, putting it in motion again. So first concepts are put in relation to each other, then this relation turns out to be destructive, and the integrity of the concept is dispersed, and

[25] *Hegel 1991* (Section 48).
[26] See note 25(Section 81).
[27] See note 7 (p. 359) and refer note 8 (230ff.).
[28] See on this especially *D'Agostini 2009a* (81ff.).
[29] See note 25 (Section 81).
[30] *Hegel 1971 Werke 18* (pp. 275, 303, 305, 319) and refer note 7 (p. 61).
[31] See note 25 (Section 81).

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finally the concept's wholeness is restored. In these two passages, the concreteness of the concept (its complete meaning) is achieved.

If one refers all this to conceptual analysis, to say the simple procedure by which thought inquires into the meaning of its own concepts, it is clear that putting concepts in relation to each other is motivated by *semantic* reasons: any inquiry into the meaning of concepts, ultimately, works in this way. This is properly the reason why dialectics is defined by Hegel 'the movement of pure concepts': it corresponds to the semantic behaviour of conceptual determinations, revealed by conceptual analysis.

4. Priest's account

One of the first detailed comparisons between Hegel's dialectics and dialetheism is the one elaborated by Priest in *Dialectic and Dialetheic* (*1989*). More recently, other authors, such as *Berto 2007c*, *D'Agostini 2009a, 2010, 2011*, and *Redding 2007*, have considered continuities between specific aspects of Hegel's philosophy (the meaning of metaphysics, the concept of truth, the analysis of paradoxes) and dialetheism. In what follows, I will focus on Priest's own account.

In *Dialectic and Dialetheic*, Priest recalls that Hegel distinguished, not unlike Kant and Fichte, between dialectics and formal logic (the Aristotelian logic of his times) and underlined that in dialectical logic LNC fails. Subsequent dialecticians followed this view, while Aristotelian logic developed into Frege/Russell logic. Many modern dialecticians – so Priest – see Frege/Russell logic 'as giving a definitive account of the most abstract norms of correct and scientific thought'.[32] What is more, the view according to which 'accepting contradictions' means giving up 'any kind of scientific activity' – a view held, significantly, by non-logicians, such as, first of all, Popper – is one of the strongest reasons why modern dialecticians have been intimidated into reinterpreting dialectical contradictions. But such a reaction 'is rather naïve. Someone who accepts that there are true contradictions, and therefore that some things are both true (A) and false (¬ A) is hardly going to accept the unargued *assumption* of Frege/Russell logic that truth and falsity are mutually exclusive. Truth and falsity overlap; whence is possible for things of the form A&¬ A to be true'.[33]

According to Priest, the exclusivity of truth and falsity is an *assumption* and, as such, and if the evidence speaks against it, it can and should be re-thought and revised. As a matter of fact, '20th century logicians themselves […] have been under no illusions about the contentious and often shaky nature of some of the assumptions built into the Frege/Russell theory'.[34] Many presuppositions of Frege/Russell logic (that truth and falsity are exhaustive; that all terms denote; that the conditional is truth functional; that existential quantification has existential import) have indeed been questioned. As Priest points out, there are now 'articulated formal theories of logic satisfactory for the purposes of someone who accepts that there are true contradictions, and does not accept the assumption that truth and falsity are mutually exclusive': paraconsistent logics and, more particularly, dialetheism.[35]

While Frege/Russell logic assigns to each sentence one of the truth values T (true) and F (false), dialetheic logic may assign, in addition, both values (true and false). Interestingly, the dialetheic semantics of negation, conjunction, and disjunction are not different from the orthodox ones: ¬ A is true just if A is false and ¬ A is false just if A is true; A&B is true if A is true and B is true, A&B is false just if A is false or B is false. Dialetheic semantics also give the same set of logical truths as orthodox logic.[36] However, the notion of logical

[32] *Priest 1989* (p. 392).
[33] See note 32.
[34] See note 32.
[35] See note 32 (pp. 392–93).
[36] See note 35 (p. 394).

