
Death and Recognition

It still remains to be decided which death, that which is brought by life or that which brings life.

Jacques Lacan

The role of being-with-others in Heidegger's analysis of death is restricted to a consideration of the analogical significance of the death of others for 'an ontological delimitation of *Dasein's* totality'. And its result is strictly negative. For while it might be thought that the death of others could function as a 'substitute theme' for the closure of *Dasein's* totality, Heidegger quickly makes it clear that:

The dying of Others is not something which we experience in a genuine sense; at most we are always just 'there alongside'. . . . When someone has died, his Being-no-longer-in-the-world . . . is still a Being . . . in the sense of the Being-just-present-at-hand-and-no-more of a corporeal Thing which we encounter. . . . The *end* of the entity *qua* *Dasein* is the *beginning* of the same entity *qua* something present-at-hand.

However, it is the fact that 'no one can take the Other's dying away from him [*sic*]' – that we cannot in principle experience the other's dying *qua* dying – which establishes that 'by its very essence, death is in every case mine, in so far as it "is" at all.' Demonstration of the 'mineness' of death is the reflected result of the radical 'otherness' of the other's dying.¹

Heidegger leaves it there, moving on to consider the temporal implications of the mineness of a death *Dasein* itself can only know as the end towards which it is thrown, since for all its mineness even its own death will escape it. There is no account of where 'death' comes from. Presumably, Heidegger thinks this irrelevant to a strictly existential analysis.² Yet this is disputable, given the use that is subsequently made of the difference between mineness and the standpoint of 'the they' in the attribution of authenticity to different

orientations towards death. It is useful at this point to turn to Hegel and his account of the role of death in the dialectic of recognition in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. For if, as Heidegger argues, 'death individualizes', it does so only in the context of being-with-others. In Hegel, we find the resources for a social critique of the individualism of Heidegger's analysis of death, with which to supplement Ricoeur's cosmological critique of its phenomenological 'intimism'.

There is, of course, a radical disjunction between the philosophical terms of the projects at issue. Hegel sought to supersede (*aufheben*) the subject-object problematic of modern epistemology in the concept of the absolute, thereby preserving it, transfigured, in the course of its transcendence; whereas it was Heidegger's explicit intention to bypass that problematic altogether. The concept of *Dasein* registers that intention. Nonetheless, it is unclear that in defining *Dasein* as an 'inquiring' being – an entity which 'is distinguished ontically by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it'³ – Heidegger has entirely succeeded in avoiding the structure of reflection characteristic of the concept of self-consciousness; or indeed, that such success, were it achieved, would be wholly desirable. On the other hand, in turning to Hegel's dialectic of recognition as a counter to the individualism of the analytic of *Dasein*, it is no more intended to replace the latter with the former, than vice versa. Rather, it is hoped that each problematic will work on the other, contributing to a broader rethinking of both their terms.⁴

Being-there-with-others: the dialectic of recognition

The main point of Hegel's dialectic of recognition – as opposed to Heidegger's existential analysis whereby a *Dasein* individualized by its anticipation of death is also considered, by virtue of its thrownness, to be 'with-others' – is that 'self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged. . . . A self-consciousness exists *for a self-consciousness*.'⁵ If this is true, then as a self-interpreting, self-conscious being, *Dasein*'s individuality cannot be derived from its anticipation of death independently of its relations to others. Rather, *Dasein* must first, or simultaneously, be constituted as a self-conscious being through its relations with others, in a dialectic of recognition, in order that it may become the kind of being which is capable of anticipating its death as the end towards which it is thrown, and hence of constituting itself existentially as a Being-towards-death. This disrupts

the whole ontological problematic of *Being and Time*. For it challenges the foundational status of Heidegger's depiction of *Dasein* – a being for whom Being is 'there' in the fundamentally inquisitive form of the question of the meaning of Being – revealing it as a dogmatic presupposition of Heidegger's inquiry: the result of a prior commitment to 'the question of the meaning of Being' which falls outside the scope of the inquiry's own critical procedures.

