Our discussion of the development of dialectics would remain incomplete without a note on the role of Fichte and Schelling who bridged Kant and Hegel in this regard. Though various other names like Jacobi, Herder, Reinhold, Goethe, Holderlin and Schleiermacher come in between Kant and Hegel, the names of Fichte and Schelling represent definite points in the development of the philosophical thread of dialectics. In this chapter we would deal with this.

It is interesting to note that, even with differences, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel were united in breaking away from Kant, and the latter two united in the beginning in opposing Fichte, and finally Hegel had to fight out Schelling too. Even in this teaming up, one can see a kind of growing united front, no less than a dialectical approach in Hegel. Against Kant's dualism figured Fichte as the main soldier; against Fichtean subjective idealism fared Schelling as the leading critic, against whom in turn Hegel took up cudgels to settle accounts with the Schellingean formalism.
Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762 - 1814)

It is Kant who freed dialectic out of its seeming arbitrariness. In the words of Hegel, "Kant rated dialectic higher... and exhibited it as a necessary function of reason." ¹

At the same time, Kant tried to resolve the necessary antinomies of pure reason (as we have seen in the 3rd chapter), in order to keep at high pedestal the traditional laws of logic. He could do this only at the behest of dividing reason, dividing the faculties and splitting the world into two - the phenomenal and the noumenal. ² The attempts of Kant to bridge this in his *Critique of Judgement* cannot be taken as something substantiated by necessary connections. Importantly, two points in Kant - one, that Kant's principle of thought and knowledge is blatantly dualist, and two, that Kant's method does not show any axiomatic certainty as his so-called transcendental deduction is just an empirical exercise - have provoked the then thinkers to arrive at a consistent monistic system. These

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1. A.V. Miller (Tr.), *Hegel's Science of Logic*, op.cit. p. 56.

two aspects are basically same as an axiomatically certain method, according to the prevailing logic, would lead to an internally consistent monistic system. Some like Fichte even thought that Kant does not have a system; following the principle of Kant one has to develop one. In essence, this became the philosophical problem posed before the post-Kantian thinkers.

Some worked against Kant. Some basically agreed with him, but demanded development and modifications. More or less, all agreed on one thing: this is the need of a monistic principle to be developed. The search mainly turned out to be an attempt at eliminating the thing-in-itself, the materialist element left in Kant.

Reinhold (1758 - 1823) tried to unite the subject and object of knowledge, the basis of dualism, into a third something called 'representation' in his Attempt at a New Theory of the Human Faculty of Representation (1789). His argument is that this representation that is consciousness is referred to both object and subject.  

The attempt of Schulze (Aenesidemus, 1792), Maimon and Beck (Only Possible Standpoint From Which The Critical Philosophy Must Be Judged, 1796) were also not different; they all, some way or

other, tried to remove the thing-in-itself. Beck (1761 - 1840) arrived at something called "original synthesis" as the monistic principle. Schelling's attempt remained within the sphere of aesthetics, since, following Kant's third Critique, he thought that this sphere would give the monistic solution. ⁴

Fichte's achievement surpassed all of these attempts in the line of resolving Kant. Fichte started as a Kantian. The essential Fichtean thought is contained in his work, Wissenschaftslehre (1794). ⁵ Fichte contends that the spirit of Kant consists in his transcendental idealism; the thing-in-itself should be overlooked. Fichte is critical of those who follow the letter of Kant. Following Beck and Jacobi, Fichte also concluded that the essence of Kant's philosophy is idealism. As a logical end to this thinking, he developed a typical subjective idealist position. The revolutionary side of his idealist strivings reflects in his support to French Revolution; Fichte declared that people have the right to change the state. This

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⁵. Translated as Science of Knowledge (Flackenberg, Thilly, Ilyenkov), and also as Theory of Science (as translated in The Young Hegel of Lukacs).
commitment made him lose the faculty position in the university of Jena. 6

Now let us pinpoint Fichte's tracing of the Kantian logical inconsistency. The basic inconsistency in Kant, according to Fichte, lies in his doctrine of thing-in-itself; it lies in Kant's thought that there is a thing-in-itself outside the consciousness. To say that consciousness (or Ego in Fichte) is aware of something outside it is to commit a flagrant contradiction, to violate the law of identity. Whether this thing-in-itself exists or not is not the main question before Fichte. Rather Fichte is convinced of the logical impossibility of such an entity. This is actually a step of retreat from Kant in terms of the development of dialectical logic. In the case of Kant, even though he is against any breach of the law of identity, he accepted things that does not follow this formal logic. That is, he accepted the necessity of the contradiction and the objectivity of the illusions; only difference of him with the dialectical logic is that Kant granted it but as illusory. Even this achievement of an objectivity of contradictions (despite them being illusory in Kant) is reversed by Fichte.