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consequence is different from the traditional one: according to the paraconsistent account of logical consequence, from A&¬ A does not follow B. In *Dialectic and Dialetheic*, Priest also introduces the operator ^such that if A is a sentence (John is happy), ^A is a noun phrase and denotes an object (John's being happy). It is easy to see that 'these semantics are a generalisation of orthodox logic which just cover a case that orthodox logic ignores, and conversely, orthodox logic is just a special case of these semantics which ignores a dialectically important case […] Thus we may stretch Hegel's claim a little as follows: (Frege/Russell) formal logic is perfectly valid in its domain, but dialectical (dialetheic) logic is more general'.[37]

At this point, an important question arises: which is the *domain* of traditional logic, insofar as distinct from dialectics? Priest writes: 'An easy answer is "the consistent" and the dialecticians' answer to the further question: what is the consistent? is "the static is consistent"; only when change enters the picture do contradictions arise'. If true contradictions occur in the domain of movement, as the dialectician holds, then the dialetheic nature of dialectic becomes even more evident and the dialectician is essentially a dialetheist, that is, someone who holds that LNC does not fail always but *only in special cases*:

> At any rate, it is quite compatible with the claim that dialectics is based on dialetheism that dialecticians […] should castigate other writers for contradicting themselves in certain contexts. Those contexts are just not of the kind where a contradiction is to be expected.[38]

So according to Priest dialetheism does contemplate a critical use of *reductio ad absurdum* and 'is compatible with the rigor of a non-trivial formal logic'.[39] In particular, dialetheism does neither 'obliterate the distinction between truth and falsity' nor 'abandon …the idea of entailment and deductive argument'.[40]

So dialectical logic, like dialetheic logic, is an enlargement or an extension of classical logic, and not a true rival of it. An important point (possibly the main), is that dialectical and dialetheic true contradictions do imply a stronger conjunction between a sentence and its negation. The link is not extrinsic, and merely accidental. 'The opposites are so far intertwined that the one cannot exist without the other'.[41] Consequently, Priest claims that 'there should be a more intimate relation between dialectical contradictions than the mere extensional (external) conjunction'.[42] As a matter of fact, for extensional conjunction holds the rule of simplification: $\alpha \wedge \beta + \alpha$ or $\alpha \wedge \beta + \beta$ (Rome is in Italy and the sun shines today, therefore Rome is in Italy). Intensional conjunction, on the contrary, implies a stricter relation between the conjuncts, such that from $\alpha \wedge \beta$ it is not possible to infer only α or only β.

This can be best understood – so Priest – if one considers Hegel's talk about the 'identity in difference', which is '*the* form of a dialectical contradiction, to which all others reduce'. A possible example is the dialectical relation between being-in-itself and being-in-consciousness.[43] 'An object *a* may exist in consciousness *Ca* or out of consciousness (in itself), ¬ *Ca*. Let us write *c* for ^*Ca* , its being in consciousness, and c^* for its being in itself, ^¬ *Ca*'.[44] As Hegel wants, they are related by the identity in difference of opposites: $(c = c^*)\&(c \neq c^*)$. 'Various people in the history of philosophy have seen only one side of

[37] See note 35 (p. 395).
[38] See note 35.
[39] See note 35 (p. 396).
[40] *Norman and Sayers 1980* quoted by *Priest 1989*, See note 35.
[41] *Wetter 1958* quoted by *Priest 1989* (p. 397).
[42] See note 41.
[43] Taken from *Sayers 1985.*
[44] See note 32 (p. 412).

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this contradiction, and have thus landed themselves in awkward philosophical problems'. Dualists (such as Locke) argued for the distinction between thing in itself and thing in consciousness $c \neq c^*$, thus raising the problem of how knowledge is possible. Non-dialectical monists, on the other hand, argued merely that $c = c^*$. This leads to a variety of problems, due to the reduction of c to c^* (typical, for example, of Berkeleyan idealism) or of c^* to c (typical of materialists). The dialectician, however, has seen both sides of the contradiction, avoiding the problems associated with either of the reductionist programs or the problem resulting from the disjuncture between the two. Thus, the dialectician 'sees the recognition of the identity in difference of the thing-within-consciousness and the thing-without-consciousness, $(c = c^*)\&(c \neq c^*)$, as central to an adequate understanding of the nature of cognition'.[45]

5. Dialectics and dialetheism

I will now try to reconsider some basic points of the comparison, by taking into account what specified above, and some new results of recent literature.

5.1. Conceptual and propositional

A preliminary possible objection, which is not explicitly addressed by Priest, needs to be discussed first. *Is a translation of Hegel's dialectic, which is a logic of concepts, in terms of propositional logic legitimate?*

In the above considered passages, dialectics appears to be a *conceptual* logic. It basically deals with the contradictory properties of some concepts or predicates, and their relations. In contrast, dialetheism, like any modern logic, is a propositional logic, which deals with contradictions as pairs of sentences one of which is the negation of the other. To what extent are these two perspectives comparable? What is the relation between conceptual oppositions and contradictory sentences? Priest's operator ^is namely intended to make the comparison possible, but the problem is still open, and has been typically discussed in some of the attempts of formalising dialectical logic since the 1960s.[46] I will only give here a brief account.