On the Hegelian model, Being can only be 'there' in Heidegger's sense of presenting itself as the object of inquiry for a fundamentally self-interpreting entity, if this entity has been previously constituted as an entity of this kind (self-conscious being) through a process of mutual recognition. Furthermore, it is only through this process of mutual recognition constitutive of *Dasein's* consciousness of itself as a self-interpreting being that *Dasein* can acquire the sense of death in the first place. The point for Hegelians is thus not only that *Dasein* is first and foremost a being with-others, but that its being with-others is *constitutive* of a death which, while ultimately grounded ontologically in our inscription within cosmological time, nonetheless derives its existential reality from the form of our relationship to it. Heidegger's analysis may register that it is by the deaths of others that the 'mine-ness' of death is confirmed, but it provides no account of whence this thing called 'death' comes, or what its existential anticipation has to tell us, ontologically, about the character of *Dasein* as a social being. In Hegel's analysis, on the other hand, the dual priority of recognition over the anticipation of death appears explicitly in the depiction of a 'struggle for recognition' in which each must risk their life in order to be recognized by the other as a self-conscious being; the process leading up to the notorious dialectic of lordship and bondage (*Herrschaft und Knechtschaft*), or mastery and slavery, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The complementarity of Hegel's and Heidegger's work here lies at the basis of the extraordinary centrality of what has become known as the 'master-slave dialectic' to French thought since the Second World War.

The key text is Kojève's *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, especially the appendix, 'The Idea of Death in the Philosophy of Hegel'.⁶ Kojève reads Hegel not only through the lens of Nietzsche's quasi-Feuerbachian critique, but crucially 'after' Heidegger. Hence his judgement that 'the "dialectical" or anthropological philosophy of Hegel is in the final analysis a *philosophy of death*.'⁷ However, while Kojève's work is thus of great intrinsic interest, this makes it extremely unreliable as an interpretation of Hegel from the standpoint of Hegel's self-conception. Of particular significance here is his translation of

Herrschaft und Knechtschaft as *maîtrise et esclavage* – equivalent to the English ‘mastery and slavery’, rather than ‘lordship and bondage’ – a usage which was followed by Hyppolite in his 1939 translation of the *Phenomenology* into French.⁸ This translation replaces the feudal terms of Hegel’s analysis (to which the English ‘serfdom’ is appropriate) with a notion of slavery resonant with both the world of ancient Greece and the heritage of European colonialism. This would prove to be a brilliant move in the years during and immediately following the Second World War, as Occupation gave way to Liberation and decolonization, revitalizing Hegel’s text in hitherto unforeseen ways – as Sartre’s and Fanon’s appropriations of the model indicate.⁹ However, precisely because of its contemporaneity, this translation has led to serious misunderstandings of both the place of this particular dialectic within Hegel’s text and its relationship to Marx’s work.¹⁰

Given this history of reception, it is as well to emphasize at the outset the role of the passage in question within the *Phenomenology* as a model for the exploration of the structure of self-consciousness, independently of either the universality of reason (*Vernunft*) or the historical forms of spirit (*Geist*) in terms of which human self-consciousness, of necessity, appears in concrete actuality.¹¹ In particular, it is important that this scenario is not read as an historical realism, as the depiction of an originary state of affairs through which self-consciousness came into the world. Rather, it is a conceptual model of the (contradictory) structure of self-consciousness *as such* – albeit one that is richly embellished by an illustrative social content. And it is methodologically subordinate to the broader movement of the *Phenomenology*, through which alone the analysis of recognition is completed.

Lord and bondsman (master and slave) are historically specific social roles, but that is not primarily what they signify here. Hence the justification for Kojève’s translation of one pair into the other. Rather, they are allegorical forms, typifications of power relations inherent in the structure of recognition. What they mark is, on the one hand, the necessarily *social* character of all self-consciousness, and, on the other, the contradiction between *dependence* and *independence* that self-conscious beings must consequently experience outside of an association ‘in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all’;¹² or, as Hegel himself puts it in his introduction of the concept of spirit, an ‘absolute substance which is the unity of the different independent self-consciousnesses which, in their opposition, enjoy perfect freedom and independence:

“I” that is “We” and “We” that is “I”.¹³ The fact that, in expounding the structure of self-consciousness through the dialectic of recognition, Hegel has recourse to a particular shape of spirit (the institution of serfdom) prior to the formal transition to spirit within the developmental logic of the *Phenomenology* – and the difficulties this causes for those with an independent interest in the details of his analysis – are things which need not concern us here.¹⁴