Fichte reproached Kant for setting a bad example of "juggling with the rules of logic itself" in the course of substantiating his own system of logic. Not only that Kant dismantled the laws of logic, but he presented two logics even - the Analytic and the Dialectic, the logic of truth and the logic of illusion. Fichte thought that it is illogical to present two logics. Following the existing norm of logic, Fichte argues for a single logic.

Analytic is the logic of phenomenon in Kant; it is the science of thinking, theory of thought. Dialectic is the logic of things-in-themselves (i.e., noumena for practical life); this is science of things; thinking of things, not thinking itself. Fichte suggests that the latter is the concern of the natural scientists. Proper logic should be science of thinking, or thinking about thinking, or theory of thought. It became a must that things be conceptualised first to be applicable for logic. And this should rule all the fields of thoughts including the science of things. Thus the plan for a monist principle of logic developed. Despite the relapse of dialectical logic into

formal logic in Fichte, the monist principle suggested by him gave dialectics an opportunity to come again, this time in its positively developed form in Hegel. The positive aspect of Kant's dualism, i.e., the transcendental logic (dialectic) combined with the monist principle of Fichte (and Schelling) becomes Hegel's dialectics.

It is another question to see that whether Fichte could really follow his declared principle of monism. The absolute principle for Fichte is Ego. This initial Ego is Absolute Ego. It posits itself; this only have being or existence. The rest is deduced from this being. Fichte's Absolute Ego is a mythical whole; it is neither human Ego, nor the substance of Spinoza. The essence of this Ego lies in activity or action (Tathandlung). 8 This Ego posits the limited individual human Ego which is, for Fichte, only an empirical Ego that is opposed to the non-Ego. He uses the triad of 'positing', 'contrapositing' and 'synthesising' for the deduction. This method is often called "antithetical" because the antithesis, unlike the claim of Fichte, is not deduced from the thesis, but placed alongside it. It can be considered that his method has elements

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8. 'Tathandlung' is translated as 'deed-act', 'activity', 'action', etc.
of both 'antithetical' and 'synthetical' methods.

Fichte sometimes calls his method 'genetic' and he claims axiomatic deduction. For him, the opposition goes within the absolute. So, everything is inside the absolute. What is the nature of this absolute? This is the only thing that undoubtedly exists. Since this absolute is the 'activity' it cannot be an object; it is subject only. The substance is subject or activity. Here, we can see the separation of the object from the subject. Fichte says:

Either of the two must be removed: spirit or nature; the two cannot be united at all. Their imaginary unity is partly hypocrisy and lie, and partly the inconsistency imposed by the feeling. 9

The motion of matter and things is not activity, but alienated activity. So, the initial monism falls into an inherent dualism. His monistic principle is the subject separated from object (nature). This dualism is later attempted to be resolved by Schelling. But, as we shall see, he also could not succeed in it except in replacing the absolute ego of Fichte with a similar mystified concept of nature.

Hegel had aptly pointed out the dualism in Fichte. Hegel says that Fichte does not consistently follow his declared monism in his system.

As soon as the construction of the system begins, the identity is given up; the system itself is an inferred set of finitudes of the understanding which is not able to clasp the original identity together in the focus of the totality to the point of absolute self-intuition. The subject-object therefore turns into something subjective and does not succeed in sublating this subjectivity and in positing itself objectively.10

Hegel continues:

Identity has been constituted in Fichte's system only as a subjective Subject-Object. This requires an objective Subject-Object for its completion, so that the Absolute presents itself in each of the two and turns out to be complete only in both together.11

The being of Fichtean Absolute is only one-sided; it negates non-ego; it lies only subjective Subject-Object. So, Hegel suggested that the Absolute itself should be "the identity of identity and non-identity; op-positioning and being-one are in it equally."12

Despite the question of correctness or incorrectness, Fichte had shown more consistency than Kant in deducing the

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11. Ibid. p. 72.

12. Ibid. p. 73.
categories. The origin of categories in Kant is eclectic as well as empirical because he took over the categories from the previous philosophers (though there is nothing wrong in it) and ordered them in his own way (that smacks of arbitrariness), and also because the transcendental deduction in Kant boils down to just an empirical method without any axiomatic certainty. Fichte is more concerned with the logical possibility than the real possibility, and his strict adherence to formal logic can be seen in his deduction of categories.

Fichte deduces the categories from his first principles. In the beginning of his *Wissenschaftslehre*, Fichte gives what he calls three supreme fundamental principles. These form his first triad of Ego-non ego-human ego.