It should be noted first that, even if Hegel criticises the sentence form 'p',[47] and considers it unable to grasp conceptual truth, he also considers sentences as the only way we have in order to express conceptual truth.[48] This means that the only way one has in order to express dialectical relations between concepts or properties in natural language are so called 'meaning postulates', that is, sentences that make the implicit incompatibility-relations between concepts explicit.[49]

Yet, according to Berto as well as to Brandom, the conceptual properties considered by Hegel do not express contradictory, but merely incompatible (i.e. contrary) relations.[50] Priest holds instead[51] that when Hegel spoke of 'Widerspruch' he meant the relation between contradictory pairs (of concepts or sentences), that is, logical contradictions. I think the latter approach is preferable, and I will try to show why.

[45] See note 32 (p. 412).

[46] See *Kosok, Apostel, Marconi* in *Marconi (ed.) 1979*. See also *Fulda 1978a* and *Fulda 1978b* as well as *Flach 1964* (pp. 55–64).

[47] On Hegel's critique of the form of sentence see among others Bowman in *Bowman (ed.) 2007* (pp. 271–82).

[48] See *Bodhammer 1969*.

[49] See *Berto 2007b* (19ff.).

[50] The origins of this interpretation go back to the debate about the meaning of dialectics in the second half of the nineteenth century. That dialectical oppositions express contrary rather than contradictory relations is a view defended among both Hegelians (as in *Bullinger 1884*) and anti-Hegelians (as in *Trendelenburg 1840* and *Überweg 1874*).

[51] For an interpretation of Hegel's oppositions as contradictory relations see also Routley and Meyer in *Marconi (ed.) 1979* (pp. 324–53), *Gadamer 1976* (20ff.), *Düsing 2012* (11ff. and 93ff.), *Schäfer 2001*, *Schick 2010*.

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The first important point is that the propositional nature of the contradiction *strictu sensu* ($\alpha \wedge \neg\alpha$) does not clearly figure in the most well known of Hegel's reflection on logic, but it appears in the clearest way in the early Jena Essay on *Scepticism and Philosophy*, which is the germ cell of Hegel's mature conception of dialectics.[52]

In this text (as well as in other writings of the early Jena period), Hegel specifically focuses on the concept of contradiction. He underlines that what he calls 'concepts of reason', such as 'truth', 'essence', 'existence', necessarily entail contradictions. He recalls in this context some examples drawn from Spinoza's *Ethics*, in particular the sentences: '*causa sui* is that whose essence implies existence' or 'God is the immanent cause of the world'. The term *causa* means a relation to something different from what causes. This meaning is negated by the term 'sui' ('of itself') which means the relation of the cause to itself. The term 'essence' implies a negation of the term 'existence' as well as 'cause' implies a negation of the expression 'immanent'. Hegel calls these concepts 'rational' and explains that they derive from the philosophical way of thinking. (As in Kant's terminology, 'reason' is here the way of thinking which generates necessary contradictions.) The concepts of reason, such as the notions of *causa sui*, or of God immanent and transcendent at the same time, or the concept of one which is also many; or the concept of man as at the same time free and subjected to necessity, etc., do entail differences and oppositions. For this peculiar nature of philosophical concepts, the LNC, as well as the logic based on it, is insufficient. 'The so called LNC has no formal value for reason, so that every sentence of reason about concepts must entail a violation of it; that a sentence is merely formal means for reason: affirming it alone, without affirming at the same time its contradictory opposite, is false […] every true philosophy contains this negative part, this eternal violation of the LNC'.[53] A more appropriate law for philosophical rationality, capable of expressing the peculiar nature of the concepts of reason, Hegel suggests, would be the already mentioned sceptic principle: *pantì lógo lógos ísos antíkeitai.*

In this passage, it clearly emerges that Hegel by 'Widerspruch' means *conceptual*, but also *propositional* contradiction. He openly says that the statements of reason or philosophy result from the conjunction of 'contradictorily opposed' sentences *or* concepts. Which means that, in his intention, the reducibility of conceptual to sentential and vice versa was somehow natural, and pretty clear. In this perspective, what I think is the most important point also emerges. It is true that Hegel criticises LNC, but his critique is circumscribed to a limited field, the one of 'Vernunfterkenntnisse' (concepts of reason). 'LNC has no formal meaning *for reason'*, '*philosophy* entails an eternal violation of this law', Hegel says. The mature *Wissenschaft der Logik* adopts the sceptic insight ('for every statement about reason there is an opposite one which is equally valid') as its programmatic principle. However, its application is circumscribed to the analysis of the contents and semantic behaviours of rational concepts.