Hegel’s argument has four main stages. The first outlines the contradictory doubling of consciousness’s relationship to itself as both subject and object of knowledge as the perpetual movement of a ‘return from otherness’ or ‘*desire* in general’.¹⁵ In the second stage, these relations are shown to be recognizable by consciousness in their unity only in a duplicated form, as relations between two different self-consciousnesses – consciousnesses which ‘recognise themselves as mutually recognising one another’ ([O]nly so is it in fact self-consciousness; for only in this way does the unity of itself in its otherness become explicit for it’).¹⁶ Next, the contradictory structure of this process of mutual recognition – in which each consciousness must be at once *for-itself* and *for-another*, at once independent yet dependent for this independence on its recognition by another – is presented in the form of a ‘life and death struggle’, or ‘trial by death’, between two consciousnesses, in which ‘each seeks the death of the other’.¹⁷ Finally, this struggle is shown to achieve a preliminary resolution in the unstable, allegorical form of the relationship between lord and bondsman (master and slave), in which the opposed moments of being for-itself and for-another, inherent in all self-consciousness, appear as separate shapes of consciousness, mediated through a form of recognition that is ‘one-sided and unequal’:

The lord is the consciousness that exists *for itself* . . . which is mediated with itself through another consciousness, i.e. through a consciousness whose nature is to be bound up with an existence that is independent, or thinghood in general [the bondsman].¹⁸

What Hegel calls ‘genuine recognition’ (*eigentlichen Anerkennen*) can only come about in a form of ethical life which is the practical equivalent of the standpoint of absolute knowing. Its concept is thus, strictly speaking, available only at the very end of the *Phenomenology*. It is expounded in (and as) the system of speculative philosophy.¹⁹

It is the second and third of these four stages that are of most interest to us here – the background to the master-slave dialectic, rather than the development of its preliminary resolution of the problem of

recognition, as such: the necessity of a second self-consciousness to consciousness's recognition of itself, and the presentation of the relations between them as a 'trial by death'. It is these two arguments that cut deepest into Heidegger's presentation of *Dasein* in *Being and Time*. The former is relatively straightforward, the latter is somewhat harder to grasp. Each appears in the *Phenomenology* as part of the developmental sequence of forms of consciousness generated by the immanent dynamic of a knowing subject (natural consciousness) in search of consistency with itself.²⁰

Trial by death

The duplication of self-consciousnesses in the *Phenomenology* is fuelled by consciousness's epistemic need to render its unity explicit to itself 'in its otherness' – that is, as an object of knowledge. For in order to know itself as a consciousness, consciousness must know itself as both subject and object of knowledge *at the same time*. But without another self-consciousness, this is impossible, since any relation of consciousness to itself which is modelled on its relations to objects can only oscillate between an assertion of its independence from itself as the object of its knowledge, and a supersession (*Aufhebung*) of this independence which establishes the self-certainty of the knowing subject only at the cost of demonstrating its dependence on the negated object:

Thus self-consciousness, by its negative relation to the object, is unable to supersede it; it is really because of that relation that it produces the object again, and the desire [the desire to supersede it] as well. . . . On account of the independence of the object, therefore, it can achieve satisfaction **only when the object itself effects the negation within itself**: and it must carry out this negation of itself in itself, for it is *in itself* the negative, and must be *for* the other what it *is*. Since the object is in its own self negation, and in being so is at the same time independent, it is consciousness. . . . *Self-consciousness achieves its satisfaction* [the satisfaction of its desire to supersede itself as an object] *only in another self-consciousness*.²¹

To put it another way, since self-consciousness only exists as a knowing relationship of consciousness to itself *qua* consciousness, and this relationship eludes the structure of self-reflection (in principle), it can only exist on the model of its knowledge of another self-consciousness. Yet this other self-consciousness cannot exist either, except in the same way. The *duplication* of self-consciousnesses, their *mutual recognition*,

and hence their *mutual dependence* (replacing dependence on an object, the independence of which is confirmed by our need to negate it in the satisfaction of desire), are thus all shown to be conditions of the possibility of self-consciousness, and hence, conditions of the possibility of *Dasein* as a self-interpreting being for whom Being is in question.