The first principle is the original positing of the Ego itself. "The Ego posits itself". The pure ego is activity. It is subject. Here, Fichte gives primacy to practice, following the footsteps of Kant in accepting the primacy of practical reason over theoretical reason. Fichte took *Critique of Practical Reason* as the model of his system. He took the *Philosophy of Morals* and the concept of freedom as the spirit of Kant. He denied the philosophy of nature and concepts of nature.
as the letter of Kant.\textsuperscript{13} Object is denied; subject is taken up. He equates subjectivity with activity.

The second supreme principle is the contraposition/positioning of non-ego. "The Ego posits a non-ego." This is again an act of the original ego itself; its self-restriction. Non ego is the antithetical element; it is passivity.

The third principle is the unity of the first and second principles. "The Ego posits a limited ego in opposition to a limited non-ego." Here also, it is an act of the original infinite Ego.

From this major set of triad itself Fichte deduces the categories reality, negation and determination/limitation. Ego is the absolute fullness of reality; non-ego is the absolute fullness of negation. The third is the mutual restriction of the unconditionality of reality and negation, a mutual determination or limitation. This method of deduction is very much internal to the system of Fichte and an advancement over Kant in this respect. As Lukacs has pointed out, there is a dialectic in Fichte's derivation of categories. Lukacs, in \textit{The Young Hegel}:

\begin{quote}
In Kant as in Fichte, the categories are subjective-ideal-ist in character. But in Kant's case they have been
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{13} Kant himself broadly divides philosophy into two to be bridged by his third critique. See J.C.Meredith (Tr.), \textit{The Critique of Judgement}. p. 8.
\end{quote}
assembled empirically, rather than deduced. Kant took the categories over from the traditional school-logic and then gave them fresh interpretations, but without raising the question of their deduction from each other. The typical Kantian approach is: There are synthetic judgements a priori - how are they possible? This shows the extent to which Kant simply accepted the categories and their interrelations as something pre-existing. (And here too we see Kant wavering between materialism and idealism). For Fichte, however, the categories spring from the interactions of Ego and non-Ego - which means that the dialectical triad of thesis, antithesis and synthesis can be found already in Fichte.14

Fichte's concept of identity of logic and the science of knowledge (Wissenschaftslehre) is also very important. For him, the schemata revealed in the dialectical journey of the ego itself is logic. That means logic and science of knowledge (the latter itself is both ontology and epistemology) are the same. This is the principle forerunning Hegel's identity of ontology, epistemology and logic.

But this similarity is strangely incidental and has to be understood as two different standpoints. Fichte follows the law of identity and cannot allow differentiation. Hence the identity of all fields. So, Fichte's monism is provoked by the traditional law of identity. Contrarily, for Hegel, monism and identity of all fields form the ground of dialectics, a logic that refutes the law of identity.

Schelling also followed Fichetean principle, that one should be loyal to the logical law of identity. For the same purpose, Schelling maintained separate identities for ego and non-ego, thinking to avoid contradictions in the single field itself. Let us see this in Schelling.

Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling (1775 - 1854)

Even while Fichte was developing all his differences with Kant, strangely he was thinking that he is only following Kant and doing the needed alterations. Only when Kant himself repudiated Fichte openly, he could become aware that he has already started a new system. A similar case was with Schelling also. Hegel had to play a role in convincing Schelling that he went farther from Fichte and a break is inevitable.15 Hegel's book, The Difference between the Fichetean and Schellingian Systems of Philosophy, did this job.

Though the search is for a monistic principle, both Fichte and Schelling remained dualistic. While Fichte absolutised the subject/ego, Schelling kept up the separation of ego and non-ego.

Schelling could not develop a consistent philosophy, and he kept on changing his views. In the beginning he was a Fichtean subjective idealist; then an objective idealist along with Hegel; his third stage was an attempt to unite the transcendental idealism and philosophy of nature that flopped into a Bohmean mysticism. In the fourth stage, that is generally termed as the stage of positive philosophy, he produced mainly theological works. Hegel ridicules Schelling for the unconnected stages of his philosophical development in *History of Philosophy*:

Schelling completed his philosophical education in public. The list of his philosophical writings is simultaneously the history of his philosophical education. It represents his gradual emancipation from the Fichtean principles and Kantian contents with which he began. It does not contain an analysis of the different parts of philosophy in logical sequence, but the stages in his education.16

While *Critique of Practical Reason* supplied the model for Fichte to start with, *Critique of Judgement* was the beginning point for Schelling. Schelling based himself on Fichte. But he started interpreting *Critique of Judgement* and the *Wissenschaftslehre* in the spirit of objective idealism. Schelling took

over the Fichtean triad and transformed it into an objective element in the structure of universe. Fichte, in order to make his system internally consistent than it be consistent with the reality, denies being and existence to anything outside ιγνό or Consciousness. Schelling's approach was different. His problem was how to conceive objective knowledge of the external world especially of nature. Schelling's System of Transcendental Idealism that appeared in 1800 made the split with Fichte. In a letter criticising Schelling, Fichte says:

The reality of nature is quite another matter. In the transcendental philosophy nature appears as something given and as such it is perfect and complete in itself. Moreover, it is "given" not in terms of its own laws but according to the immanent laws of intelligence... 18

The subjective idealism is clearly stated here. To think that nature does not have its own laws, but is given to us in terms of our intelligence is the subjective idealist position. Hegel and Schelling at this juncture joined in their venture to have the break with the subjective idealism, and in 1801 itself they together started a journal with the aim of propagating objective idealism.

17. Ibid. p. 245.
Nature and natural science attracted Schelling more. Schelling also began in the same way as Fichte did. He also considered the antinomy of subject and object as something within human consciousness; the contradiction is between the images of external world produced 'freely' by consciousness and the images produced unconsciously. This dualism remained unresolved. Fichte united the two (ego and non-ego) into the concept of activity (Tathandlung). But the inner necessity of such a unity remained unexplained. Schelling found that the dualism remained and in Fichte it is transferred to the realm of human consciousness. The two divisions seen in Kant and Fichte, Schelling thought, are arising from a common trunk that has to be traced. This is some initial identity that realizes itself in its detail as it develops. Schelling could not find it. He was only describing it negatively - not real, not ideal; not matter, not consciousness; neither spirit, nor substance etc. It should be some primordial whole in which the subject matter of all special sciences are differentiated. And these fields should be understood as consecutive stages in the development of the one and the same initially undivided whole. Then, the antinomies can be resolved without appealing to the supernatural factors.

For instance, in the words of Schelling himself:

As soon as our investigation ascends to the idea of nature as an entity the opposition between mechanism and
organism disappears immediately, an opposition that has long hampered the progress of natural science and that will long continue to block our enterprise's success in the eyes of quite a few...

So Schelling sought to develop a single cosmical principle working in all fields. This led him to take nature as a dynamic whole in which each successive stage negates the preceding one by adding on new determinations.

Though the nature is substituted to the Fichtean Ego in Schelling, the united whole which one seeks is impossible in conceptual logical terms.

Original identity is impossible because no concepts are able to conceive it. The moment we express it, antinomic bifurcation appears. So Schelling's identity philosophy maintained the separate identity of two systems. One is the system of determinations of the Ego (transcendental philosophy); the other, of object (non-ego), i.e., philosophy of nature. Two remained non-contradictory; contradictions are avoided in the transcendental idealism, and that of subjectivity in the philosophy of nature.

Two cannot come from one; because law of identity will be infringed. So, Schelling concluded: whole system of philosophy

cannot be a single science. It would "find consummation in two fundamental sciences, which mutually opposed in principle and direction, seek each other out and complement each other."  

Uniting the two into any third single science is impossible because it would infringe the law of identity. Indirectly, this Schellingian conclusion hints at a new law (or lawlessness) if the unity has to be realised. The way out for Schelling is the aesthetics. The identity of the objective and subjective worlds could be realized in the act of creation. But again, this identity cannot be expressed and described. It is "absolute Simple, Identical, cannot be comprehended or communicated through description and not at all through conception. It can only be intuited."  

Schelling thinks that the transition or unity of opposites cannot be expressed without a non contradictory concept. To express it in a concept means to smash the concept itself. That means that this transition cannot be caught by any concept. It is expressed in art, not in science. So, the art forms the highest form of mental activity. Thus Schelling resorted to  


a rejection of logic in the highest unity possible. He did not care to reform the logic. At this stage of his philosophy he was influenced by the German mystic, Jacob Bohme. This inexpressible identity is what he expressed as dialectic. So, when he rated dialectics as higher form of mental activity, he separates logic and dialectics, sending both back to the pre-Kantian stage of neglect. And dialectics is mystified, or, to use the Lukacs' term, made skeptical.22 Schelling himself called it "Scientific Skepticism".

Thus we saw that Schelling started with the law of identity to oppose the dualism committed by Kant and Fichte. Strangely, with the same principle, he kept up the separation. Because for Schelling, any conceivable principle of identity cannot be the same principle. And here, lastly the genuine principle of identity took him to mysticism. Dialectics, for him, became mysticism, something beyond logic. Hegel rightly took dialectics into the arena of logic.

Now, it is for Hegel to resolve the dualism in Kant, Fichte and Schelling and to integrate the positive aspects of their endeavour, the strivings for a monist principle, into his new dialectical logic.

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22. Lukacs, op.cit. p. 441.