According to the program sketched in the *Essay on Scepticism*, the meanings of the concepts analysed in the mature *Science of Logic* are expressed through couples of sentences one of which is the negation of the other. The concepts analysed in Hegel's *Science of Logic* are universal abstract nouns like 'Sein', 'Differenz', 'das Unendliche', 'das Endliche'. As Fulda has reconstructed,[54] the meaning of 'Sein', 'Differenz' and so on, is expressed in the *Science of Logic* through sentences of the form: 'der (die, das) t_1 ist der (die, das) t_2', for instance: 'das Sein ist das Nichts' or 'der (die, das) t_1 ist t_2', for example, 'Das Endliche ist unendlich'. The nature of these concepts is such that for every sentence expressing their meanings ('the finite is infinite', 'the concept of being is identical with the concept of

[52] See *Verra 2007* (pp. 55–64), *Düsing 1973* (pp. 119–30), *Vieweg 1999* and *Vieweg 2007*.
[53] See note 8 (p. 230).
[54] *Fulda 1978b* and *Berto 2007b* (21ff.).

nothing', etc.) one has always to admit the equal validity of the respective negation ('the finite is not infinite', 'the concept of being is not identical with the concept of nothing'). In this sense, an interpretation of the relations between concepts in terms of sentences and propositional logic does not only seem perfectly plausible, but it seems to correspond to what Hegel himself does in his *Science of Logic*.

5.2. Dialectics and formal logic

A second classical objection is the following: *is Hegel's critique of formal logic to be applied to the general enterprise of logic, in the modern sense of the term?* This question can ultimately be traced back to the question whether Hegel's logic *is* properly a 'logic', in the contemporary meaning of the term. It is a complex issue, which would require historical considerations about both the meaning of logic and its misfortunes in the European transcendental-idealistic tradition.[55] Again, I only limit myself here to fix some basic points.

First, Hegel's logic is not and cannot be *mathematical*, in neither of the two main possible meanings of the term: it makes no use of mathematical symbols and devices; it is not moulded on mathematical reasoning. And furthermore, as I have stressed above, Hegel's logic 'of concept' is to be applied to philosophy. Hegel's logic is a *philosophical* logic. As *Peckhaus 1997* reconstructs (see also *Apostel 1979*), Hegel held that philosophy's scientific method cannot be derived from mathematics: 'A philosophy which tries to be a science cannot borrow its method from a subordinate science such as mathematics'.[56] 'Wanting to fix [the concept] through spatial figures and algebraic signs in order to achieve a merely external visual satisfaction and a mechanic, blind consideration', Hegel observes in the *Science of Logic* 'is useless'.[57] According to Hegel, natural language is thus the best way of expressing concepts. So I would suggest that Hegel's dialectical logic is *philosophical* at least in three senses: because it corresponds to the typically philosophical effort to make clear natural language and thought; because it institutionally belongs to philosophy, as academic discipline; finally, and more interestingly, because it is 'the logic of philosophy'. This last point is specifically stressed by Croce,[58] and is confirmed by any occurrence of the concept of 'logic' in Hegel's work.

A second point concerns the meaning of 'formal' in the expression 'formal logic'. Is Hegel's logic *formal* or not? As a matter of fact, Hegel nominally criticised formal logic, and this could discourage any attempt to consider dialectic from the point of view of dialetheism, which is a formal logic, indisputably, and in a clear and strong meaning of the term. And yet, the individuation of dialectical regularities in the semantic behaviour of conceptual determinations corresponds to a 'formal' analysis.[59]

Dialectic ultimately *is* for Hegel the form of conceptual analysis. But it should be noted that *form* in Hegel's dialectic corresponds to the proper meaning of *morphé*, which Goethe stressed in his naturalistic inquiries as a *generative* principle.[60] Is modern logic also *formal* in this sense? In a sense yes, it is. Frege was perfectly aware of this generative notion of form, when he wrote that 'theorems stay within axioms not like a beam in a house, but like a plant in the seed'.[61]

Besides, Hegel's critique of formalisms is connected to truth. Logic in the contemporary meaning deals with truth (as validity is anyhow defined as truth-preservation), though

[55] *D'Agostini 2000* (189ff.) provides a first analysis of this sort. For an inquiry into the several senses in which logic can be said to be 'formal' see *Novaes 2011* (pp. 303–32), though in this analysis Hegel's conception is not taken into account.
[56] *Hegel 1971 Werke 5* (p. 16) quoted by *Peckhaus 1997* (p. 122).
[57] *Hegel 1971 Werke 6* (p. 295).
[58] *Croce 2006* (p. 11ff.).
[59] See on this Apostel in *Marconi (ed.) 1979* (pp. 85–113).
[60] On Goethe's concept of form see *Cislaghi 2008* (172f.).
[61] *Frege 1884* (Section 8).