It is the difference between the other as 'an unessential, negatively characterised object' (an object of desire in general, 'submerged in the being of life'), and the other as another self-consciousness (pure being-for-self), which imparts to the process of recognition its peculiar character as a 'life-and-death' struggle.²² Hegel explains it as follows. For the individual:

The presentation of itself . . . as the pure abstraction of self-consciousness consists in showing itself as the pure negation of its objective mode, or in showing that it is not attached to any determinate being, nor to the individuality common to existence as such, that it is not attached to life. This presentation is a twofold action: action on the part of the other, and action on its own part. In so far as it is the action of the *other*, each seeks the death of the other. But in so doing, the second kind of action, action on its own part, is also involved; for the former involves the staking of its own life. Thus the relation of the two self-conscious individuals is such that they confirm themselves and each other through a life-and-death struggle. . . . it is only through staking one's life that freedom is won . . .²³

The difficulty here resides in the concepts of life and death: specifically, in Hegel's treatment of death as the negation of life. For 'life' is not used by Hegel here in the general, commonsense way which would render such equivalence unproblematic. Nor is negation so simple a relation as might be supposed. Rather, 'life' is a specific category in Hegel's phenomenological ontology, and negation comes in at least two quite different forms.

'Life' is the category which, at the beginning of chapter 4 of the *Phenomenology*, matches the reflective transition from consciousness to self-consciousness on the side of the object. In this sense, it is 'the infinite unity of the differences' between objects, the 'simple fluid substance of pure movement within itself', the 'ceaseless movement' by which the 'passive medium' of the in-itself is 'consumed'. It is 'the self-developing whole which dissolves its development and in this movement simply preserves itself'. Life is 'the *natural* setting of consciousness', or what Hegel describes as 'independence without absolute negativity'.²⁴ Hence, when Hegel writes that the individual's 'presentation of itself . . . as the pure abstraction of self-consciousness

consists in showing . . . that it is not attached to life', what this means is that consciousness must show that it is detached from its 'natural setting', from its dependence on an independent objectivity.

The question that arises is: in what sense is this 'detachment' equivalent to death, such that to seek it in the other is to seek its 'death', while to seek it for oneself is to put one's 'life' at stake? Are we really talking about literal, *physical* death here? The rhetoric of the 'life-and-death struggle', and the historical reference to serfdom, certainly make it seem as if it were so. Yet it is clear from what follows that this is not always the case. Physical death, according to Hegel, is 'the *natural* negation of consciousness, negation without independence, which thus remains without the required significance of recognition'.²⁵ Now, consciousness cannot be understood to seek this for the other consciousness, since it would undercut the possibility of recognition. So how are we to make sense of Hegel's remarks? The key lies in the difference between Hegel's two senses of negation.

Death in the literal, physical sense defined above is only one way of negating 'life' in Hegel's specific sense: an abstract negation. There is also another way: a negation which 'supersedes in such a way as to preserve and maintain what is superseded, and consequently survives its own supersession'.²⁶ This is the kind of negation performed by consciousness on its objects in the course of its ascent through the forms of appearance to an absolute knowing. Such negation is essentially epistemological in character, but it is nonetheless of ontological significance for a subject defined as a relation of knowledge (consciousness). In the passage quoted above Hegel fails to distinguish between these two negations. He consequently fails to register sufficiently clearly the way in which they bear *differentially* on the two sides of what he presents as a single, symmetrical, twofold action: the staking of 'life' and the seeking of 'death'.

We have seen that it cannot be the achievement of the other's literal, physical death which is at issue in the seeking of death, since this would terminate the dialectic. At best, this can only generate the negative lesson for the one who survives that 'life is as essential . . . as pure self-consciousness'²⁷ – which takes us back to our starting point. Rather, insofar as this kind of negation of life is at issue (literal, physical death), it is present only in the 'staking of life', and it is present there only as the enactment of an *unrealized* possibility. Consciousness requires a demonstration that the other is detached from its 'natural setting' ('life') – that it is a being-for-itself – in order that it may recognize itself in it as another self-consciousness. The other's staking of its life, the free enactment of the possibility of its literal physical death, or the

staging of its independence from 'life', is the only form that such a demonstration can take, since it is the only way of showing that self-consciousness is a pure being for-self, independent of objectivity. The freely embraced *possibility* of death, a life that is staked, symbolizes the freedom of consciousness from the dictates of self-preservation. Pure being-for-self manifests itself only as *freedom-for-death*. This is what one might call the existential core of the dialectic of recognition. It is in this sense that, for Kojève, humanity is 'death living a human life': in achieving self-consciousness the human being 'kills' the animal within him- or herself, supersedes his or her 'natural' being.²⁸ But this is already to move to Hegel's second sense of negation and, thereby, to a dialectical or metaphorical sense of death: Lacan's death which 'brings life', the life of self-consciousness. It is this second, metaphorical sense of death alone which is at issue in consciousness's seeking of the death of the other; applied in this case, not at the naturalistic level of 'life', but at the level of the independence of self-consciousness.