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not properly with the effective, realistic truth of our usual inquiries, but rather with the *assumption* of truth, as related to abstract domains, or to axioms, or possible worlds.[62] In this respect, Hegel's criticism parallels Kant's criticism to 'formal' as *uninterested in the content*. Traditional logic, Hegel says, entails only the 'formal' conditions of true knowledge, it 'neither grasps truth nor can be considered as a way towards truth' because 'what is essential in relation to truth, namely content, is explicitly let outside of its field'.[63] So Hegel's logic is not formal in the sense of pure truth-functionality admitted by classical logic (uninterested in content), but is formal in the sense that it is aimed at individuating the valid form of (philosophical, conceptual) reasoning. And this is a kind of 'formal' admitted by contemporary non-classical logics (such as relevant logics).

Finally, Hegel's observations about the formal logic of his time and on the attempts (carried on by Leibniz, Euler and Lambert) to express thought through figures and signs, would ultimately, as Apostel observes, condemn every instrument of communication, natural language included. As Hegel himself puts it: 'no language is able to express a whole whose elements are connected organically'.[64] And yet, Hegel uses natural language in order to express conceptual developments. So if one thinks that Hegel actually used natural language, though considering it insufficient in order to express conceptual properties, it is possible to argue that formalisms, though limited and insufficient, can be successfully employed in order to express dialectical conceptual relations. This view is programmatically endorsed by those who, since the 1960s, have tried to formalise dialectics. What is more, contemporary, non-classical logics, 'claiming that language develops consciously and unconsciously in force of the interaction between the common substrate (natural language) and an indefinite multiplicity of signs own developed' embody the very spirit of dialectics. They 'apply dialectics to the problem of symbolism'.[65]

In conclusion, attempts to consider dialectics from a logical point of view (in the contemporary non-classical meaning of the term 'logic') seem to be fundamentally Hegelian in spirit.

5.3. Conceptuality and reality

All this should deserve a more detailed analysis. For the present needs, I think it may be sufficient in order to address the central question: *is dialectics really different from trivialism, the view according to which every contradiction is true and therefore everything is true?*

As I have shown (Section 2.), dialetheists claim that *some*, very specific sentences are truly contradictory, and distinguish thereby themselves from trivialists. Hegel, instead, defends the sceptical principle according to which, for any *p*, not-*p* also obtains (is equally true), and contradictions arise not only – as Kant wanted – in the four cosmological concepts, but rather 'in every object, representation, concept and idea'. Thus there seems to be a relevant difference between dialetheism and dialectics, on this point, and Hegel seems to be a trivialist more than a dialetheist.

And yet, if my interpretation is correct, it is not so. If one takes into account what Hegel stresses in his definitions of 'dialectics' (that the sceptical principle is only valid in the domain of philosophy and concepts of reason, that 'being aware that contradictions arise in every object, representation, concept' is – so Hegel – the specificity of 'the philosophical consideration', that is, of 'thought thinking about itself'), then it is clear that dialectical logic, and Hegel's theory of contradiction, are indeed limited to a very specific domain, the one of self-referential thought, variously called by Hegel the field of 'pure concepts', of

[62] See, for instance, *Read 1995* (5ff.).
[63] See *Hegel 1971 Werke 5* (p. 36).
[64] Hegel quoted by Apostel in *Marconi (ed.) 1979* (p. 88).
[65] Apostel in *Marconi (ed.) 1979* (p. 90).

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'concepts of reason (*Vernunfterkenntnisse*)', 'the conceptual', 'the logical (*das Logische*)'. This is a crucial point, which is neglected by all major attempts to interpret Hegel's dialectics from the perspective of modern formal logic.[66]

To put things in a very simple way, if we ask: *what kinds of true contradictions are there?* The answer of dialetheists is:

- The paradoxes of self-reference
- Transition-states
- Some of Zeno's paradoxes concerning local motion
- Borderline cases of vague predicates
- Multi-criterial predicates
- Certain legal situations

Hegel instead, if the analysis carried on here is correct, only acknowledges *one* contradictory field:

- The conceptual (*das Logische*)

And he says that 'in the conceptual' contradictions are necessary, and everywhere.

Here a metaphysical problem arises. Allegedly, in Hegel's view reality and conceptuality are not distinct, so 'everywhere' in the conceptual is 'everywhere' in reality. This is an old problem, already mentioned by Priest himself.[67] But, on this point, the last developments of Hegel's reception as well as recent reflections about dialetheism may be of the greatest interest. As a matter of fact, while dialetheism has better established its own metaphysical implications, the old image of Hegel 'idealist' insofar as anti-realist has been definitely revised.

In his *2004*, Mares distinguishes between semantic and metaphysical dialetheism and cites Priest as metaphysical dialetheist. Semantic dialetheism holds that there are no inconsistencies in things, but that inconsistencies arise because of the relation between language and the world. In contrast, metaphysical dialetheism claims that there actually are inconsistent things in the world.[68]

In some of his latest works, Priest has developed a series of reflections about dialetheism's possible ontological or anti-ontological implications.[69] In *Towards Non-Being* (2005) he has presented the ontological perspective which is at the basis of dialetheism in terms of *noneism*, that is the view that there are non-existent objects. This position, inspired by Meinong, assumes a modal account, in virtue of which there are infinite possible worlds, each containing any possible objects, though in some world some objects are truly existent, while in other worlds they are non existent. However, this position cannot be taken to be a metaphysical dialetheism, because possible worlds, though able to make our sentences true, are *fictional* worlds.[70] At the same time, weak dialetheism, according to which contradictions may occur, but only in possible (impossible) worlds, is not embraced by Priest.[71]

In a more recent article,[72] Priest has considered the following theses: 1: Dialetheias are merely in our concepts; there are no such things as contradictions in re. 2: Dialetheias may always be removed by revising our concepts. 3: Even if this is not the case, if they can be,

[66] And it is adopted by *D'Agostini 2009a* and *D'Agostini 2009b.*

[67] *Priest 1987* (p. 159).

[68] *Mares 2004* (269ff.).

[69] See the remarks about the ontological turn in *Priest 1995* (p. 294), the comments on some critics in *Priest 2006* (p. 299ff.), as well as *Priest 200+*.

[70] This view is coherent with Priest's Meinongianism. See on this *Priest 2008* (p. 30) and *Priest 2005* (16ff.).

[71] See *Berto and Priest 2008*.

[72] *Priest 200+*.

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they should be, *ceteris paribus*. He has also shown that dialetheism offers ways to resist all of them. This resistance would imply a stronger inclination towards a metaphysical sort of dialetheism rather than to a merely semantic one. But, as far as I know, Priest hasn't defined his dialetheism neither as semantic nor as metaphysical yet. In the same article he rather asks: 'Are the contradictions involved simply in our concepts/language [this would be the claim of a semantic dialetheist], or are they in reality [as a metaphysical dialetheist would hold]? And what exactly does this distinction amount to anyway?'

This last question seems to deserve a special emphasis for our needs, as it concerns the relation between reality and conceptuality, which is at the very core of Hegel's theory of contradictions. In this sense, Hegel's view could also constitute a possible suggestion for a dialetheist about where to go from here. Actually, the whole problem for dialetheists, both metaphysical and semantic, ultimately concerns what we mean by *reality* and *conceptuality*. And Hegel's position, in a nutshell, consists of saying that the 'merely conceptual', intending 'merely' in the sense of 'not real', simply does not exist.

Hegel does hold that contradictions arise because of the relation between our concepts/words and reality. Thus, if one follows Mares' distinction, Hegel has to be considered a semantic dialetheist. But Hegel also holds that there really are things which are actually inconsistent, and that they are so independently from our actual thinking or conceiving them.[73] Thus Hegel would also have to be considered a metaphysical dialetheist. The problem evidently concerns the conception of the relation between reality and conceptuality, and the meaning of the 'things' at stake.

Recent developments of Hegel's reception have stressed that the interpretation of Hegel's idealism in terms of anti-realism are fundamentally wrong.[74] The positions on this point are quite disparate, but the basic idea I think here useful to take into account is that Hegel fundamentally shares Kant's empiricism and that he does not exclude reality from the philosophical analysis. He rather focuses on the intersection of reality and rationality, which – as I also tried to show here – is the objective field of philosophical and logical analysis.[75] As a matter of fact, Hegel does not discuss the usual meaning of 'reality', but he speaks about the objective field of logic and philosophy (*das Logische*/the conceptual) as the 'true reality' and the 'reality in the emphatic meaning' of the word.[76]

In this perspective, it is clear that there is no concept which is not (also) real, like there is no 'real' – in the specific, philosophical sense of the term – which is not conceptual. So Hegel's 'semantic' dialetheism is based on the intersection of reality and conceptuality, simply because this intersection is the only 'reality' we actually have, when we reflect on reality. Then here, and only here, contradictions are 'everywhere', in the sense that the same intimate connection between reality and rationality which we call 'reality' dispositionally creates irreducible contradictions.