What consciousness seeks when it seeks the death of the other is its death *qua independent self-consciousness*, since it is the other's independence from life (not its mere 'life') which threatens the status of consciousness as a being-for-self; just as the independence of the object thwarted the satisfaction of desire in consciousness's attempt to know itself as an object. It is thus not the negation of life (in either of Hegel's two senses of negation) that is at stake in the death which is sought, but a *reduction to 'life'*, in Hegel's naturalistic sense: death as the death of independence, or what we might call the *death of death*. Consciousness does not seek the supersession of the other's 'life', but the negation of its self-consciousness. Such is slavery: the contradictory refusal to recognize the humanity of the slave, the symbolic reduction of social to natural being, or the positing of social as natural being. It is in this sense that the consciousness of the slave is 'an extended act of mourning' for the loss of the slave's social being. Slavery is social death.²⁹

Conversely, the life that is won by the lord or master is a life beyond mere 'life'. This is why Kojève calls the struggle one of 'pure prestige'. There is no desire at stake in the struggle beyond or beneath that of recognition. Furthermore, as Lacan argues, recognition must in fact be there from the very beginning, as 'a rule of the game'. For if, in the end, 'the loser must not perish if he is to become a slave', the pact must be 'everywhere anterior to the violence before perpetuating it'.³⁰ It is the 'death' of the other in slavery, and the 'life' of self-consciousness as the lord, which are the equivalent sides of a single relationship; not the life that is staked (which is literally, physically so) and the death which

is sought (which is not). It is the *lack of symmetry* in this latter relationship which explains why there is in fact another option for the bondsman or slave, unacknowledged by Hegel, but amply documented elsewhere: namely, the *choice of death*, as the refusal of recognition to the master. As Gilroy puts it:

The repeated choice of death rather than bondage [in the practice of slave suicide] articulates a principle of negativity that is opposed to the formal logic and rational calculation . . . expressed in the Hegelian slave's preference for bondage rather than death.³¹

Such self-destructive negativity both asserts the independence of consciousness on the side of the slave, as an *absolute* striving, and marks the limit of the dialectic in an underlying discontinuity between its terms ('lord' and 'bondsman', or 'master' and 'slave'). It may be realizable only in passing, as an ephemeral, transitory form, but it lives on in the memories of other slaves, as the source of a resistance which exceeds the terms of the Hegelian model of freedom through labour. Slave infanticide, as depicted by Toni Morrison in *Beloved*, for example, may be understood as a generational displacement of the same dynamic, with additional temporal complexities of its own.³²

Hegel is unable to envisage such negativity on the part of the bondsman or slave, for methodological reasons: namely, because of his abstraction of the figure of the bondsman, as an individual, from the community of bondsmen, and his delegation of the principle of independence to the lord. As Sartre puts it in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (in implicit criticism of his own use of the master-slave dialectic in *Being and Nothingness*), Hegel describes 'the relations of a master and his slave through universals, without reference to their relations to other slaves or other masters'.³³ However, in fairness to Hegel, it should be pointed out that it was never his intention to apply the schema directly in historical interpretation. To the extent that his followers have done so, they have violated the methodological terms of the *Phenomenology*. This may be no bad thing, of course. But insofar as it has happened unknowingly – or, at least, unaccompanied by reflection on its conditions and consequences – it has impeded, rather than promoted, understanding of the relevance of Hegel's argument to subsequent debates. In this respect, the history of reception of the master-slave dialectic is seriously compromised, especially in France. In Hegel's own account, 'absolute negativity' or 'pure being-for-self' appears in the consciousness of the bondsman or slave only in the form of the *fear* of death.³⁴

If self-consciousness is a manifestation of desire – ultimately, for Hegel, the desire for ‘pure self-recognition in absolute otherness’, the completion of that ‘return from otherness’ which is desire in general – it is also equally *fear*: a fear of death which is produced by the recognition of the independence of the other. Such recognition is a condition of the acquisition of self-consciousness, since the other must appear as pure being-for-self if it is to be a model for consciousness’s relationship to itself as an independent whole. Yet this recognition thereby makes consciousness aware of its own potential nothingness for the other – a nothingness it must project onto the other in return (‘seeking the death of the other’), if it is to establish itself as pure being-for-self. *Pure* self-consciousness, *pure* being-for-self, thus reveals itself to be a contradictory structure of *misrecognition* and *disavowal*, since it must repress or deny its dependence on the recognition of the other. This is the structure which is staged by Hegel in the figure of the lord or master. Pure self-consciousness is an impossible state of affairs.