This can be best understood by applying Priest's intensional conjunction to Hegel's famous *Doppelsatz* (double sentence): 'what is rational is real and what is real is rational'.[77] As in Priest's example, we can write r for $\hat{}Ra$, an object a's being real, and r^* for its being

[73] See note 25 (Sections 7 and 38).

[74] For an interpretation of Hegel's theory of truth in a realistic sense see *Rockmore 2005, Koch 2006, Gabriel 200+*. See *D'Agostini 2010* and *Rockmore 2010* on the difficulties of an interpretation of idealism in terms of anti-realism. For a conciliation between realism and idealism, see *Alston 1996* (73ff.). For a critique of the coherentistic interpretations of Hegel, see *Bordignon 2010*.

[75] I have also underlined this aspect in *Ficara 2010*, but it is an insight that goes back to *Croce 2006, Gadamer 1976*, and, more recently, to *D'Agostini 2009a*, and *D'Agostini 2010* (146ff.) suggests that Hegel's idealism was strictly philosophical, that is, it did not concern reality as such, but the object of philosophy and that Hegel was not anti-realist, but rather had an articulated and complex view of the *concept* of reality.

[76] See note 25 (Section 6).

[77] For Hegel's own interpretation of this sentence, see note 25 (Section 6).

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rational, $\wedge\neg Ra$. Also in this case, the two states (being rational and being real) are related by the identity in difference of opposites: $(r = r^*)\&(r \neq r^*)$. The correct interpretation of the Doppelsatz is thus the one which takes the intensional meaning of conjunction seriously, and gives an account of the 'intersection' of reality and rationality which keeps the difference (and somehow the opposition) between them.[78]

5.4. Motion and self-reference

The dialectical intersection expressed by concepts is the field (*das Logische*) in which contradictions do arise. But *how do they properly arise*? What is the generative factor? We have seen that a fundamental role is played for Hegel by self-reference, that is: thought reflecting on itself (on its own concepts). This could be discussed. For instance, the contradiction conveyed by *motion*, which seems to be the fundamental contradiction, in Hegel's view, does not seem to be 'self-referential', in any sense. Motion seems to be the most 'real', and less 'conceptual' of the contradictions, actually.

Priest 1989 deepens this aspect, which is also dealt with in *Priest 2006*. In *1989*, Priest reconstructs that according to Hegel to be in a state of motion is to both be and not be in a certain spot s at a certain time t. So an object b occupies s at a certain t. What is the instantaneous difference between its being in motion and its being at rest? Priest writes: 'Hegel would say "consistency". Let A be the sentence "b is at spot s". If b is at rest, A is true (only true), if b is in motion, then A is true, since b is occupying the spot s; but, since it is in motion, b has already started to leave that spot. So $\neg A$ is also true. A is true and false'.[79]

In *2006*, Priest considers the contradictions of change and motion as examples of 'contradictions in the empirical world' and distinguishes them from set-theoretic and semantic dialetheias.[80] He analyses the orthodox, Russellian account of motion and then the Hegelian one. As to Russell, for something to be in a state of motion is occupying different places in different times. Unlike Russell, Hegel held that 'something moves not because at one moment of time it is here and at another there, but because at one and the same moment it is here and not here'. Priest comments:

> 'Hegel does not deny that if something is in motion it will be in different places at different times, but this is not sufficient for it to be in motion. It would not distinguish it, for example, from a body occupying different places at different times, but at rest at each of these instants. What is required for it to be in motion at a certain time is for it both occupy and not occupy a certain place at a certain time […] Consider a body in motion – say, a point particle. At a certain instant of time, t, it occupies a certain point of space, x, and since it is there, it is not anywhere else. But now consider a time very, very close to t, t'. Let us suppose that over such small intervals of time as that between t and t' it is impossible to localise a body. Thus, the body is equally at the place it occupies at t', x' ($\neq x$). Hence, at this instant the body is both at x and at x' and, equally, not at either. This is essentially why Hegel thought that motion realises a contradiction'.[81]

[78] For an analysis of Hegel's *Doppelsatz* in the Preface of the *Philosophy of Right* in the perspective of the meaning of conjunction see *D'Agostini 2010* (149ff.). D'Agostini notes that classical interpretations of Hegel's Doppelsatz 'draw a partial justification from the trivial rule of the elimination of conjunction (E∧)', and as a matter of fact, Hegel's assertion has been interpreted in the tradition as meaning only one of the two sides. *Haym 1857* underlined only the second side ('what is real is rational'), interpreting Hegel as an effectualist whose main concern was legitimating the Prussian state. *Marcuse 1941* stressed instead the first side, interpreting the assertion as the program of a critical rationality, able to intervene on reality, to change it.