Let us sum up the results of this analysis. Self-consciousness and the consciousness of death are *one*; and both come from *the other*. They are the product of *desire* and they result in *fear*: fear of death as the fear of the refusal of recognition. In both its pervasiveness and indeterminacy, such fear is equivalent to Heidegger’s existential concept of *anxiety*: an anxiety in the face of ‘Being-in-the-world as such’ which, according to Heidegger, ‘makes fear possible’ (fear of any particular thing).³⁵ In each case, it is the consequence of a recognition of freedom. However, whereas for Heidegger it is *Dasein*’s own freedom which is at issue, its character as pure possibility – to which anxiety returns it from its absorption in the world; for Hegel, it is the freedom of the other from which fear stems, a freedom which is registered by self-consciousness as at once a threat to its identity and a condition of its existence. From the Hegelian standpoint, freedom comes, phenomenologically, from the other, and it is the ambivalence of this relationship which is the true source of existential anxiety – a suggestion which is supported by the similarity between Heidegger’s concept of anxiety and Freud’s.³⁶

Death both appears to consciousness as, and derives its existential reality from, the possibility of an *absolute* refusal of recognition. This is why Hegel calls death the ‘absolute lord’. (The lord refuses recognition of self-consciousness to the bondsman.) Death is the ‘possibility of the impossibility of existence’ introduced into consciousness by the recognition of its dependence on the recognition of another, who harbours within him- or herself the possibility of its denial. Anticipation of death, in Heidegger’s existential sense, is to this

extent a constitutive dimension of self-conscious (and therefore social) being. If temporality derives, existentially, from the anticipation of death (Heidegger's argument), and death comes from the other (Hegel's argument), so, it follows, does time. *Existential temporality comes from the other. It is recognition which 'temporalizes' time.* It is only self-consciousness for which death has meaning – for which death 'is', in Heidegger's sense – and self-consciousness is always socially mediated. Hegel's definition of death thus requires modification as his analysis progresses through the various stages of the *Phenomenology*. Death is not just 'the natural negation of consciousness, negation without independence', the literal, physical death with which Hegel begins. It is the natural or *unnatural* negation of a consciousness, negation without independence, which is both *for-itself* and *for-others*. For all its inherent 'mineness', which cannot be denied, what death 'is', existentially, is mediated by relations to others – in Hegel's terms, the forms of objective spirit. Its analysis will form part of an ontology of *social* being.

But what about the absolutism of Hegel's idealism, within which his account of recognition is enclosed? As we saw in the last chapter, this ends up negating both time and death, through the recuperative, transfigurative power of its interiorizing memory. What happens to Hegel's argument if we extract his dialectic of recognition from this speculative context, and pursue it outside the assumption of an "I" that is "We" and "We" that is "I", its ultimate presupposition and putative end? What structures of recognition are constitutive of the primordial temporality of self-interpreting *social* beings who are also part of an *exterior* nature? And what are their relations to the temporalization of 'history'?

Such questions can be approached at two different levels: the level of the psychic formation of the individual *qua* individual, as a temporal being; and the level of the social formation of individuals as historical beings. In the first case, which we shall explore in the rest of this chapter, we find ourselves on the terrain of psychoanalytical appropriations and transformations of Hegel's dialectic of self-consciousness, in the service of the development of Freud's account of the formation of the ego (*das Ich*). From this point of view, the standpoint of a psychic materialism, it would appear that 'the only way to "save Hegel" is through Lacan';³⁷ or, more generally, in Freud's own words, 'to transform metaphysics into metapsychology'³⁸ – an aspiration which, of necessity, inflects metapsychology back in the direction of metaphysics, as the continuation of ontology by other means. In the second case, which we shall take up in the course of the