[79] See note 32 (p. 397).

[80] *Priest 2006* (p. 159).

[81] *Priest 2006* (p. 175–76).

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Priest's aim, in this passage, seems to show that Hegel's concept of motion conveys a true contradiction, and not a 'dynamic' version of it. Actually, some interpreters have objected that the contradiction arising from the consideration of physical motion is somehow reducible, for instance through temporalisation, that is, showing that A is true at a certain time, while ¬ A is true at another. By generalisation, one may say that Hegel's contradictions would be 'temporalized', so they would not be real, effective structure reducible to the form $\alpha \wedge \neg\alpha$.

In the perspective that I have tried to trace here, motion surely conveys a true contradiction. But there is another point on which Priest's account may be discussed. For both Hegel and Priest motion is a typical source of contradiction. But in Priest's reconstruction, motion and self-reference are different cases of true contradictions, while in Hegel the two are characteristically tied together. So the challenge is to show whether the 'reality' of motion could be reduced to the conceptuality of self-reference.

Priest takes Hegel's position as indicative of a peculiar view about the empirical world. Even if the contradiction of motion is, according to Priest, a phenomenon concerning our thought about motion, it expresses a feature of the world, and has to be therefore distinguished from the contradiction conveyed by self-reference.

Surely, Hegel's account does have implications for what concerns the interpretation of the physical and empirical world, implications which are possibly different from the ones following from the orthodox, cinematic account. However, in his reconstruction of Zeno's analysis of motion, Hegel explicitly underlines that Zeno's arguments did not demonstrate anything about motion's empirical reality. They rather disclosed the very nature of the concept of motion and, with it, of every reflexive concept.[82]

As a matter of fact, the irreducible contradiction within motion is not really a fact of the world as such. It rather arises when we try to give an answer to the question: 'what is motion?', or when we reflect upon motion in search of a suitable understanding of it, and of its *being*. The problem thereby is that of something which moves one cannot say that it *is* in some way. Movement is not a state or a condition in which something *is* in a certain way. Thus the attempt to speak of motion as something which *is*, necessarily leads to a contradiction (namely, for Zeno: the conflict between *motion* and *being*). As Gadamer puts it: 'According to Hegel, the contradiction which Zeno points up in the concept of motion is to be admitted, but nothing is thereby said against motion, but conversely, the reality of contradiction is demonstrated […] In the phenomenon of motion spirit becomes aware of its selfhood for the first time and in immediately intuitive fashion as it were. This occurs because the attempt to speak of motion as something which is, leads to a contradiction'.[83]

In the comments to the second edition of *2006*, Priest remarks: 'It might be just that our concepts have such and such structure, or that our words have such and such meaning. It is natural to suppose that the truth of a paradox of self-reference is determined in this way' while 'the contradictions of motion are due, no doubt, to our concept of motion, but there would be no contradictions unless things in the world moved. In a world where everything was frozen there would be none'.[84]

But what is special about motion for Hegel is that when we grasp the meaning of the concept of motion we not only grasp a particular contradiction (like the one involved in other concepts, such as being, nothing, the finite), but also the very nature of every contradiction, and of every conceptual property. Hegel writes: 'The reason why dialectic first seizes upon

[82] See note 30 (305ff.).
[83] *Gadamer 1987* (p. 13).
[84] *Priest 2006* (p. 302).

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motion as its object lies in the fact that dialectic is itself this motion'.[85] So the concept of motion is the same concept of contradiction (i.e. of something which in the same time, place, respect is and is not), but plunged in a spatio-temporal, visual representation. Motion is thus considered by Hegel as the example, the figure, or representation which best expresses the meaning of dialectics as the semantic (both conceptual *and* real) behaviour of every pure, reflexive concept.[86]

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[85] See note 30 (p. 313).

[86] Another typical 'figure of dialectics' is 'becoming'. For the consideration of motion or becoming as 'figures' of the dialectical nature of reflexive thought, see note 25 (Section 88).

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